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**Origin and Function of  
the Party Form**

## ***General Premises***

The central thesis that we wish to state and illustrate is that Marx and Engels derived the characteristics of the party form from the description of communist society.

We shall attempt to indicate methodologically as far as possible the link between the different works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the Italian left. We shall, in short, use all the elements from the Marxist school. Some points will, moreover, be indicated, but not studied fundamentally.

The struggle of the embryonic proletariat in the French revolution led some revolutionaries (Varlet, Leclerc, Roux, i.e. the Enrages) to believe that the revolution could only benefit a category of people and that it was not universally liberatory. At the same time, however, the Egaux questioned the possibility of this revolution liberating humanity. Thus they proclaimed the need for a new revolution led in the name of reason (cf. Marx's critique in *The Holy Family*).

The theory of the universal evolution of reason and of its role is in Hegel's system which completed the work of the French philosophers and the bourgeois revolutionaries. Moreover, the proletariat was growing in numbers and in its power in society when Marx entered the political scene. It was from Marx's and Engels's observations of the struggle of the proletariat that they gave birth to the idea that the enlightening solution was not the real, the true one, and they also saw that this solution was to be found in the proletariat's struggle.

They understood that the question could not be resolved theoretically because the question, the emancipation of humanity, had not been posed practically since the bourgeoisie thought in terms of an abstract man in a category excluding the proletariat. The liberation of man had to be seen in the area of practice and one had to consider real men, i.e. the human species (cf. *Theses on Feuerbach* 8 and 10). Marx went on to criticize the Hegelian system armed with this inspired intuition. He found out why the dialectic was on its head. He attacked the monster with reckless enthusiasm. (Marx was the new Oedipus who resolved the enigmas). He returned to the field of practice when the difficulties grew too great and threw what was real in old Hegel's face: the existence of the proletariat. Since he was anti-modern, Marx always drew new strength from the proletariat to support the fight, explaining the proletariat's struggle (we shall try as often as possible to underline this aspect).

Marx noted all the practical and theoretical struggles and he was also in the current of work of other fighters such as Engels, Moses Hess, the French socialists etc.. Thus the summation was finally made, theory of the proletariat, theory of the human species, which appeared in all its power in the full phase of the eruptive development of human society: the 1848 revolution, with the *Communist Manifesto*.

Thus Marxism is the product of the whole of human history, but it could only be borne by the proletariat's struggle which:

"(has) no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant." (1)

Our work today is that of trying to explain how the inspired intuition has become reality, the communist programme, how the programme was proposed to humanity through the medium of the proletariat. How Marx and Engels fought for its acceptance by the proletarian organization ("...the history of the International was a continual struggle of the General Council against...the individual sections"), how it won in 1871 with the Paris Commune which showed the absolute need for it (need expressed its verification and validity). We shall study all that so as to specify the origin and function of the party form. Finally we shall deal with the question with the reasoning that the only activity with any reality is that of the programme, i.e. its necessity. Capitalism no longer exists for us, only communist society does.(cf. numbers of 'il programma comunista' of 1959-60 as well as what was dealt with in Milan)(2) on the theme that our theory is the only one able to base itself on a future action.

## ***ORIGIN OF THE PARTY FORM***

One has to know how human consciousness evolved in order to understand Marx's - critique of bourgeois society. Leaving aside the period of primitive communism and the phase of its degeneration (beginning of class society), there are three main movements, two straightaway:

1. Knowledge mediated by God,
2. Knowledge mediated by individual man (capitalist period, cf. the Florence, Casale and Milan meetings.(3)).

In the second case it is a matter of knowing what is man (cf. the writings on man by the bourgeois philosophers such as Hume, Locke, and Helvetius). One precedes from the abstract definition of individual man (characterized by reason) to the problem of knowing what is the best form of society allowing an optimum development of this man, therefore what the best social organization which will guarantee the most rational development of humanity, seen as the sum of all people alive at a certain stage, is. Finally, given that the human spirit is perfectible, the masses have to be educated for the liberation of man.

Marx destroyed the Hegelian monster in an implacable critique in the *Paris Manuscripts*, in the critique of the state and of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (law being the link among individuals and between them and the state), and in *On the Jewish Question* and came to grasp the real meaning of the

movement of human society in its totality. Humanity as a whole tended to communism described thus:

"Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e. human) being - a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man - the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution. "The entire movement of history, just as its (communism's) actual act of genesis - the birth act of its empirical existence - is therefore, also for its thinking consciousness the comprehended and known process of its becoming." (4)

The character of the proletariat is to be:

"...a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates, a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no particular right because no particular wrong but wrong

generally is perpetuated against it; which can no longer invoke a historical but only a human title;..."

(here too we find the basic constant of Marxism: the criteria for judging truth or error is that of the species, what interests us is not a contingent and transitory fact, but the human being which mediates all knowledge and action. The proletariat does not found its action in history on the ownership of a certain means of production and so on the partial liberation of man, but on the non-possession of human nature which it wishes to appropriate and thus emancipate man.)

"which does not stand in any one-sided antithesis to the consequences but in an all-round antithesis to the premises of the German state; a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society, which, in a word, is the complete loss of man and hence can win itself only through the complete rewinning of man. This dissolution of society as a particular estate is the proletariat."  
(5)

The following quotation from *The Holy Family* again specifies what has just been stated:

"Indeed private property drives itself in its economic movement towards its own dissolution, but only through a development which does not depend on it, which is unconscious and which takes place against the will of private property by the very nature of things, only inasmuch as it produces the proletariat as

proletariat, poverty which is conscious of its spiritual and physical poverty, dehumanization which is conscious of its dehumanization, and therefore self-abolishing. The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounces on itself by producing the proletariat, just as it executes the sentence that wage-labour pronounces on itself by producing wealth for others and poverty for itself, when the proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat disappears as well as the opposite which determines it, private property. "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. Since in the fully formed proletariat the abstraction of all humanity, even of the semblance of humanity, is practically complete; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in their most inhuman form; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative need - the practical expression of necessity - is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but stealing school of labour. It is not a



question of what this or that proletarian, or even of the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. 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 organization of bourgeois society today. There is no need to explain here that a large part of the English and French proletariat is already conscious of its historic task and is constantly working to develop that consciousness into complete clarity." (6)

Thus the problem of the becoming of the proletariat is that of knowing how the question of classes and the state would be resolved, thus also the question of the future society. The bourgeoisie tended, moreover, to prevent the realization of the organic link between the class and its programme; it tended to reduce the proletariat to a class of this society and, to do so, made it abandon its programme. Here is the theoretical location of the question of the party. All these questions were not dealt with individually, the reply was made as a whole. Marx had the intuition of the future society and he went on to draw out the theory of the state and the party in this knowledge. All Marx's and Engels's work was to be the description of this society and its defence against bourgeois society. The following article (7) in the Parisian *Vorwärts* (7.& 10.8.1844.) enables us to show this.

## ***The Nature of the State***

Marx analysed here what the state is:

"From the political point of view, the state and the system of society are not two different things. The state is the system of society. Insofar as the state admits the existence of social defects, it sees their cause either in the laws of nature, which no human power can command,(a) or in private life, which does not depend on the state, or in the inexpedient activity of the administration, which does not depend on it."(8)

Then he analysed the 'faults' of the state and the remedies invoked:

"finally, every state seeks the cause in accidental or deliberate short-comings of the administration, and therefore it seeks the remedy for its ills in measures of the administration, Why? Precisely because administration is the organizing activity of the state." (9)

Here we already have the critique of the bureaucracy which some now wish to present us as a class. We can also note Marx's keen interest in questions of the definition of the mechanisms of the state. It was thus that he was closely to follow the measures taken by the Paris Commune. The importance of administration had to be limited and simplified in order that the bureaucratic phenomenon could disappear,

and, given the link with authority, prevent membership of the administration being accompanied with privileges.

Later Marx envisaged the different contradictions linked with the state and criticized the reformists who were those who wanted to fix the 'faults' of the state which are by their very nature irreparable:

"Suicide is against nature. Therefore the state cannot believe in the inherent impotence of the administration, i.e., in its own impotence. It can perceive only formal, accidental deficiencies in its administration and try to remedy them." (10)

Here the position of the Stalinists and the various democrats is defined very precisely. But this did not satisfy Marx, he scoffed at his adversaries by showing them their impotence:

"And if these modifications prove, fruitless, the conclusion is drawn that social ills are a natural imperfection independent of man, a law of God or - that the will of private individuals is too spoilt to be able to respond to the good intentions of the administration. And how preposterous these private individuals are! They grumble at the government whenever it restricts their freedom, and at the same time they demand that the government prevent the inevitable results of this freedom!"(11)  
This is the critique of the Stalinists who want a strong democratic power and who 'grumbled' each time de Gaulle restrained 'freedoms' and increased the power of the state. They did not agree on the form of the state! Marx mocked

these illusions showing that the state is the organized power of a class which dominated society:

"For this fragmentation, this baseness, this slavery of civil society is the natural foundation on which the modern state rests, just as the civil society of slavery was the natural foundation on which the ancient state rested. The existence of the state and the existence of slavery are inseparable," (12)

Marx took this impossibility of reformism to its extreme by criticizing Ruge's position which stated:

"...the smothering of uprisings which break out in "disasterous isolation of people from the community (Gemeinwesen), and in the separation of their thoughts from social principles." (13)

That is to say that the state has to be used to liberate the proletariat if one wishes to avoid a check. This position was to be readopted by Lassalle, Proudhon, Duhring etc. ...(14)

Marx replied by analysing what the bourgeois, and all other revolutions were:

"But do not all uprisings, without exception, break out in a disastrous isolation of man from the community? Does not every uprising necessarily presuppose isolation? Would the 1789 revolution have taken place without the disastrous isolation of French citizens from the community? It was intended precisely to abolish this isolation." (18)

## ***The Proletarian Path is not inside the State***

Do the facts of the proletarian struggle appear in exactly the same manner? No:

"But the community from which the worker is isolated is a community the real character and scope of which is quite different from that of the political community. The community from which the worker is isolated by his own labour is life itself, physical and mental life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, human nature." (19)

Here the critique achieves totality because it is radical, but:

"To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for man the root is man himself." (20)

The poverty of the proletariat is its separation from its human nature. This critique supercedes the narrow limits of Proudhon's which was merely a rational impoverishment and thus even a derationalization on the real poverty of man. The Stalinists with their theory of absolute poverty are the real inheritors of Proudhon and E. Sue (cf. Marx's critique in *The Holy Family*). The claim of the proletariat was manifested in its will to reappropriate its human nature and Marx defined the communist programme as:

"Human nature is the true community of men." (21)

So the state does not exist in communist society. The principle of authority, of organization and co-ordination between men is the human species. It is the return to primitive communism, but also integrating the intermediate evolution (cf. the previous citation on communism). The human species has been represented imperfectly and fragmentedly beforehand: e.g. the totem. Men delimited themselves in relation to it, according to a participation with it (Moira of the ancient Greeks):

their individual existence was not separate from that of the species. The split between the two showed up when class society was established, attaining its greatest development in the existence of the proletariat. It is this poverty that Marx expressed in all its universality: the poverty due to separation from the *Gemeinwesen*:

"The disastrous isolation from this essential nature is incomparably more universal, more intolerable, more dreadful, and more contradictory, than isolation from the political community. Hence, too, the abolition of this isolation(b) - and even a partial reaction to it, an uprising against it - is just as much more infinite as man is more infinite than the citizen, and human life more infinite than political life.' (22)

Some philistine, i.e. some vulgar democrat, will think that clever Marx drew all that from his powerful brain because, for him, some philistine, reflection is the exclusive property of some brain activity, if not...farewell division of labour!! In fact it was not so. The proletariat is the living manifestation of Marx's

thought of the enunciation of the universality of poverty and thus of the universality of its liberation.

"Therefore, however partial the uprising of the industrial workers may be, it contains within itself a universal soul; however universal a political uprising may be, it conceals even in its most grandiose form a narrow-minded spirit." (23)

If this can be considered as a critique of blanquism, it is all the more a powerful blow at Proudhon, whose shabby thought discovered a day when the working class did not have political ability, thus it could not govern. His refusal, as with the other anarchists, correctly to envisage the economic, then the trade union struggle. Marx continued:

"We have already seen that a social revolution is found to have the point of view of the whole, because - even if it were to occur in only one factory district - it represents man's protest against a dehumanized life, because it starts out from the point of view of a separate real individual, because the community, against the separation of which from himself the individual reacts, is man's true community, human nature." (24)

The proletariat tends to oppose its own Gemeinwesen, the human being, to the capitalist one, the oppressive state. It has to expropriate this being to realize this real opposition. It can only do so if it organizes in a party. This is the representation of its being, its prefiguration. The whole life of the class, thus the party, is dominated by the movement for the appropriation of

this being. Here the consciousness of the mission of the proletariat is expressed specifically as the appropriation of human nature.

## ***The Revolution and the States***

The discovery of the direction of the movement of human society, the movement towards communist society, is concomitant with that of the rediscovery of man, thus the simultaneous manifestation of the need to appropriate the latter's nature. All that defined the programme: Marx characterized the bourgeois revolution to specify this:

"The political soul of revolution, on the other hand, consists in the tendency of classes having no political influence to abolish their isolation from statehood and rule." (25)

The bourgeoisie possessed means of production in feudal society which gave it a power unrecognized by the state. Hence the need to be separated from the *Gemeinwesen* no longer. That is why the bourgeoisie demanded the dissolution of the different estates (henceforth there would only be people), because their existence was the legal expression of its actual estrangement. It pronounced that all social layers would participate in the state. In fact only owners would participate (cf. The different constitutions and analyses of them by Marx). Hence the wish of the bourgeoisie for all to have property - its Utopian character - which assured equality among individuals but also gave 'self-consciousness' to each individual. Basically



then, the bourgeoisie realized a political revolution. We proletarians cannot be satisfied with such a revolution because its point of view is:

"that of the state, of an abstract whole, which exists only through separation from real life, and which is inconceivable without the organized contradiction between the universal - idea of man and the individual existence of man." (26)

Therefore the proletariat had to conquer power but it must not struggle for a so-called more progressive form against another. It does so when it struggles for one side of the bourgeoisie against another (democracy against fascism). Its action must be external. The proletariat has to abolish the opposition between the individual and the species to make the revolution, the contradiction on which the present state rests. (While there are individuals there is the problem of their organization in society and this exists in the relation of their organization to the needs of the human species.) The proletariat must not make a revolution with a political aim because this:

"organizes a ruling stratum in society at the expense of society itself". (27)

Then, before going into the characterization of the proletarian revolution, he stated:

"Every revolution overthrows the old power and to that extent it is "political." (28)

The bourgeois revolution is thus a social revolution while it dissolves old society, and political when it destroys the old political power, but in definitely strengthening its own political power (at least it hopes to do so) it creates only a political revolution. Because the bourgeoisie had to use a political organization to establish its social organization which is inseparable from the former: why? Because the bourgeoisie made a revolution that wished to create an abstract human, the individual separated from nature and his own species, because it wanted to liberate men from the old feudal relations (dependence of men on each other and on nature). The problem was to define what would be the relations between the new men. That is why the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the citizen were formulated and which were only realized when the revolution entered its practical bourgeois terrain, when it lost the hope of really liberating humanity (after having destroyed the movements like the Sans-Culottes, cf. *The Holy Family*). For Marxism, on the other hand, man is the human species; social man has a human link with the species and a human link with nature (domination of it). Clearly the proletarian state cannot be a special organ regulated by clearly formulated rules, by whatever right, but will be the human being.

"But socialism cannot be realized without a revolution. It needs this political act insofar as it needs destruction and dissolution, But where its organizing activity begins, where its proper object, its soul, comes to the fore - there socialism throws off the political cloak."(29)

## ***The Proletarian Parties***

Marx's later work was to study how to realize that. That is why he went into a specific study of society and indicated the main feature of its transformation: property of the species, destruction of exchange etc... He stated all that in the Manifesto then, about the Commune, in *The Civil War in France* (the question of the destruction of the bourgeois state and means to limit careerism among other things).

The party thus represents the *Gemeinwesen*. It cannot be defined by bureaucratic rules, but only by its existence, and the party's existence is its programme, the prefiguration of communist society, of the liberated and conscious human species.

The corollary is that the revolution is not a question of forms of organization. It depends on the programme. Only one proved, that the party form is the one most suited to represent and to defend the programme. The organizational rules in this case are not adopted from bourgeois society, but derive from the vision of future society, as we shall show.

Marx derived the originality of the party from the proletariat's struggle. From the start the proletariat manifested itself as a new *Gemeinwesen*, it manifested the goal it tended to - a society without private property but with property of the species instead:

"...the proletariat at once, in a striking, sharp, unrestrained, and powerful manner, proclaims its opposition to the society of

private property. The Silesian uprising begins precisely with what the French and English workers' uprisings end, with consciousness of the nature of the proletariat. The action itself "bears the stamp of this superior character, not only machines, these rivals of the workers, are destroyed, but also ledgers, the titles to property, and while all other movements -were aimed primarily only against the owner of the industrial enterprise, the visible enemy, this movement is at the same time directed against the banker, the hidden enemy, finally, not a single English workers' uprising was carried out with such courage, thought and endurance.

"...it is enough to compare these gigantic infant shoes of the proletariat with the dwarfish, worn-out political shoes of the German bourgeoisie, and one is bound to prophesy that the German Cinderella(c) will one day have the figure of an athlete. It has to be admitted that the German proletariat is the theoretician of the European proletariat, just as the English proletariat is its economist, and the French proletariat its politician."(30)

In all these cases it was the struggle of proletarians which was the critique of the different aspects of human activity. Knowledge does not come to us directly from the bourgeoisie as some wish us to say. It comes from the struggle of our class. It is not a particular sphere of our activity which arrives passively from the opposing class, it is something moving and impassioned which has been taken from its class enemy by the proletariat. The young Marx was completely correct in writing that the ideas of communism:

"..which have conquered our intellect and taken possession of our minds, ideas to which reason has fettered our conscience, are chains from which one cannot free oneself without a broken heart: they are demons which human beings can vanquish only by submitting to them."(31)

Marx had thus integrated three facts and retransmitted them to the proletariat in the form of theses forming the communist programme. This was therefore born of struggle and it is the impersonal force above generations, Marx and Engels were the substrate of the first universal consciousness and transmitted it to us. Marx made clear from the start that the programme was not an individual's product. That coincides with what we have often said, that the revolution will be anonymous or will not be.

But this goal, this liberation, is precisely the one that society tends towards as the liberation of the proletariat is the liberation of humanity, a constant affirmation of Marxism. The programme born in the struggle could only be affirmed by it. That leads us on to considering the conditions for the struggle against capital, thus the conditions for the link between the proletarians and the programme. We have to separate the periods of revolution and counter-revolution. The proletarians, only support their mission when they have no reserves (let us integrate that into the dynamic of society, into the class struggle: can capitalism assure a reserve for the proletariat, give it security? see *The Holy Family*. All that is related to the problem of the crisis and the different cases that can occur are explained in the Rome Theses (1922).(32))

An important characteristic of the party is derived from that, from the fact that it is the prefiguration of the person and communist society, it is the mediating base of all knowledge for the proletarian, i.e. for the person refusing the bourgeois *Gemeinwesen* and accepting the proletarian one. The knowledge of the party integrates all that of past centuries (religion, art, philosophy, science). Marxism is not only a scientific theory (among so many others!), but incorporates science and uses its revolutionary arms of foresight and transformation to achieve the goal revolution. The party is an organ of foresight, if not, it is discredited.

"The middle class party in Prussia discredited itself and brought on its present misery chiefly because it seriously believed that with the 'new era' power, by the grace of the Prince Regent, had fallen into its lap. But the workers' party will discredit itself far more if it imagines that in the Bismark era or any other Prussian era the golden apples will drop into its mouth by the grace of the king. That disappointment will follow Lassalle's hapless illusion that a Prussian Government would carry out a socialist intervention(d) is beyond doubt. The logic of things will tell. But the honour of the workers' party demands that it should reject such illusions even before their hollowness is exposed by experience(e)."

Why that? Because:

"The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing." (33)

This is the essential characteristic of the proletariat.

## ***Party and Revolution***

We have thus specified the links between the programme and the class, i.e. between state and class. We must now state how the liberation movement is constituted by the revolution. What will the revolution's character be? It will be violent:

"For although industry makes a country rich, it also creates a class of unpropertied, absolutely poor people, a class which lives from hand to mouth, which multiplies rapidly, and which cannot afterwards be abolished, because it can never acquire stable possession of property, and a third, almost a half, of all English people belong to this class. The slightest stagnation in trade deprives a considerable part of this class of their bread, then such a situation occurs, what is there left for these people to do but revolt? By its numbers, this class has become the most powerful in England, and woe betides the wealthy Englishmen when it becomes conscious of this fact. "So far it is not conscious of the fact. The English proletariat is only just becoming aware of his power, and the fruits of this awareness were the disturbances of last summer. The nature of these disturbances was quite misunderstood on the Continent. At any rate, people wondered whether the matter might not take a serious turn. But there was no question of that for anyone who saw the events on the spot. In the first place, the whole thing was based on an illusion; because a few factory owners wanted to reduce wages, all the workers in the cotton, coal, and iron areas thought that their position was endangered, which was not the case at all. Moreover, the whole affair was unprepared,

unorganized and without leadership. The strikers had no definite aim, still less were they united on the nature and method of the action to be taken. Hence, at the slightest resistance on the part of the authorities they became irresolute and unable to overcome their respect for the law. When the Chartists took over the leadership of the movement and proclaimed the People's Charter to the assembled crowds: it was already too late. The only guiding idea vaguely present in the minds of the workers, and of the Chartists as well, with whom it had, in effect, originated, was that of revolution by legal means - in itself a contradiction, a practical impossibility - in their efforts to achieve which they failed. The very first measure jointly undertaken by all - stopping the factories - was forcible and illegal. In view of the inconsistent character of the whole of the undertaking, it would have been suppressed at the very outset if the administration, for whom it came as a complete surprise, had not been equally irresolute and resource less. Nevertheless, insignificant military and police forces sufficed to hold the people in check. In Manchester one saw thousands of workers trapped in the squares by four or five dragoons, each of whom blocked one of the exits. The "legal revolution" had paralysed everything. Thus the whole thing fizzled out; every worker returned to work as soon as his savings were used up and he had no more to eat. However, the dispossessed have gained something useful from these events: the realization that a revolution by peaceful means is impossible and that only a forcible abolition of the existing unnatural conditions, a radical overthrow of the nobility and industrial aristocracy, can improve the material position of the



proletarians. They are still held back from this violent revolution by the Englishman's inherent respect for the law; but in view of England's position described above there cannot fall to be a general lack of food among the workers before long, and then fear of death from starvation will be stronger than fear of the law. This revolution is inevitable for England, but as in everything that happens there, it will be interests and not principles that will begin and carry through the revolution; principles can only develop from interests, that is to say, the revolution will be social, not political." (34)

Here Engels anticipated Marx's conclusions in the Paris Vorwarts articles. He also described magnificently the proletariat without the party. Unfortunately the English proletariat was unable to separate itself from the bourgeois *Gemeinwesen*. On the contrary, a kind of alliance between the two classes came into existence to exploit the world.

"It is well known that in England parties coincide with social ranks and classes; that the Tories are identical with the aristocracy and the bigoted, strictly orthodox section of the Church of England; that the Whigs consist of manufacturers, merchants and dissenters, of the upper middle class as a whole; that the lower middle class constitute the so-called "radicals", and that, finally, Chartism has its strength in the working men, the proletarians. Socialism does not form a closed political party, but on the whole it derives its supporters from the lower middle class and the proletarians. Thus, in England, the remarkable fact is seen that the lower the position of a class in

society, the more "uneducated" it is in the usual sense of the word, the more closely it is connected with progress, and the greater is its future. In general, this is a feature of every revolutionary epoch, as was seen in particular in the religious revolution of which the outcome was Christianity: "blessed are the poor", "the wisdom of this world is foolishness", etc. But this portent of a great revolution has probably never been so clearly expressed and so sharply delineated as now in England. In Germany, the movement proceeds from the class which is not only educated but even learned..." (35)

Thus is answered the famous anarchizing question, have the masses to be educated to organize the revolution?

Resulting from what we have just written is that the proletariat only exists when it is revolutionary, when it has its aim and its programme. It opposes its state, the human being, to bourgeois society. Otherwise it is debased and its aim is bourgeois. It becomes something of this society. Then it no longer has life as its life is revolution (cf. The above quotes). That is why the Communist Manifesto states:

"Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes

generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class." (36)

Class, party, programme, and revolution, all that is specified. The class does not act and thus does not exist outside what is formed as the party, characterized its programme (which is its aim). The party can only realize its mission through a revolution.

Marx and Engels did not content themselves with an 'intuition', they showed the reality of the programme. Every time that the question of revolutionary struggle was not central to their activity they returned to their 'theoretical studies' i.e. to specify the programme. They discovered the general law, the overall law, and after specified the particular ones. These studies were not only an enrichment, but also a potential reinforcement. They performed then while in contact with the proletarian struggles question of the state and the commune (cf. Lenin's explanation in *State and Revolution*). These studies allowed the specification of the description of communist society and so the modes for attaining it too - by an extrapolation into the past - they specified the evolution of human society: indications of a society with no class struggle (primitive communism), an extrapolation verified during the publication of Morgan's works (thus losing the nature of an extrapolation), well used by Engels and Marx. It is thus that one views the latter's work on capital. One can state that there are three essential moments here: that of capital's birth, that of fully developed capital, and, finally, the one of communist society. To unveil the historical movement in its real becoming, Marx opposed them without

noting that he went from one to the other. This is why it was so easy for Stalinists to theorize that Capital gave no indication of communist society.

### ***The Tormented Cycle of the World Party***

As an historical product, the programme could only "be born in the proletarian struggle. Marx and Engels had to reveal it to the working class and humanity in 1848 with the *Communist Manifesto*. They had to explain it clearly in the IWMA rules. Now it is a question of how it is imposed, why the proletariat abandons it in certain periods, what are the conditions for its rediscovery? This is the question of the formation of the party, the question of its reconstruction resolved at the Naples and Rome meetings of 1951.(37)

The first phase of the workers' movement was the sectarian phase:

"The first phase in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is marked by sectarianism. This is because the proletariat has not yet reached the stage of being sufficiently developed to act as a class. Individual thinkers provide a critique of social antagonisms, and put forward fantastic solutions which the mass of workers can only accept, pass on, and put into practice. By their very nature, the sects established by these initiators are abstentionist, strangers to all genuine action, to politics, to strikes, to coalitions, in brief, to any unified movement. The mass of the proletariat always remains unmoved by, if not hostile to, their propaganda. The workers of

Paris and Lyons did not want the Saint-Simonians, Fourierists or Icarians, any more than the Chartists and trade-unionists of England wanted the Owenists. All these sects, though at first they provided an impetus to the movement, become an obstacle to it once it has moved further forward; they then become reactionary, as witness the sects in France and England, and more recently the Lassalleans in Germany who, having for years hampered the organization of the proletariat, have finally become nothing less than tools of the police. In fact, we have here the proletarian movement still in its infancy, comparable perhaps to the time when astrology and alchemy were the infancy of science. For the founding of the International to become a possibility, the proletariat had to develop further. "In comparison with the fantastic and mutually antagonistic organizations of the sects, the International is the real and militant organization of the proletarian class in every country, linked together in common struggle against the capitalists, the landowners, and their class power organized in the state." (38)

All this period corresponded to that of the post 1815 counter-revolution and saw the greatest development of secret societies. This is why the Communist Manifesto states:

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims."(39)  
We shall return to this question with the study of blanquism which is simultaneously that of the link of a minority to the mass. For the programme to be defended by an organization, the movement had to supersede the stage indicated. Then

there is the question of imposing it. This is why Marx and Engels fought inch by inch in the IWMA to make the programme triumph. Let us recall Marx's letter to Bolte, the history of the IWMA was that of a struggle between the London General Council and the national sections (cf. p.1 above). That is, the party acted inside the proletarian organization and, at the 1871 London Conference, the party-programme won out:

"Considering the following passage of the preamble to the Rules: 'The economical emancipation of the working classes is the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means:

That the *Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association* (1864) states: 'The lords of land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defence and perpetuation of their economical monopolies. So far from promoting, they will continue to lay every possible impediment in the way of the emancipation of labour ... To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes';

"That the Congress of Lausanne (1867) had passed this resolution 'The social emancipation of the workmen is inseparable from their political emancipation';

"That the declaration of the General Council relative to the pretended plot of the French Internationalists on the eve of the plebiscite (1870) says; 'Certainly by the tenor of our Statutes, all our branches in England, on the Continent, and in America have

the special mission not only to serve as centres for the militant organization of the working class, but also to support, in their respective countries, every political movement lending towards the accomplishment of our ultimate end - the economical emancipation of the working class';

"That false translations of the original Statutes have given rise to various interpretations which were mischievous to the development and action of the International working Men's Association;

"In presence of an unbridled reaction which violently crushes every effort at emancipation on the part of the working men, and pretends to maintain by brute force the distinction of classes and the political domination of the propertied classes resulting from it;

"Considering, that against this collective power of the propertied classes 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 this 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;

"That the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists -

"The Conference recalls to the members of the International:

"That in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united." (40)

Also, the creation of the First International, just as that of the Second (both products of the proletarian struggle) was also the attempt to prevent the movement from falling into the hands of the anarchists and reformists. The Third International too was established in the midst of revolutionary struggle.

To understand this one must envisage two points:

1. Link between the organization-party and the programme-party.
2. What situations and moments favour the foundation of the party?

1. Marx specified these elements in his letter to Freiligrath (41):

"Let me state to begin with, that the League had been dissolved, at my instance, in November 1852, I never again belonged, and do not now belong, to any secret or public society; that therefore the Party in this wholly ephemeral sense ceased to exist for me eight years ago."

That is, the party as a group of people (organization). The link with point 2 takes place through the intermediary of this question; why dissolve this organization? Marx replied by explaining that this is a phase of retreat, a counter-revolutionary phase.



We ought to link this reply organically to the statements at the Naples (1951) meeting on Marxism as theory of the counter-revolution and on the capitalist revolutionary nature of Russia. In this second study we stated that our movement had already known other periods of counter-revolution, thus we should not make the Russian question central to our activities as this would sooner or later result in a contingent vision.

In these periods the party is reduced to those comrades who have, in one way or another, refused the victory of the enemy class which many militants theorize in wishing to "break from the situation" by doing something at any price. History, for Marx and Engels, was only the continual transformation of human nature. A period of retreat cannot create good militants. Those remaining have to be protected from this world's corruption, which is not easy:

"Can one escape dirt in ordinary bourgeois intercourse or trade? Precisely there it has its natural abode. ... "The honest villainy or villainous honesty of solvent morality I do not set one iota higher than the irrespectable villainy by which neither the first Christian communities, nor the Jacobin Club, nor our erstwhile 'League' was entirely unbesmirched. The only thing is that in bourgeois intercourse one becomes accustomed to being dead to all sense of respectable villainy or villainous respectability." (42)

No Utopia about man, so no activism, *cordon sanitaire* around the party as was clarified in a *sul filo del tempo*.

This retreats from action, the thought out will to refuse action on the bourgeois field when that of the autonomous proletariat is no longer possible caused Marx to be "several times bitterly attacked, if not by name then by clear allusion, for this "inactivity"".(43) As we have frequently stated; music of the counter-revolution, words of yesterday. Today it is the same. Our "inactivity" is attacked because we refuse to leap into the whirlpool of bourgeois corruption, our action is incomprehensible to them.

### ***Why the Party never disappeared***

Marx specified the life of the party after stating this:

"The 'League', like the Societe des Saisons in Paris(f) and like a hundred other societies, was only an episode in the history of the party, which is growing everywhere spontaneously (naturwuchsig) from the soil of modern society." (44)

The formation of the organization is a product of the antagonisms of this society. If the class has been beaten, if its organ of struggle has lost its revolutionary character by rejecting the programme, or if it has been destroyed during an armed struggle, a new organization will reappear spontaneously, the social contracts will lead to an explosion on the historical scene; the party will reappear.

The party is not just this differential notion then, this organization whose life somehow depends on the class struggle. What is the integral notion?

"I have also tried to clear up a misunderstanding that when I refer to the party I mean an organization which died eight years ago, or an editorial board which broke up twelve years ago. When I refer to the party I do so in an historical sense." (45)

i.e. the prefiguration of future society, prefiguration of future man, the human being which is the real *Gemeinwesen* of man.

It is the attachment to this being which appears to be negated in the periods of counter-revolution (just as the revolution now seems to be a Utopia to everyone) that allows us to resist. The struggle to remain in this position is our activity, Marx said at the Central Committee meeting of the Communist league (15.9.1850)(46):

"Schapper has misunderstood my motion. As soon as the motion is accepted we will separate, the two districts will separate, and the people involved will have no further connection with each other. They will be in the same league, however, and under the same Central Committee. You will even retain the great mass of the League membership. As far as personal sacrifices are concerned, I have made as many as anyone else, but they have been for the class and not for individual people. As for enthusiasm, there is not much enthusiasm involved in belonging to a party which you believe will become the government. I have always resisted the momentary opinion of the proletariat. We are devoted to a party which would do best not to assume power just now. ... Louis Blanc provides the best example of what happens when power is assumed prematurely."

More generally, this question is linked, to that of knowing under what conditions one can undertake an action. What is the link between this and consciousness. We shall elaborate on this, but first let us remark that the act of uselessly dissipating energy in periods of retreat, mortgaging the historical encounter between the proletarian organization and its integral programme.

"Such events are however maturing in Russia where the vanguard of the revolution will engage in battle. This and its inevitable impact on Germany is what one must in our opinion wait for, and then will come the time of a grand demonstration and the establishment of an official, formal international(g) which simply can no longer be a mere propaganda society but only a society for action. We are therefore decidedly of the opinion that such an excellent means of combat should not be weakened by wearing it away and using it up at a time when things are still comparatively quiet, when we are only on the even of the revolution."(47)

All Marxists agree on this last point. One only has to recall Lenin's and the Bolshevik Party's struggle, that of Trotsky, and the whole work of the left to clarify that, for us, insurrection is an art.

What occurs in periods of revolution, as in those of retreat, is the continuity of our being, the affirmation of our 'programme-party' in its historical sense.

## ***Rejection of Anarchism to save the Programme***

Marx and Engels struggled in the IWMA to make the programme (not their personal ideology, the narrow vision of the anarchists and all our enemies) victorious. The sticking point was not the final vision; everyone wanted communism, even the bourgeoisie (cf. Lenin on this), but on the means for attaining it, on the 'tool' for the liberation: the dictatorship of the proletariat. The support for this characterizes Marxists (letter to 'unreadable'). Let us recall the movement: the class acts only when it constitutes itself in the party representing its interests and thus, owing to this class' characteristics, those of all humanity. The party seizes power, destroys the bourgeois state, sets itself up as ruling class, thus as the state which now no longer has a political, but a social function, hence arriving at the human nature which is the real Gemeinwesen of man. The destruction of classes is the *conditio sine qua non*. This is the basic rub with Bakunin.

"We read in article 2: 'It (the Alliance) desires above all the political, economic and social equalization of classes'. "The equalization of classes, if taken literally, amounts to the harmony between capital and labour, which is precisely what bourgeois socialists so unfortunately preach. It is not the equalization of classes, a logical impossibility and therefore incapable of achievement, but on the contrary the abolition of classes which is the true secret of the proletarian movement,

and the prime object of the International Working Men's Association." (46)

This secret is maintained in the Party which is the dissolution of all enigmas, thus all antagonisms engendered in class society.

"(The Circular of the Jura Federation) states that, according to the Statutes and the decisions of the founding congress, the International is nothing other than "a free federation of autonomous" (self-continuing) "sections" and that the emancipation of the workers is their own task, "without any leading authority, even resulting from free consent" "Accordingly the General Council would only be "a mere statistical and correspondence bureau". This original foundation would rapidly be falsified by the right given to the General Council to strengthen itself with the help of new members and more still by the Basle Congress resolution which gave the General Council the right to suspend any section until the next congress and to regulate provisionally the disputes until the pronouncement of the Congress. Thus one would have given the General Council a dangerous power; the free union of autonomous sections would be transformed into a hierarchical and authoritarian organization of "disciplined sections" so much so that the sections would be entirely in the hands of the General Council which could refuse, at will, admissions and suspend their activities" "To us German readers who know only too well the value of an organization able to defend itself, all this will seem very startling.... "But the struggle for the emancipation of the working class is for Bakunin and his associates merely subterfuge: the true object is completely different. "The future society must be none other than the

generalization of the organization which the International will assume. We must thus be anxious for this organization to approach our ideal as far as possible... The International, the seed of the future human society(h), must from now on be a faithful copy of our principles of liberty and federation and must thrust from its ranks any principle tending to dictatorship and authority."

"We Germans are decried for our mysticism, but we are very far from attaining such mysticism. The International, a model for future society with no more Versaillard firing-squads, military courts, permanent armies, interception of letters, Brunswick criminal trials! Just now, when we have to fight for our own skins with tooth and nail, the proletariat must not organize for the necessities of its struggle which is imposed on it every hour and every day, but according to the ideas that some ghosts make of a vague future society! Let us depict what would become of our German organization if we were to organize according to this model.... "If Stieber and all his associates, if the entire Black Cabinet, if, on command, Prussian officers enter the social democratic organization so as to destroy it, the committee, or rather the statistical and correspondence bureau must absolutely not defend itself for that would be to introduce a hierarchical and authoritarian society and, most of all, no disciplined sections! yes, no party discipline, no centralization of forces, in a word, no arms with which to fight! In short, where will we go with such an organization? To the lax and rampant organization of the first Christians, to the slaves who accepted with thanks each kick and who through flattery, it is true, furnished victory to their

religion three centuries later. This is a method of revolution that the proletariat most certainly will not imitate!"(49)

## ***The Different Phases in the Life of the Party***

We can now specify the life of the party.

1 . Phase of sects.

2 . Development of the party in 1840-8.

3 . Period of retreat beginning in 1850. It was preferable to dissolve the league because of what we have just said and because the moment for the party to seize power had not then arrived. The class had been beaten.

"If, then, we have been beaten, we have nothing else to do but to begin again from the beginning. And, fortunately, the probably very short interval of rest which is allowed us between the close of the first and the beginning of the second act of the movement, gives us time for a very necessary piece of work: the study of the causes that necessitated both the latter outbreak and its defeat, causes that are not to be sought for in the accidental efforts, talents, faults, errors, or treacheries of some of the leaders, but in the general social state and conditions of existence of each of the convulsed nations." (50)

This is also true for the involution that manifested itself in 1926; hence Trotsky's error in believing that one could reconstruct an international. This involution revealed to us all the errors revealed by Engels. Instead of a logical study and a



balance sheet which would have allowed for the preparation for another revolutionary rise, one tried, to find the cause of the defeat in the betrayals of leaders, Stalin's crimes, the passivity of the masses, the incorrect application of slogans (cf. e.g. Trotsky's criticism of the German movement of the 1930's). Only we posed the problem correctly and we stated that we have been beaten but...

4 . Reconstruction of the movement which accelerated with the 1857 crisis. Marx and Engels studied fundamentally the reasons for the defeat. Their leaving the league did not mean their acceptance of the defeat, on the contrary, they tried to find out if the revolution could not break out elsewhere, in India or China, and come to radicalize the proletariat's struggle in the West. Lenin held the same position, which is also ours.

1864: foundation of the IWMA which took place in a period of rising of the proletarian movement, only the conditions were not altogether favourable. However, the proletariat tended to supercede sectarianism and supported this international organization. Also there was the anarchist danger, for if the movement were to be taken over by anarchists, it would run the risk simply of being reduced to lower types of struggle. This is why Marx and Engels believed the foundation of the IWMA to be necessary.

1871: the proletariat took power. The characteristics of the Commune will be analysed in a study of the French workers' movement and on the military question. In any case, the class was beaten internationally.

In the new period after 1871, as in that after 1850, action was above all theoretical work. In 1851 Engels wrote to Marx:

"What use will be the entire gossip and drivel of the whole of the émigré rabble made at your expense when you will reply to it with your Economy?" (51)

On November 24th, 1871, Marx wrote to De Paepe:

"I have already told you in London that I have often asked myself whether the time has come for me to withdraw from the General Council. The more the association develops, the more time is lost, and finally I do have to complete Capital once and for all." (52)

The workers had to be given their means of struggle.

5 . Marx drew up a fresh balance sheet in 1871 and specified the conditions for struggle. He specified the link between human will and action, that the party-programme was produced at a given moment of the human struggle, that the proletarian, organization could only develop with a certain level of class struggle, i.e. the class had to gain its programme. Put another way, the party does not form by the direct will of men. It is recreated in determinate periods. It was a matter of knowing how the revolutionaries could prepare the best conditions for the return of the party onto the stage of history. All this was explained in Marx's speech of September 25th, 1871:

"...the great success which had hitherto crowned its (the IWMA's) efforts was due to circumstances over which the members themselves had no control. The foundation of the

International itself was the result of these circumstances, and by no means due to the efforts of the men engaged in it. It was not the work of any set of clever politicians; all the politicians in the world could not have created the situation and circumstances requisite for the success of the International. The International had not put forth any particular creed. Its task was to organize the forces of labour and link the various working men's movements and combine them. The circumstances which had given such a great development to the association were the conditions under which the work people were more and more oppressed throughout the world, and this was the secret of success.(...) But before such a change (socialism) could be effected a proletarian dictatorship would become necessary, and the first condition of that was a proletarian army. The working classes would have to conquer the right to emancipate themselves on the battlefield. The task of the International was to organize and combine the forces of labour for the coming struggle." (53)

6. 1871-1889: the period of the reconstruction of the movement which ended in the foundation of the Second International which was a little 'forced'? Actually it was supported above all by the possibilists and various reformists. Engels accepted its foundation to prevent the world movement from falling into their hands (cf. the Engels-Lafargue and the Marx-Engels-Sorge and others correspondence).

The programme underwent practical proof in 1889 and was reinforced. The Commune of 1871 had allowed the

specification of the theory of the state. The cycle of the proletarian movement was thus terminated; no social phenomenon could again 'question' Marxism. There remained only the hypothesis of a non-catastrophic evolution of society, thus of a peaceful revolution. The 1914 war showed the absurdity of all that.

The reformist vision could only be imposed because of the development of imperialism which created contradictions after a while from the colonized countries. Only the groups remaining on the basis of the international programme assured the continuity of the human being = party-programme.

### ***The Last Counter-revolutionary Storm***

Tactical errors prevented the proletariat's reorganization as the world communist party. These were the errors of the united front and too 'forced' a vision which prevented the Russian proletariat from receiving the aid of the world proletariat. This tactic somehow recognized the defeat of the western proletariat and theorized it. The theory of the counter-revolution grafted itself onto these errors. Here we reach the most difficult, longest, and most painful stage of the development of the workers' movement. The counter-revolution triumphed in the guise of revolution. To be able to get the better of the latter, it was insufficient to get onto the field of the 'Russian leaders' (Trotsky's error). One cannot consider the Russian question to be central. The validity of Marxism in no way depends on the success or failure of the Russian revolution because Marxism had been shown to be

correct in each of its parts. Thus success of the Russian revolution depended solely on the world-wide victory of the proletariat. Now, as has been shown many times, the victory of socialism in Russia depended on the seizure of power by the proletariat in the West. If there has to be verification, one has to find it in our western zone.

The continuity was not destroyed. The Left defended the programme. It showed the facts of it in all their purity on all their levels, theoretical, practical, tactical. Better still, it made a new summation of all the separated elements of Marxism, which had not been ordered organically after the struggle, in an ensemble of theses which did not pretend to have discerned something new, but had ordered things for a more effective struggle. These were the *Rome Theses* (1922) and the *Lyon Theses* (1926)(i) and all the works on the party.

The proletariat abandons its programme in periods of defeat. This programme is only defended by a weak minority. Only the programme-party always emerges reinforced by the struggle. The struggle from 1926 to today proves that fully.

This struggle takes place with providing evidence and demasking critically far greater than that the Russians were led to do practically. It consists in showing how they were led to create new categories to include reality in their general positions. We know that the bases for the foundation of the world communist party will only exist after the critical demasking is over: the recognition. We alone also know that the proletariat has to draw this out in struggle. It will thus

rediscover its programme which is presently denatured and prostituted. We can show our task by this following comparison: Jesus chased the moneylenders out of the Temple, we must chase away all those who sell their theoretical goods calling them Marxism. SO yet again invariance, i.e. the continuity of our human nature = party programme.

It is only by so envisaging the party that one can integrate the apparent opposition between the act of proclaiming the possibility of communist revolution in 1848 and stating in 1859 (which was already done differently in *The German Ideology*) that all social forms only disappear when they have exhausted their possibilities.

The communist revolution can shorten the transitory capitalist phase from the moment when there is a development of the productive forces that engenders a class able to appropriate the human nature. Henceforth communism is possible, laying that is not to delude oneself on the capacity for the ruling class to resist which can still 'realize something' which hinders the liberation movement because it provokes the rise of opportunism in the proletariat. Marx and Engels could prepare the troops for the retreat after the defeat by realizing all that. All other movements threw or throw all their forces into the battle and are completely destroyed. It is this dialectical vision that gave birth to our historical continuity (cf. on this question what may be called the anti-fatalism and anti-activism of the Lyon Theses of 1926).

In any case, now we have arrived at the point indicated by Marx when the social form had exhausted all its possibilities (at least for a large part of the world). We greet with joy the great movement of expropriation which develops on a world-wide scale because the greater that it grows, the greater the possibility of the reappropriation of the human nature, the more real communism is.

## ***FUNCTION OF THE PARTY FORM***

The function of the party derives from the struggle in contemporary society and from the description of communist society.

First, the organization of workers, organization of force and the use of violence.

"The political movement of the working class has as its ultimate object, of course, the conquest of political power for this class, and this naturally requires a previous organization of the working class developed up to a certain point and arising precisely from its economic struggles.

"On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class comes out as a class against the ruling classes and tries to coerce them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt in a particular factory or when in a particular trade to force a shorter working day out of individual capitalists by strikes, etc. is a purely economic movement. On the other hand, the movement to force through an eight hour etc. law, is a political movement. And in this way out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say, a movement of the class, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force. While these movements presuppose a certain degree of



previous organization, they are in turn equally a means for developing this organization.

"where the working class is not yet far enough advanced in its organization to undertake a decisive campaign against the collective power, i.e., the political power of the ruling classes, it must at any rate be trained, for this by continual agitation against this power and by a hostile attitude toward the policies of the ruling classes. Otherwise it remains a plaything in their hands..." (54)

The party thus allows the organization of the class. After it will become the subject of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"1. The aim of the association is the overthrow of all privileged classes and their subjugation to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will carry through the permanent revolution until the realization of communism, the ultimate form of organization of the human family. 2. Towards the realization of this goal the association will form a bond of solidarity between all tendencies of the revolutionary communist party, while, in accordance with the principle of republican brotherhood, it dispenses with all national restrictions." (55)

It is this dictatorship which allows the destruction of the bourgeois state and which impels the social formation (cf. Engels in Anti-Duhring). This dictatorship is historically necessary and thus 'free'. Here we have to say that we are not

for just any dictatorship and that this dictatorship is a means. We have to see against whom the dictatorship must be enforced, against what, in whose and in what name.

One can say from this point of view that only the reactionary dictatorships, which wish to maintain a class oppression, are authoritarian because they are rejected by man (being unnecessary to his development and because they absorb the *Gemeinwesen* to exploit it). The revolutionary dictatorship is not authoritarian because it is accepted by man as a liberation while this new *Gemeinwesen* will have an increasing tendency to identify itself with the human existence, and so disappears as a phenomenon outside people. Lenin said that the dictatorship of the proletariat was that of the immense majority over the minority, unlike that of the bourgeois class. Marx also showed in *Capital* that the latter also becomes evermore the dictatorship of capital, thus itself developing outside the class. During the revolutionary period, in fact, the revolutionary power of the bourgeoisie allowed the development of production by the destruction of the bonds linked with the existence of feudal society. Therefore capital and the capitalist are identical to begin with and the freedom of the one reflects on the freedom of the other. Afterwards, with the capitalist concentration together with the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, the capitalist tends to be separated from his having and he, who was capital's being, becomes its property. The capitalist as person disappears:

"If the crises demonstrate the incapacity for the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the

transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies (trusts) and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees." (56)

Freedom disappears or, more the case, it is merely that of capital. This becomes an impersonal force served by a bureaucracy (pathology of classes) which becomes the organization of the modern state, put another way, the state becomes state-capital with its bureaucratic administration. All the individuals in this society participate in capital; they receive a profit in proportion to what they invested.

The modern state has to make this operation, this equalization, respected. Hence the crying contradiction of our epoch: an ever more oppressive state and the demand by individuals for it to be even stronger, (the last French crisis linked to the Algerian war was the nth. demonstration of this). The bourgeois dictatorship has become a monstrous form alien to man, hindering the development of society which, as a whole, tends to communism. Capitalism itself tends to disappear (57).

The proletariat has to struggle against this dictatorship. The destruction of the latter is the suppression of sickness of men; the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat is its recognition by the appropriation of human nature. Thus the antitheses individual-state, individual-species, liberty-authority-necessity are dissolved.

The dictatorship of the proletariat was suggested to Marx by the events of the bourgeois revolution, by Babeuf, by the struggles of the French proletariat in its specific blanquist form (not to forget Flora Tristan) by that of the English and the German workers.

The workers express practically the theoretical need formulated by Marx in his critique of Hegel: might is right. They rejected all forms of struggle and aspired to a kind of power which would allow the foundation of a classless society. It is important to note that Marx always based himself on reality to establish his theory (cf. the same process on the question of the state and the lessons of the Commune).

From this flowed:

a. the party is a minority of the class.

b. unification of the proletariat internationally to take power.  
International character of the revolution and of communism:

"The importance of communism is not that it is a highly serious question of the time for France and England. Communism has a European importance..." (58)

The party has to unite the struggle and make it lose its limited character.

c. the class struggle is a war, so an army is needed. There is therefore the question of neutralizing certain social layers, the question of allies: one has to establish a base for regrowth in case of defeat.

We have, as Marx underlined several times, an ardent passion for man and his liberation, but it is not for that reason that we shall throw ourselves into the struggle. We must always try to dominate the strategy and the terrain of struggle. Our enemy will be assured sooner or later of the maintenance of order in an opposite case (cf. the anarchist and their precipitation). For us insurrection is an art.

### ***Characteristics of the Party of Tomorrow***

Given that the party is the prefiguration of communist society, it cannot adopt a mechanism, a life principle, an organization, linked to bourgeois society. It has to realize the destruction of this society.

1. Refusal of the democratic mechanism. Our position is: organic centralism.
2. Anti-individualism. The party realizes the anticipation of the social brain. All knowledge is mediated by the party as is all action. The militant does not have to seek the truth; this is afforded him by the party (truth in the social domain, in other fields one can come to it after the revolution and only then).

Tendency to realize social man.

3. Refusal of any form of mercantilism and careerism. The relationship between comrades, their manifestation, must be inspired by the comments by Marx on James Mill's book: all activity, all manifestation, must be the affirmation of human joy

by communication with the other and, here, with future society.

4. Abolition to social antagonisms linked to classes. There are only communist militants in the party. Practically this means the unity of the party around place of living and not place of work.

5. The party has to be the dissolution of the enigmas and must know itself to be so. It must present itself as the harbour for the proletarian, the place he affirms his human nature so that he is able to mobilise all his strength against the class enemy.

One must specify these characteristics because they make clearer the party's function; they allow one to have an integral view of it.

The party is this impersonal force above generations, it represents the human species, the human existence which has finally been found. It is the consciousness of the species. It can only manifest itself under certain conditions. In a revolutionary situation there can be the overturning of praxis which is the overthrow of all past and present human development. The party decides to seize power. The destruction of bourgeois society ends human prehistory. Then everything converges. It is the culminating point of the theory by the exact prediction of the favourable moment for action (insurrection is an art). The two phenomena are summed up, it is the consciousness of action which appeared, consciousness before action.

Marxism is a theory of human action, a theory of the production of consciousness. So it is also a reflection on this action, on this praxis, so it is consciousness of this action. It is thus produced consciousness. It is the absolute truth of this consciousness (Milan meeting in 1960). Consequently we can say that it is a guide to action (because it is the organical action of the proletariat, subject of history) a guide to human action leading to the liberation of man, towards his consciousness, towards communist society. It is the guide to human emancipation.

## ***Postface January 1974***

### ***From the Party-Community to the Human Community***

This text was published in 1961 as the 'Report of the internationalist groups in France' and was not the contribution of party militants because, at that time, the small organization originating in what is called the Italian left did not really see itself as a party on an international scale. In fact the text was the work of two people, myself and Roger Dangeville. It is an example of what Bordiga called a semi-finished work because it had not been fully edited. Originally it was to have been an expose for the Rome March 1961 meeting. Since I was unable to be there, I wrote a text, but, lacking the time, I resorted to a condensed presentation of some points (often only listed) to give an impression of the work's totality.

Due to its numerous aims, this text could only be dense and sometimes involved, often laconic, because I wished:

- to deal with the question of the party in specifying its different moments and especially to define the future party as it could be which was connected with the idea (to be demonstrated) that the party arose spontaneously, thus trying to supercede the spontaneity-consciousness opposition and above all that of



consciousness coming from outside and immanent consciousness, often reduced to spontaneity.

- to present the left in its originality, to divide it from Leninism and Trotskyism, to make a real break with the Third International.

- to lay the foundations of the anti-mediatism and anti-activism of the left, to augment the invariance of the theory of the proletariat.

- to approach the analysis of what I consider to be the fundamental relations that of the Gemeinwesen and the human being (etre humain).

It was Bordiga who wanted the text published. Once it had been printed, even in its imperfect, elliptic and, sometimes, defective style, the die was cast. One no longer needed to envisage its modification, but to consider the investigations that it contained. One had to go on from the sketches to exhaustive explanations. This did not happen throughout the party because, in fact, the text gave rise to an intense opposition inside the current of the left. The attempts to impose it were met with only a feeble echo, but it existed, which allowed a supercession of the whole question of the party. Thus there was a meeting in Marseille at the end of 1962 with a section dealing with 'The Three Internationals'. It was hoped to clarify historically the life of the class, and party as had been sketched in Origin and Function... This did not occur and did not supercede the level of generalities. The essential

arguments developed during this meeting were published in *Invariance* Serie I, n. 6 'La Revolution Communiste' chs. 1.2 'Les Lecons de 1'histoire du mouvement proletarien'.

The work on the democratic mystification began in 1962 and was approached at various party meetings from then on. It was also in the same perspective. Again there was but a weak echo. Only a few, including Bordiga, agreed that the job should be done. The theses in *Invariance* Serie I, n. 6 ch. 5 (see *The Democratic Mystification*) provide the essentials of this work. (N.B. the schemes are Bordiga's but not the commentaries underneath them.) Yet we did not define an important passage written in 1964 commenting on Marx's Contribution to the critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law*. (a preparatory work for the study of democracy). We do so here because it illustrates well our position then inside the organization.

"All other state forms are definite, distinct, particular forms of state. In democracy, the formal principle is at the same time the material principle. Only democracy, therefore, is the true unity of the general and the particular."(j)

"For there to be democracy on a large base, men have to be on an egalitarian basis: they must be reduced to approximately the same substance. The human species is unified by the action of capital, but atill object and not subject, hence the bourgeois limit to historical social development. The democracy form of organization can be useful for a humanity reaching this stage. Humanity tending to its unification can still have an external being, as a prisoner, alienated to an economic form. The society

tending to give it its real being (communism) cannot be democratic.

"The unification movement is constructed to the profit of an oppressive being. This oppressive moment, at the beginning of the domination of capital, still did not envisage itself because capital did not dominate in a real manner, but had to assure its hegemony, above all against the proletariat. Consequently it is the first aspect that matters: hence the utopians' illusions, then those of the reformists.

""In democracy the state as particular is merely particular; as general it is truly general, i.e. not something determinate in distinction from the other content."(k)"

"This is fully verified in present-day society. It is the limit. The state is the universal-concrete; it is society because society has conquered the state. It models the state in its image. Here again the limit, bourgeois society tends to destroy classes to make men slaves of capital. It tends to do the same as communism, only the latter has the vanishing of classes as supposing the sovereignty of man. The domination of the *Gemeinwesen*. The capitalist state can thus be the universal being, not of men, but of capital's slaves. "It is no longer true for the whole, for the basis! The question of the link between state and society is, mutatis mutandis, that of the link of the party and the class and, later, the whole of humanity. Capitalism tends to resolve the question by making the state a social force, society alienated to capital, which dominates men. We therefore have to specify this movement of unification

which supposes the parallel of the concentration of consciousness. Thus also as a corollary, the question of the link between the united masses and this consciousness, between the class and its social brain: the party. That is the great question asked by the philosophers (e.g. especially Hegel who posed it clearly and plainly in his philosophy of the state). There is the beginning of the reconciliation between the social and the political in bourgeois society. Beforehand it seemed that the political movement was independent of the other. Force still appeared to be in individual and not a social and economic fact. That is what Proudhon did not understand. His theory of violence was one of physical violence, as it could have been in primitive society. The strongest man could really dominate it. Now who can attack the system physically? It is this phenomenon of equalization which is fundamental. We are all kids faced with the impersonal power of capital.

"All the powers have been subjugated under a single one, economic force. Politics, as an element seemingly autonomous in function, was also subjugated. That is also the case with war. Men cannot wage war as in Napoleon's time. Capital in its metamorphosing engine of iron and steel imposes a given form of destruction and outside the fundamental consideration that before one waged war for enrichment, now for impoverishment to restart the productive machine at full-tilt. Machines and men produced in mad quantities had to be destroyed.

"So the characterization of the state when bourgeois society emerged from feudal society is completely true. First Marx made the following remark:

""In democracy the constitution, the law, the state itself, insofar as it is a political constitution, is only the self-determination of the people, and a particular content of the people."(l)"

""In the states of antiquity the political state makes up the content of the state to the exclusion of the other spheres. The modern state is a compromise between the political and the unpolitical state."(m)"

"This is the fundamental characteristic of a society where capital dominates formally, a period when it tends to use its political power to ensure its domination, to make it a social domination. The bourgeois revolution is a social revolution with a political aim. It also tends to assure its political domination by a social force. It is simultaneously the end of politics, the question of the relationship between men, their organization and domination, is resolved, by an external being: capital. So far as capital has not yet assured its material and real domination, there is an arrangement between the political and non-political states. There is also an arrangement between form and matter. Hence what seems paradoxical; democracy which ought to be realized for man is realized by excluding man. That inevitably happens while democracy supposes a domination, a dictatorship and a base as large as possible."

At the same time the study of the 'philosophical question' tended, to deal with the same theme, but differently. The following statement showed this amply:

"Philosophy appeared when primitive communism dissolved, so at the moment when the *Gemeinwesen* was secured by a class state. Philosophy =the theoretical attempt to reconcile antagonistic forces of the old society."

The most obvious proof of the non-acceptance of those various analyses, all having the central point of the rejection of democracy and the affirmation of the need for a new community lay in the debate on organization which became very acute in 1964. Then some comrades (some of whom later published *Rivoluzione comunista*, but this also applies for the small group publishing *Ottobre Rosso*) believe that the party ought to intervene more actively in the struggles which since 1962 (in Italy) had attained a certain importance. They saw the cause of the incapacity of the party to intervene in those struggles in its way of life, its organization. That is why they proposed the abandonment of organic centralism, actively supported since 1952, and its replacement with democratic centralism and they preached a new what is to be done?

Bordiga reacted strongly against this tendency and published 'Notes for the theses on the organization question' (Florence meeting 31.10. - 1.11.64.). These were accompanied by texts elaborating the definitive theses, fundamental texts suitable for showing the invariance of a position entitled 'Contribution of

our present post-war movement to the organization question'. Origin and Function... was included among them and the sections 'why the party never disappeared' and 'The bases of the future party were reproduced (cf. *il programma comunista* no. 1 1965). This meant that Bordiga still agreed with this text and implied that the comrades trying to continue the task undertaken with him were to carry out their researches. This is why I wrote to Bordiga in a letter dated 27.12.64.:

"The relation between the party and the community is also the question the material community created by capital as well as that of the mistake of the French (bourgeois) revolutionaries who wished to found a new community while capital was founding its own with its own development, will be studied later in work on the workers' movement. Only this aspect of the question is linked to the study of Capital, chapter 6 above all, and Marx's famous Urtext where he deals with this question."

The consideration followed of the party-individual relation and the critique of the affirmation of the negation of the individual ending finally in the negation of the human being himself.

The allusion to the material community of capital is explained by the fact that the study of the Sixth Chapter of 'Capital' was undertaken at the same time. It was due to this study that the explanation of the development of the community assumed a more adequate basis. In a letter dated 11.5.64. sent to Dangeville and Bordiga, I raised these points:

"The meaning of the demonstration is this when the human communities are destroyed by the action of economic forces,

use value loses its importance, usefulness of the product disappears to be replaced by exchange value. Production was for man in primitive society; after it was for wealth. The movement of the expropriation of man, of his separation from the *Gemeinwesen*, is accompanied by the increasing autonomization of exchange value. Here Marx analysed the passage to capital as the passage to the complete autonomization of exchange value.

"Money which results and autonomizes itself (verselbstständigte) from circulation, which perpetuates and valorizes (reproduces) itself, is capital. Money has lost its fixedness (Starrheit) in capital and has become a process from being a palpable thing." (Urtext in *Grundrisse* (Berlin-E.) p. 937)"

"Marx also showed how capital became an impersonal being. It is also important to note that *Capital Vol. II* begins with the metamorphosis of capital. It is no longer a matter of the commodity circulation process which is formal (see above); it is a question of the metamorphosis of the same being.

"...then he indicates that capital is the result of a long process and he makes the essential remark: "One sees at this determined point in what way the dialectical form of exposition is correct only if one knows its limitations (Grenzen)." (p.945)"

"That is, one has to know the pre-capitalist forms of production and communism. Thus Marx described communism and, more immediately, the ultimate forms of capitalism. It is just these



forms that we shall try to evidence in trying to see how commodity-capital presents itself.

"Capital absorbs the real non-capital's labour. To do this labour has to lose its concrete character, its use value for man, and become use value for capital; all human labour has thus to become abstract. Here we find again in another form what Marx said in his critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state.

"...Capital is the negation of value because it is its own affirmation. It is its valorization, its reproduction on an ever increasing scale. It is the negation of value but the affirmation of value that has achieved autonomy: capital. A value which is no longer linked to whatever use, if it is not a valorization and so the only use value interesting for capital, is labour. But here yet again labour has lost its character as use value for man. It is for capital (cf. in the same order of ideas the 1844 Manuscripts where Marx explains what labour under the rule of capital is: wage labour.)

"Thus labour is originally an activity of man allowing him to exploit the land. All the later social forms interpose an intermediary between land and man. Capital does more, it makes man a source of wealth, it inverts the phenomenon. Man is like the ancient land from which all products necessary for life are taken. Capital draws life from that, exploits it just as man exploits an iron ore mine. This is therefore as appearance of an impersonal being that capital originates.

""They (i.e. individuals) do not have any relations between themselves from the point of view of organic social metabolism, which develops in circulation, without this objective mediation (i.e. commodities). This exists solely as reified (*sachlich*) one for the other, something which is finally developed solely in the money relation, where their common being (*Gemeinwesen*) appears as an external and so accidental thing above everyone. The fact that the social ensemble which appears through the clash of independent individuals, at the same time as a material (*sachliche*) necessity and as an external bond to them, it represents exactly their independence for which social existence and so a necessity but it is only a means, to appear to individuals themselves as something external, in money as something palpable.(...) In as much as they are not subsumed in a natural community nor, on the other hand, consciously subsume elements of a community, a community under them, this must be by comparison with them, by comparison with independent subjects as something reified (*sachliches*), likewise independent, external, and accidental. This is just the condition that they as private, independent persons remain at the same time in a social ensemble." (pp. 908-9)" "Now this is what I believe can be deduced from this passage: the human community is destroyed by the action of private property, exchange, division of labour and simple circulation.

"But simple circulation cannot lead to the reconstruction of a material community because there is no liberation of man, no separation from his immediate community mediated by the

land, feudal hierarchy, or even by money. Man has to be circulated as a commodity (labour power) for there to be the birth of autonomous exchange value (capital) which would be able to presuppose the whole of the social phenomenon. Capital becoming the material *Gemeinwesen* of man, but an enslaved, abstract man (see in parallel the critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state).

"Hence the mystification of abstract communities which is also negated by economic movements in any case as they draw the limits to the realization of these communities, in pre-capitalist society and especially during the early period of capitalism (period of formal domination). The question of democracy ought to be seen in this way. Recreating a human community while the economic movements and forces had been liberated by the bourgeois revolution and could but tend to install the community of capital. Seen in this way, Marx's polemic with Ruge assumes a further dimension.

"One also sees why Marx was so interested in the prior forms, in the analysis of the division of labour in primitive communism, in the forms of its dissolution, in the period of simple commodity circulation, and finally in capitalist society.

"Hence the role of politics in the whole period from primitive communism to developed capitalism (real domination). Politics was the attempt to unify men separated by the productive forces. Now the same men are reunited under the domination of capital, so politics is used by capital to dominate men. Hence the contradiction that emerged with the use of forms that were

useful but which are now no longer adequate, which also means that bourgeois society is based on a misunderstanding, a lie which has its source in the very roots of this society."

In my letter dated 26.5.64. to the same people, I made the following remarks:

"Thus in pre-capitalist mercantile society the law of value is 'necessary' when it is a question of producing commodities. Under capitalism it is not a question of producing commodities, but of valorizing a value, increasing it. Thus it becomes process. Everything is in motion. That is why pre-capitalist society can make do with metaphysics while capitalism engenders the dialectic."

The same themes were always underlined, as too with the expose on the French workers' movement at the Marseille meeting (July 1964). But this encountered the same opposition, more often passive than active. The account of the meeting was only published in French in 1971 in *Invariance* Serie I, n. 10.

Let us return to the question of the party to state that at this time the formal party to be was seen as having to be the party community, i.e. by definition it could only be the realization of the historical need which then was defined as being that of the proletariat, realizing the human community. Put another way, the distinction between historical and formal party ought to have tended to lose all meaning. But such a statement implied the rejection of all discussions, often lively ones, on forms of organization and the need for leaders in them. The supporters

of organization at any price, on the other hand, saw the debate as a choice between formal and historical party. Hence the strange 'specification' that Bordiga believed he had to make in Considerations on the party's organic activity when the general situation is historically unfavourable, the title alone institutionalizing the difference between historical and formal party and making any supercession impossible. One also must say that since 1963 the same organization considered itself to be a party that really existed, hence the expression 'organic activity of the party' in a clear context. The "specification was thesis 12:

"This distinction existed in Marx and Engels and they had the duty to infer from it disdain for belonging to any formal party as they were, with their work, on the line of the historical party. Thus no militant today can however conclude from this that he has the right to choose to be in line with the 'historical party' and to ridicule the formal party. It is not that Marx and Engels were supermen of a type and race unlike all others, but one must understand that their proposition has a dialectical and historical meaning. "Marx said: party in the historical meaning, in the historical sense, and formal or ephemeral party. The first notion contains continuity and hence we derived our characteristic of the invariance of the doctrine from the time Marx formulated it, not a genius invention, but as a result of human evolution. But the two concepts are not in metaphysical opposition and it would be foolish to express it with the little catechism, cold shoulder the formal party and go instead for the historical one.

"When we deduce from the invariant doctrine the conclusion that the revolutionary victory of the working class can only be won with the class party and its dictatorship, and, guided by Marx's works, we state that before the revolutionary and communist party, perhaps the proletariat was a class for bourgeois science, but not for Marx and us; the conclusion to be deduced from it is that victory requires a party deserving simultaneously the title of historical and formal party, i.e. the victory requires that the reality of action and history have resolved the apparent contradiction, and that it has dominated a long and difficult past, between the historical party, thus as to the content (historical, invariant programme) and contingent party, thus as to the form which acts as force and physical practice of a decisive part of the proletariat in struggle.

"The synthetic mise au point of the doctrinal question must also be applied, to the historical stages before our own."

One can clearly see from all the above text that the entire basis of the question was removed, all that remained was by definition the justification for the existence of the small organization whose majority wished to call a party at any price (and at the beginning of 1965, when these theses were published, they succeeded) while before for Bordiga and always for us, the party could only be in a distant future.

However, I approached the question again based on the entire world indicated. Thus I wrote this in a letter to Bordiga dated 18.6.65. accompanying the dispatch of a collection of

commentaries on works of the young Marx (*Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, On the Jewish Question*):

"Marx found the solution in the communist Gemeinwesen. He demonstrated the genesis of the state and so the destruction of the old community and afterwards the reformation of the community. One can show that this was Marx's basic preoccupation. In fact he discussed capital in 4 different ways: 1. in the 1844 Manuscripts he insisted mainly on alienated labour and so wage-labour in capitalist society, 2. *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. He started from the material relation, the commodity, then capital. The conclusions were the same, only Marx wanted to show both how the social process was actually produced and how it occurred in man: the various economic schools. So a double plan, on one hand purely economic facts and historical considerations on the other. 3. Forms which precede capitalist production. In the first two texts he tried to see how the wage labourer had been produced, how capital constituted itself. The difference between the two works resulted from the different central points; the alienated wage-labourer and capital. Here Marx explained that capital could only develop by destroying the natural community

then the one mediated by land etc.. The central point is the community. 4. The Urtext which is only a part of the draft of *Contribution...* Here Marx posed the problem of the autonomization of exchange value and showed that gold could not realize that, only capital could. Only he also indicated that, now, capital can be the material community. It alone could

replace the old community destroyed during the various revolutions which are the various periods of man's expropriation, up to the total rejection of man, even ejected from the production process and thus from labours the proletarian. This is important because it completes the investigations of the Forms... and moreover allows the unifying of the whole work on the fundamental question of the community, i.e. communism."

On 21.6.65. I specified:

"A simple addition to my last letter. The specifications on the party community are vital for understanding the historical and formal party. The two are not opposites, nor have we interposed these two terms to oppose them, but, on the contrary, to interpose the historical continuity, to show that it was integral while our enemies saw only the differentials. That is why prior to knowing Marx's terminology, we spoke of integral (historical), and differential (formal) party. The party arises historically, i.e. integrally, because it expresses the totality of the communist programme. But the class struggle made the party afterwards not always to succeed in supporting the whole of the programme and to allow itself to be limited to replies offered to situations posed by the class struggle while it had contingent tasks to accomplish (that was possible when there was still the possibility of progressive emancipation, but that is no longer so now capitalism has fully developed). Thus the present party form can only be historical. Now this is the community which is the prefiguration of communist society; its



essential task is to unite the working class which will again be set in motion by the crisis of capital leading to the revolution. Afterwards the party (reappropriation of the human being) will unify the species: abolition of classes. This is all in Marx's so-called philosophical works."

The neo-Leninist and Trotskyist current dominated ever more from then on. Bordiga released ballast, even retreated, moaning that he abandoned the work tending to supercede the historical moment of leaving the old workers' movement and so really founding the originality of the Italian left. Thus he no longer quoted Origin and Function... among the texts forming 'The documentary material showed and illustrated to comment on the general these of the Naples meeting' after the Naples theses (July 1965): a compromise between the two divergent positions?!

This little history is needed to show the accord one could have with Bordiga on the question of the party as well as the limits. Origin and Function was a sort of key text because many polemics revolved around it (all those leaving the PCI after 1962 attacked it violently) and because it was the start of a supercession continued with the work published in Invariance, and also owing to the opposition it incited, it provoked the strengthening of the Leninist component with the worship of the link with the Third International by Bordiga, but especially by the PCI which fell completely into the Leninist current and lost all originality after 1966. It is also a key text because it

supports the resistance to the counter-revolution, the effort of isolation (the famous cordon sanitaire); the workers' agitation (apart from the Belgian miners' strike of 1960, linked to the structural crisis of Belgian capitalism, which was limited) did not assume greater depth until a few years later, but then it was no longer the classical proletariat manifesting itself. It also reflected the shakings linked to the anti-colonial revolutions. It was in this appreciation of the historical moment that there was the divergence inside the PCI. Great effort is made in the text not to place it contingently, but in the totality of the communist movement. Also one tended to destroy any sectarian vision fixed on the small organization in trying to supercede it with the perspective of uniting all the forces really future-oriented, so as to start the attack on the counter-revolution; capital.

Finally this text appeared, when the left tended, to extend geographically a bit thus posing acutely the relation with the perspective outlined, in 1856 of a revolutionary movement about 1975. One had to think of the huge body of the class conceived historically as a unitary phenomenon, an attempt to supercede Marx's strictly limited position. But such an adoption of positions also led to a critical view of the past, hence the divergence with those wishing to question nothing and to continue... Over time this divergence could only be aggravated.

The themes in Origin and Function were not exhausted in 1965 but in fact were taken up again in other works published in Invariance such as Perspectives (Serie I n. 5). In I/6 The Communist Revolution they were taken up again in Chapter

8.5: 'The reunification of the class and the formation of the party-community'. One also has to specify the importance of the forecast. But this did not happen because the critique of organization founded on the analysis of the May 1968 movement led to a questioning of the way of understanding the formation of the communist party. This was the letter of 4.9.69. written with Gianni Collu on gangs published in *Invariance Serie II*, n. 2 with a preface and called *De l'organization*.

Origin and function cannot really be understood without a knowledge of the accounts of the meetings before 1962 published in *Invariance Serie I(n)* or which appeared in *Bordiga et passion du communisme*. Those texts were unknown to the French public in 1968, that is why we quoted them extensively when we published *Invariance I/1*. We also used many quotations from Lenin with the polemical intention of showing that he could not be reduced to *What is to be done?*, +hat he had a greater vision of the party phenomenon (we only wanted to note his overgrowth and not to convey everything definitely superceded and realized). Now this has no more interest. So we prefer to publish the text as it appeared, in Italian in 1961 with Bordiga's sub-titles.

We said that Dangeville participated in the production of *Origin and Function*. The reader can see his evolution by reading the 4 volumes of *Parti de Classe* in 'Petite Collection Maspero'.

Finally let us note that Rubel's text *Remarques sur la concept du parti prolotarien chez Marx* was a great source of inspiration.

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The various studies made since 1969, some of which appeared in *Invariance* Serie II, have led to a total supercession of the classist position and so too any theorizing about the party. This will be shown exhaustively in future issues of the journal. Nevertheless, we have to take a position on this old text to show a development itself clarifying the conclusions at which we have arrived.

One saw in Origin and function as elsewhere in Bordiga's work after 1945 that the party is always the party as it has to be. Basically the small group had to be under extreme tension to define something, and this could only happen with the mediation of the grasping of communist society. So as soon as an element was seen differently, everything had to be changed as the party was really envisaged through the totality.

It was the same for the proletariat: it was postulated as it had to be through trans historic consciousness, determined by an historical process, or, more exactly, according to a representation determined by a specific historical process.

The party was conceived of as always having to be produced in its purest form. The proletariat the same being always more the true proletariat: from the Bras-nus of 1793 through the artisanal proletariat of 1871 to the German proletariat of the 1920s, the true proletariat.

Here is the weakness: there is a true proletariat, but it does not have the consciousness, thus it is not the true one. But here

comes an explanation based on various theorizations of the integration of the proletariat into bourgeois society. Always the crisis destroys it and, then, there would no longer be an obstacle to the proletariat-consciousness meeting.

This briefly is the theory of the proletariat developed by the Italian left. The crisis is one of the links of the theory with that of value. The crisis is only true real, on the basis of the law of value which in turn is only possible with reference to man, man determined by a production process and not abstract man, but a man who has an antagonistic determination to capital, which is opposed to him. Now the crisis has been encapsulated by capital and so there appears an impasse for the two theories.

We do not wish to criticize them exhaustively, we simply wish to note, the presuppositions of the theory of the proletariat and its limits, given that this theory is one of the pillars of Origin and function.

As was said in this text, the schema of the communist revolution was imposed on Marx by the observation of the course of the French revolution. The bourgeoisie believed that it could liberate humanity. Here Marx did not make a reduction; he conceived this class in its human dimension and in its limitations. The irrefutable proof of the check was the existence of the proletariat which the bourgeoisie theorized and avoided in preoccupying itself with pauperism and its extinction.

Now this class is not passive, it rebels. Marx saw here the possibility finally to accomplish the task of reconciling men by

eliminating class antagonisms because a class showed itself unlinked to any particular determination: the proletariat as negation.

Also, following the Ricardian socialists, he presented this class in liaison with and on the basis of the law of value and he added that the proletariat was the class producing surplus-value. But he did not stop at this discovery and he analysed the movement of capital and stated its tendency to integrate the proletariat and negate classes. However, this is always found as a tendency in Marx: the crisis can reinvigorate the negativity.

We say this to show where we were enclosed in Marx's schema and where we have developed and somewhat exhausted its possibilities. This prevented us from superceding the Marxian vision in 1961 although reality already imposed it. But that is also true of our predecessors for such a supercession ought to have been made from the 1920s.

Certainly one can find the elements for such a supercession among Marxists and anti-Marxists in the 1920-39 period (also in the Immediate post-war period), but, on one hand, they are definitely only feeble remarks that can be used now that the 'step' has been taken and, on the other hand, we often only have a very recent knowledge of them. The Second World War eliminated a pile of documents which have only reappeared since 1968. Besides, we have already said that the revolutionary movement during its emergence will often not go beyond the resurrection of the immediate revolutionary past. We have not escaped such a phenomenon.

Here a critical analysis of the proletarian movement, from the beginning of the century above all, is needed. We began with the KAPD et le mouvement prolétarien, Bordiga et la question russe, Russie et nécessité du communisme, Bordiga et la passion du communisme and as we shall do with an analysis of the Spanish revolutionary movement and as Casten Juhl also did with *La révolution allemande et le spectre du prolétariat*, an introduction to Herman Gorter's The Communist Workers' International.

But that will not exhaust the critique of our historical behaviour, that is, our way of representing history and situating ourselves in time: all historical reconstruction is participation in the past. We have to reconsider the representation Marx made of the proletariat and to confront it with what the proletariat has really done.

This questioning does not have the goal of projecting an anathema, but of locating clearly where and why there was an illusion. This will also not imply the revalorizing of prior anti-Marxist positions, above all as an integral solution e.g. democracy.

Here we are led to considering the second pillar of Origin and Function: the *Gemeinwesen*. But that is also to say that there was a certain contradiction between the theory of the proletariat and the research on the *Gemeinwesen*. One saw this but also maintained the hope that the real movement would dissolve it with the manifestation of the proletariat as the last class which would thus not only have a classist character but,

after its movement to constitute the community, would lose this character. That is why we stated that the proletariat was integrated into the CMP by its immediate being but not by its mediate being, defined by its tendency and mission, and that afterwards the constitution of the party would be its immediate negation, by its negation of the proletariat, the party would pose the human community. This began with the publication of the Theses in n. 6 and Transition (mainly written by Gianni Collu).

But here again we would make an accommodation. One can only leave its domain by superceding the theory of the proletariat and the labour-value theory(o).

This was realized in 1972:

""...the abstract characteristics lead to the REPRESENTATION of the concrete by the path of thought". The law of value, doubtlessly, was the representation of a concrete, but, as representation, it was not the concrete itself. The development of the concrete and of its representation are not closely linked, all the more as the 'thought-concrete' resulting in the law of value has not been the dominant characteristic: wages, for example, have never been actually the price of labour power (with all the implicit consequences) but as a more or less correct price for labour, and profit as wages of the entrepreneur and not the fruits of plundering. The dominant characteristic is part of the integrant relation of social praxis and if the king is only king because his subjects see themselves as subjects, this king is nonetheless not abstract but very real



and it is around his very real person that society is organized. "Because one had given the attributes of 'thought-concrete', the revolutionary content of the law of value, to the representation that the proletariat became, one made the proletariat a 'revolutionary' class; one established on the basis of the law of value, representation of a concrete at a determined historical moment, the theory of the proletariat. The theory of the proletariat, because it is 'theory', has a basis in the law of value: other theory. But there is a self-justification of the two theories. Because the proletariat is a direct expression of living labour, it gives its content to the law of value because labour is the content of value, its concrete reality, its substance. No proletariat: no law of value, thus the need to provide a theoretical basis and an historical necessity to the proletariat, leaving the interpretation of history in order not to remove the proletariat from the political scene. Hence moreover the problem of the 'revolutionary movement' maintaining the tautology and looping the theory and finally participating in the tautological process of capital! If we have difficulty expressing this 'tautological process of capital', it is only because we participate in the same movement, we use the same artifices to maintain the same theoretical and historical coherence without daring to make the supersession now required (what are fictitious capital, the universal class etc. if not theoretical artifices?). Besides, put in the sack by the very concrete reality of the revolution, we are led to produce the concepts of its real dimension: its biological dimension! And here the too tight skin bursts under the pressure of such a developed content! We give the revolution directly the

dimension of the species, a spatial and historical dimension alongside which the 'moment of capital' appears like a simple historical hiccup. Our very understandable distraction is equalled only by our enthusiasm and we shall be reactionaries and revolutionaries, heretics and prophets. We have never been further from and closer to Marx! Our contradiction is only his contradiction implied by his theoretical developments." (letter of J-L. Darlet, 9.11.72.)

## CAMATTE

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(1) The Civil War in France in *The First International and After* (Harmondsworth, 1974) p. 213.

(2) i.e. the International Communist Party October 1959 (Milan) meeting entitled *The Classical Solution of the Historical Doctrine of Marxism for the Vicissitudes of the Miserable Bourgeois Present.* (Translator)

(3) i.e. the Florence meeting of March 1960 entitled *Historical Revolution of the living, working and knowing Species.* 1. Natural communism, almost myth and social poetry; 2. Class War on infamous private mercantilism; 3. Arrival of the classical message of the communist party, and the Casale Monferrato meeting of July 1960 entitled *Arduous Systematization of the revolutionary Communist Programme among the Miasmas Of Bourgeois Putrifaction and Pestilential Opportunism* as well as the meeting noted in note (2) above.

(4) *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in *Marx & Engels Collected Works Vol. III* (London, 1975) pp. 296-7.

(5) *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction* in *Collected Works Vol. III*. p. 186.

{6) *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company* in *Collected Works Vol. IV* (London, 1975) pp. 36-7.

(7) *Critical Marginal Notes on the Article 'The King Of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian'* in *Collected Works Vol. III* pp. 189-206.

(a) Here we find the permanent critique of Marxism of the pretended eternity of the capitalist form of production.

(8) *ibid.* p. 197

(9) *ibid.* p. 198

(10) *ibid.* p. 198

(11) *ibid.* pp. 198-9

(12) *ibid.* p. 198

(13) *ibid.* p. 204

(14)? 15)? (16)? (17) Our enemies' position is that the maximum goal of the party has no 'concrete' substance given, that the concrete historical facts are the states and parties acting through the state. Here the correct answer is well put: the two

terms of the antagonisms, the state of yesterday and the party of tomorrow, condition each other reciprocally in their material reality, which is 'scientific', without evoking any kind of myth.

(18) *ibid.* p. 204

(19) *ibid.* p. 204

(20) *Contribution...* cit. p. 182

(21) *Critical Marginal Notes...* cit. p. 204

(b) Proletarians can only acquire class consciousness by struggling and organizing themselves in a party.

(22) *ibid.* p. 204-5

(23) p. 205

(24) *loc. cit.*

(25) *loc. cit.*

(26) *loc. cit.*

(27) *loc. cit.*

(28) *loc. cit.*

(29) *ibid.* p. 206.

(c) This has been fully shown to be so, now again we must base our revolutionary strategy on the proletariat's activity in this sector of the world: invariance of Marxism!

(30) *ibid.* pp. 201-2.

(31) Communism and the 'Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung' (Rheinische Zeitung, 15.10.1844.) in *Collected Works* (London, 1975) P. 221.

(32) i.e. A. Bordiga and U. Terracini Le Tesi del P.C.d'I. sulla tattica (Roma, 1922) in *Rassegna Comunista* A. II, n. 17 (30.1.22.) (Translator)

(d) Cf. the previous criticism of Ruge on the use of the state.

(e) Our emphasis since here we have as the corollary the critique of the theory of experience we have always rejected.

(33) Marx to Engels 18.2.1865. in *Marx Engels Selected Correspondence* (MOSCOW, 1975) p. 155.

(34) The Internal Crises (London 30.11.1842.) in *Collected Works* Vol. II, p. 373-4.

(35) Letters from London (I) in *Schweizerischer Republikaner* 16.5.1843. in *Collected Works Vol. III*, pp.379-80.

(36) Manifesto of the Communist Party in *Collected Works Vol. VI*. pp. 505-6.

(37) i.e. the April 1951 (Rome) meeting entitled Party and Class Action (Theory and Consciousness), Party and Class, The Overturning of Praxis, Revolutionary Party and Economic Action, and the September 1951 (Naples) meeting called

Lessons of Counter-revolutions, Double Revolution, Revolutionary Capitalist Nature of the Russian Economy.

(38) *The Alleged Splits in the International in The First International...* cit. Pp. 298-9.

(39) in *Collected Works Vol. VI* p. 519.

(40) Resolution of the London Conference on Working-Class Political Action in *The First International* cit. pp. 269-70

(41) letter of 29.2.60. in *Marx Engels Selected Correspondence* (London, 1956) p. 146 (emphases added).

(42) *ibid.* p. 150

(43) *ibid.* p. 148

(f) The international notion of the party.

(44) *ibid.* (emphases added).

(45) cited in F. Mehring *Karl Marx* (London, 1946) p. 291 (emphases added).

(46) in *The Revolutions of 1848* (Harmondsworth. 1973) P. 343.

(g) Here Engels stated in other terms what Marx had explained to Freiligrath.

(47) Engels to J.P. Becker 10.2,1882. in *Selected Correspondence* cit. p. 422.

(48) The Alleged Splits in the International in *On the First International* cit. pp. 280-1

(h) Inter-class harmony and between capital and labour, let us recall.

(49) Engels Der Kongress von Bonvillier und die Internationale (Volkstaat 10.1.1872.) in *Marx Engels Werke Band 17*, pp. 476-9

(50) Engels *Germany: Revolution and Counter revolution* in L. Krieger ed. *The German Revolutions* (Chicago, 196?) p. 124.

(51) Letter of 13.2.1851. in *Marx Engels Werke Band 27* p. 191.

(52) in *Karl Marx Library Vol. III* ed S.A. Padover (New York, 1973) P. 458.

(53) speech on the Anniversary of the International (World (New York) 15.10.1871.) in *The First International* cit. p. 270-1.

(i) i.e. Progetto di tesi per il IIIe Congresso del Partito Comunista Presentato dalla Sinistra - Lione 1926 (Rome, 1926)

(54) Marx to Bolte in *Selected Correspondence* cit. pp. 328-9 (letter dated 23.11.71.)

(55) World Society of Revolutionary Communists in *The Revolutions of 1848* p. 57

(56) Engels *Anti-Duhring* (MOSCOW, 1947) p. 330

(57) Cf. Marx's passage in *Capital Vol. II* (Moscow, 1956) p. 123 on possession and needs. One should attach to that the theory

of need which would be a theory of the attributes of human nature.

(58) Marx Communism and the 'Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung' in *Collected Works Vol. I* pp. 215-6.

(j) in *Collected Works Vol. III*, p. 30.

(k) *ibid.* p. 30

(l) *ibid.* p. 31

(m) *ibid.* p. 31.

(n) Let us note apart from Origin and Function, Le VI Chapitre inedit du 'Capital' et l'oeuvre economique de Marx (no 2), L'etre humain est la veritable Gemeinwesen de l'homme (n. 3), Mai-Juin Theorie et action (n. 4), Perspectives (n. 5), Transition (n. 8), Charac... [unreadable] ...movement ouvrier francais (n. 10); as well as Proletariat et Gemeinwesen (n. Special) and n. 6, all the texts written by Bordiga where the theses 2.1 on Russia and. 4,3 (Capital and. Agriculture) were also by him.

(o) Different currents in Marxism (partyists and councilists) as well as in anarchism developed a theory of the proletariat so that when we speak of superceding the theory, this does not only concern the social movement from which some of us come: the Italian left.