$5.00

NST

Nature, Society, and Thought

a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

Vol. 5, No. 3 1992

Special Issue

The Downfall and Future of Socialism

Hans Heinz Holz

NST

University of Minnesota
116 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Nature, Society, and Thought

NST

a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

VOL. 5, NO. 3 (JULY 1992)
Cover design by Prockat

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3 JULY 1992

NST: NATURE, SOCIETY, AND THOUGHT (ISSN 0890-6130). Published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by MEP Publications, University of Minnesota, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *NST: Nature, Society, and Thought,* University of Minnesota, 116 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112.

Subscriptions. U.S.A./Great Britain, one year, individuals $15/£11, institutions $28/£18.50; two years, individuals $28/£21, institutions $56/£37. Other countries, add $4 for postage for each year. Single copies: individuals $5/£3, institutions $10/£6.

Subscription and editorial address: *NST,* University of Minnesota, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112 (tel. 612/922-7993).

Contents are indexed in *Sociological Abstracts* and *Alternative Press Index.*

Information for Contributors

Nature, Society, and Thought welcomes contributions representing the creative application of methods of dialectical and historical materialism to all fields of study. We also welcome contributions not explicitly employing this methodology if the content or subject matter is in an area of special importance to our readers. Submissions will be reviewed in accordance with refereeing procedures established by the Editorial Board. Manuscripts will be acknowledged on receipt. Please note: manuscripts cannot be returned.

Submissions should be made in triplicate, typed, double-spaced, with at least 1-inch margins. Normal length of articles is expected to be between 3,000 and 10,000 words with an abstract of not more than 100 words. All citations should follow the author-date system, with limited use of endnotes for discursive matter, as specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th edition. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the MEP Publications Style Guide, which appears in *NST*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1990): 123–28. The *Chicago Manual* is the general guide on all other matters of style.

Unless otherwise arranged, manuscripts should be submitted with the understanding that upon acceptance for publication the authors will submit the manuscript on an IBM- or Macintosh-compatible diskette and transfer the copyright to *NST,* the authors retaining the right to include the submission in books under their authorship. Diskettes cannot be returned. Consult the *NST* office about the disk format before sending a diskette.

Vol. 5, No. 2 (1992)

Special Issue

The Downfall and Future of Socialism

Hans Heinz Holz

Originally published in German under the title: *Niederlage und Zukunft des Sozialismus*, Copyright ~ 1991 by Neue Impulse Verlag GmbH, Essen, Germany

Printed in the United States of America

The Downfall and Future of Socialism by Hans Heinz Holz is available in library binding (ISBN 0-930656-69-5) from MEP Publications.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments 6

Publisher's Foreword to the English-Language Edition 7

Preface 17

Chapter 1. Is Marxism in a Crisis? 19

Chapter 2. Fundamental Questions of Marxist Theory 31

- 1. Recalling some self-evident propositions 31
- 2. Humanity and the shaping of society 40
- 3. Historical perspectives and the question of organization 50
- 4. The subject of history 62

Chapter 3. Philosophical-Political Perspectives of Marxism Today 77

Chapter 4. The Failure of the First Socialist Societies 101

- 1. Immaturity of the economic conditions 102
- 2. The problem of bureaucracy 108
- 3. The impoverishment of theory 111

Notes 119

Bibliography 123

Name Index 127

Acknowledgments

The Marxist Educational Press is especially grateful to the following persons who volunteered their services as translators on rather short notice so that the English-language edition could go to press with a minimum delay: Werner Blumenthal, Leonard Herman, Sara Fletcher Luther, John J. Neumaier, Charles W. Tolman, Leonore Veltfort, and Lieselotte Wolff. Morton H. Frank, Doris Grieser Marquit, and Erwin Marquit integrated and edited the translations for publication. We also thank the editors of the series *Marxistische Blätter*, especially Hans Heinz Holz and Hermann Kopp, as well as the publisher, Neue Impulse Verlag, for permission to publish this translation and for their assistance at various stages of its preparation.

Publisher's Foreword to the English-Language Edition

The collapse of the socialist systems in the USSR, Eastern and Central Europe, and Mongolia and the accompanying crises in the Communist parties in the former socialist countries and the capitalist world raise important theoretical questions for Marxists and others who see a socialist future for humanity. Why is it that social democratic parties have not brought socialism to the countries they lead? Which characteristics of the Communist parties enabled them to win state power? Why did their initially promising attempts at socialist construction fail in the end? Did the fault lie in Lenin's party of a new type or did it lie in the failure to implement his ideas? Were the problems that were encountered primarily objective, in the sense that socialism was an idea whose time had not yet come, or was attempted in the wrong place, or were the problems primarily subjective in nature, resulting from inadequate theoretical understanding of the complicated process of transition from a capitalist to a communist society?

Professor Hans Heinz Holz addresses these questions in his book *Niederlage und Zunkunft des Sozialismus.* We have chosen to present this book in translation here not because we view it as an ideological manifesto for Marxists in the 1990s, but because the author, an outstanding Marxist philosopher, discusses in a reasoned way positions that are shared by many, although not necessarily a majority, of those who have been associated with the Marxist-Leninist tradition in the past. Unfortunately, discussions in the United States on these issues until now have lacked the analytical depth that Professor Holz imparts to these subjects.

We hope that this book will stimulate more extensive discussions on these questions.

As a German Marxist, Professor Holz naturally focuses his attention on ideological developments in his own country. With the absorption of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1990, a complex situation arose on the Marxist left. In the former GDR the Party of Democratic Socialism (*PDS–Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*) emerged as a Marxist-oriented, but not Marxist-Leninist, successor party to the formerly ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany. In what was formerly West Germany, the German Communist Party (*DKP–Deutsche Kommunistische Partei*) retained its Marxist-Leninist orientation, while avoiding an organizational split. It was able to do so by opening up its publications to wide-ranging theoretical discussions on the most fundamental ideological issues, an openness unprecedented for Marxist-Leninist parties in the industrialized capitalist countries. The PDS and the DKP are now expanding their activities to the western and eastern parts of Germany, respectively. Although this situation is not addressed directly by Professor Holz, the differences in the orientation of the two parties do provide a backdrop for the issues that are discussed in the book.

A major focus of the author is what he sees as the indispensable role of a Marxist-Leninist party in giving leadership to a movement for the revolutionary transformation of society. It is clear that in the case of Germany he means the DKP. In other countries, it may not always be obvious which party, if any, represents the type of party he has in mind. Moreover, there are wide differences of opinion over what are the most appropriate political-ideological organizational forms of activity for the realization of a socialist future. Professor Holz's book will be particularly useful as a starting point for discussions of this question.

In his discussions of working-class parties Professor Holz uses the terms *communist* and *Marxist-Leninist* interchangeably in reference to revolutionary Marxist organizations and contrasts such organizations with *reformist* ones. A review of the historical and ideological background of the two principal currents in

the socialist movement could be useful to readers unfamiliar with the history of these two tendencies.

Revolutionary Marxism vs. reformist socialism: Historical background

The two most important achievements of Marx (according to Engels in his graveside eulogy) were the discovery of the law of development of human history and the discovery of surplus value as the source of capitalist profit. Marx concisely summarized the former in the famous passage in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:*

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or–this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms–with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In this statement, often characterized as Marx's law of social development, the concept of social revolution is identified with a more or less rapid change in the relations of production, the

property relations embracing the means of production. The social function of the superstructure is seen to be the maintenance of relatively stable property relations. The class that is the dominant force in the superstructure, that is, the ruling class, is the class that controls the disposition of the forces of production through its dominance in the relations of production. Marx and Engels characterized the essential content of class dominance of the superstructure as a dictatorship of the ruling class regardless of the political form in which it was materialized.

These ideas were further developed by Lenin in *State and Revolution*. Lenin saw the process of social revolution as the transformation of the class character of the state from a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie into a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat.

The materialist essence of Marx's social theory from its earliest formulative stages runs systematically through the work of Engels, and Lenin after him, despite the passage of time and notwithstanding later protestations by many left scholars. By the end of 1843 the young Marx wrote in his introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law:*

> The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force, but theory also becomes a material force as soon it has gripped the masses.

Some seventy-five years later Lenin, in his pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* repeated this emphasis on the material character of mass movements set into motion by ideas: "Ideas become a power when they grip the people."

Socialist parties oriented on a working-class constituency were first formed in the nineteenth century. Under the influence of Marx and Engels, they set themselves apart from the utopian socialism of Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, and Henri Saint-Simon, who saw the path to socialism essentially through the formation and growth of cooperatives. Marx and Engels argued instead for the concept of "scientific socialism." In their view, socialism would not come into being through the quantitative

growth of production in the cooperative sector and its effective displacement of the capitalist mode of production. Rather, socialism represented a stage in the process of social evolution from capitalism to communism. This process was a legitimate subject for scientific study, just as biological evolution had become an object of scientific investigation.

In the viewpoint of the materialist conception of history (subsequently called historical materialism), a special situation arises in the case of transition from capitalism to socialism in contrast with the previous stages of social evolution. In the transition from feudalism to capitalism the emerging bourgeoisie, through the expansion of bourgeois property relations, accumulated the necessary material resources that eventually enabled it to constitute a material force that could replace the landed aristocracy as the ruling class or force it to share power. The working class, on the other hand, does not similarly accumulate material resources, since it does not control the product of production. The working class must derive its material force through its ability to organize the masses, not only masses of workers, but of other classes and strata victimized by big capital. To do this the working class must become conscious of and accept its historical mission to give leadership to this revolutionary transformation. Marx, Engels, and Lenin understood that the process by which such consciousness arises is a very complex and difficult one, but nevertheless is a product of historical necessity.

The concept of scientific socialism, therefore, also includes the idea that the transition to socialism is not a spontaneous revolutionary process but must be scientifically understood; the masses of people who will materialize the revolutionary process must be conscious of their historical task. The Marxists, although not opposed in principle to a peaceful transition to socialism through an electoral victory, were convinced that the bourgeoisie, through its control of the state, would use its military and police forces to prevent the transfer of state power to the proletariat by peaceful means unless some exceptional situation made it impossible to do so.

The first party of revolutionary socialism, the Communist

League, which issued in 1848 the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, drafted by Marx and Engels, was a small international organization, as was the International Workingmen's Association (First International) formed in 1864. It was soon recognized that, since the material basis of class power was the bourgeois state, separate working-class political organizations had to be formed in each bourgeois state. The socialist parties were organized along national lines and established in 1889 the Second International (reconstituted after World War I as the Socialist International) with the aim of mutual consultation and support.

An alternative to the revolutionary socialism of Marx and Engels was put forward by Ferdinand Lassalle, who founded the General Association of German Workers in 1862. This tendency was subsequently transferred into the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (SWPG), formed from a merger of the Association with the Marxist-led Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1875 at a unity congress in Gotha. (The SWPG was renamed the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1890.) This alternative essentially dropped the concept of the class character of the state and set its strategy toward the gradual reforming of the capitalist system into socialism through a combination of trade-union struggles and participation in parliamentary elections with the aim of eventually achieving the parliamentary majority necessary to effect a peaceful transition to socialism.

During World War I, irreconcilable splits emerged in the European socialist parties between the reformists and the revolutionary Marxists. In each country the reformists, with few exceptions, supported their respective governments' participation in the war, while the revolutionary Marxists opposed the war as imperialist. The split further deepened after the Bolshevik-led October Revolution in Russia in 1917, with the revolutionary Marxists strongly affirming their support for the revolution. In 1919, the revolutionary Marxists formed the Communist International (Comintern or Third International), participation in which was subsequently conditioned on acceptance of twenty-one programmatic and organizational conditions by the national parties wishing to affiliate. One of the conditions was the adoption of the name *Communist Party* by each of the member parties. All

decisions of the congresses of the Comintern and of its Executive Committee were binding upon the affiliated parties. Parties throughout the world bearing the name Communist Party were thereby bound by a high degree of ideological unity and it became possible to speak of a *world Communist movement.*

Subsequently, some of the parties underwent reorganization and/or changes of name, but the commitment to acknowledge the authority of the Comintern on ideological questions retained the ideological coherence of the Communist movement. After the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943 during World War II, the Communist parties more or less still maintained ideological unity in relation to domestic and international strategies. In joint statements they referred to themselves collectively as Communist and Workers' Parties and continued to characterize themselves ideologically as Marxist-Leninist parties of the working class.

The socialist parties that had rejected revolutionary Marxism maintained their loose association in the Socialist International. Individual socialist parties have achieved parliamentary majorities or near majorities sufficient to form governments at one time or another in most developed capitalist countries and in several others. In no case, however, did these parliamentary victories lead beyond social-welfare legislation and limited nationalization of industry. None of these electoral victories led to establishment of socialist economies. Only those countries in which the Communist parties formed the government carried out a revolutionary transformation of the production relations in the sense that the preponderant share of the gross national product in those countries arose in the public (state) and cooperative sectors.

Collapse of ideological unity in the Communist movement

In 1948 ideological differences arose between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the other parties in power in the socialist countries, in particular, over agricultural policies. Subsequently, sharp ideological conflicts developed between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the one hand and the Communist Party of China and the Albanian Party of Labor on the other hand, initially over foreign policy and military aid.

These differences affected the relations among other parties in both socialist and capitalist countries. Nevertheless most of the socialist countries attempted to coordinate their five-year plans for national economic development and consolidate a socialist market through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or COMECON). Its member countries were Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, USSR, and Vietnam. It was hoped that by eventually integrating their economies it would be possible to shield one another from the fluctuations of the world capitalist market and especially from the economic warfare waged by the imperialist countries against the socialist community of nations.

After the entry of the Warsaw Pact armies into Czechoslovakia in 1968, deep ideological differences arose among many of the Communist parties outside the socialist countries. Despite these differences, those parties that had been members of the Comintern, or that were their successor parties under different names, were still collectively referred to as Communist parties, at least up to the period of collapse of the USSR and the European socialist countries.

The Communist parties that had been in the leadership of the former socialist countries no longer exist as Communist parties. The successor parties, where they still exist, have adopted new names and no longer call themselves Marxist-Leninist, or even Marxist; most do not even consider themselves parties of the working class. In some cases, groups of members of the former Communist parties have attempted to continue the Communist tradition by constituting new parties (or reconstituting the former ones) with the former names or with names suggesting such continuity.

In the developed capitalist countries, as well as in the Third World, similar processes began earlier. In some countries, such as India and the Philippines, the Communist Parties split primarily into two parties, each considering itself Marxist-Leninist and regarding the other party as reformist or ultraleftist. In other countries, such as Great Britain and Italy, the parties have transformed themselves from Marxist-Leninist parties into parties or

organizations (Democratic Left in Britain and Party of Democratic Left in Italy) that they hope will appeal to broader constituencies of socialist or left-progressive orientation; these new structures do not necessarily identify themselves as Marxist. In Britain and Italy former members of the Communist parties reconstituted Marxist-Leninist parties (Communist Party of Britain and Communist Refoundation, respectively). In still others, such as the (West) German and South African Communist parties, the parties have retained their organizational unity and Marxist-Leninist programs.

In the United States, the national convention of the Communist Party (CPUSA) in 1991 reaffirmed Marxism-Leninism as its ideological basis, but, as result of disputes over domestic policies and questions of internal democracy, one-third of the members left the party in 1992 to form the Committees of Correspondence as a socialist organization that includes Marxists, but which is "pluralist, embracing members who have theoretical frameworks other than Marxist." To the north, in the wake of a divisive internal struggle that lasted two years, the main leadership of the Communist Party of Canada left the party in 1992 with the intention of forming a broader, left-oriented organization, while half of those who had been members in 1990 remained in the party, which again defined itself as a "revolutionary party of the working class based on the science of Marxism and Leninism."

It should be stressed that wide differences exist among and within parties that characterize themselves as Marxist-Leninist, including the Communist parties in China, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam. Some still wish to retain organizational practices and ideological orientations that were introduced into the Communist movement in the Stalin period, while others are attempting to return to what they consider to be the Leninist heritage.

The situations in Communist parties in Central and South America and the more recently formed Marxist parties in Africa are also complex and a brief account is not possible here.

The persistence of all these differences, especially those that have arisen in the past few years has thus far made it difficult to convene an international conference of Marxist-Leninist parties.

Preface

Communist parties (not only in Germany) are in crisis today, but this is not a crisis of Marxism itself. Marxism has proved its theoretical power in the increasing use that bourgeois science makes of the conceptual models and individual insights that result from Marxist investigations, although without accepting the system as a whole and its consequences in regard to worldview.

As a science, of course, Marxism has to deal with fresh developments by advances in its theory. But only the doctrinaire can perceive a crisis in these reflections of changing conditions. Those who refer to a crisis of Marxism confuse the alterations of particulars with a loss of the general explanatory power of the theory, and fall into the particularism and pluralism characteristic of bourgeois ideology–a focus on isolated pieces of knowledge unconnected to a unified world picture.

The crisis in the parties results, subjectively, from an altered evaluation of themselves and their organizations by the members, and objectively, from real and apparent changes in the political problems of the world. In both these aspects, the crisis derives from a poor theoretical perception of the changes taking place.

Complex difficulties in the construction of socialism not imagined earlier have come to the fore, facts that had been inadequately considered and shunted aside with false harmonizing, the fact that even in socialist societies remnants of presocialist classes, with their characteristic forms of consciousness and modes of behavior, continue to exist, surviving (sometimes on a large scale) in every society attempting to build socialism. These manifestations clash with our expectations, easily opening the conceptions and assessments of Marxists to break-in points for

the maxims of the bourgeois worldview, under whose weight we live during capitalism.

The precondition for a socialist politics that is not merely pragmatic (or even opportunist), and that does not lose sight of the goal of overcoming capitalism and making the transition to a classless society, is constant work on a current theory of the reality in which we live.

Thus, first of all an attempt is made here to assemble in rough outline (admittedly very rough) a conception of the invariable principles of the Marxist worldview in a changing and contradictory world, a conception of how communists can comprehend their position in that world and guide their activities (chapter 2). To that end an analysis is necessary (preliminary of course) to reveal why the first great attempt to construct a socialist society ran aground (chapter 4).

And finally, because a philosophical worldview forms the core of Marxist theory, philosophical perspectives for further work need to be pointed out (chapter 3).

These chapters were written between October 1989 and December 1990. They do not ignore the collapse of the socialist states. On the contrary, they seek to make clear the grounds on which one can be a communist today, even though the first attempt to set up a socialist social order broke down by virtue of the contradictions within which it originated and because it was burdened by hideous distortions of socialist principles.

The theoretical persuasive power of historical materialism and the political consequences to be drawn from it have not suffered from the historical events, which in part depended directly on a weakening of theoretical consistency, resulting in turn from a reduced rigor of dialectical thought.

Whoever would learn from history must *reflect* on it. The positions I have advanced here may provoke disagreement, but such disagreement must be supported by reasons and not directed by impressions and emotions. In the exchange and confrontation of arguments matters will become clearer. Such clarification of concepts is indispensable in order to know what to fight for.

HANS HEINZ HOLZ

1
Is Marxism in a Crisis?

The question of what the theoretical foundation of communist parties should be in the future clearly gives rise to confusion. Back to Marx! cry some, as though a century of political practice and theoretical development had not taken place. Without Marx! say others because his theory is out of date. Still others call for New Thinking, although they cannot say precisely what they mean by that. Others reject theory entirely, leaving an arbitrary pluralism of opinions.

The pluralists and those making up homemade theories–to each his or her own worldview!–can be left aside here. Ever since there have been communists and people bearing that name, they have fought for a well-founded scientific worldview. Science and its methods have standards of validity that cannot be chosen or altered at will. Elements of scientific knowledge cannot be lined up like acts at a variety show; rather they constitute a systematic whole. For example, it is impossible to be both a materialist and an idealist at one and the same time. And even with less extreme antitheses it is important how individual conceptions fit into a coherent outlook on the world. Accordingly, the basic question of philosophy, as Frederick Engels put it, is of decisive importance.

The basic question of philosophy

> The great basic question of all, especially of latter-day philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being. . . . Which is primary, mind or nature–that question, in relation to the Church, was sharpened into this: Did God create the world or has the world existed for all

> time? . . . In what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to this world itself? Is our thinking capable of cognition of the real world?" (Engels 1975b, 365–67)

The answer to this question marks the division into two philosophical camps. The "idealists" accept a spirit that preceded the material world and that determined or created it; the "materialists" hold that the material world is primary and eternal and that it develops according to its own laws. Idealists believe that we are able to perceive the world only according to the way our understanding is constituted; materialists insist that the faculty of perception is like a mirror–even if not always so clear–that reflects parts of the infinite world.

It is clear that different answers lead to different lines of political conduct. It is impossible for materialists to believe that the world can be changed through prayer. Whoever believes that nature as we know it is merely the product of our understanding can only deal with it according to judgments made by that understanding. Whoever separates the mind from the body and regards the mind as primary can say with Schiller, "Man is free, even though he be born in chains." The galley slave wearing chains will look at it differently.

Communists are materialists. They believe that the world is knowable and–in accord with nature–can be shaped in a planned way. Therefore they hazard the hope that people can make the world better. That is why they work for a scientific worldview. This understanding combines with outrage at injustice and the drive to end oppression and exploitation to provide the essential unwavering motive underlying all their political activity. They do not believe in a hereafter or in a fate to which they are subject. They know that if they want to live in a better way, they have to make it happen themselves.

Historical materialism

But political practice cannot simply arise out of the head. We may have many dreams; whether they are realized is another

question. Revolutionaries have always formed images of a just society, free of inequality, oppression, and exploitation. It was the great historic achievement of Marx and Engels to show that social progress does not depend on the mental images we make of it, but rather it follows laws that can be recognized.

From earliest times people have had to satisfy such needs as food, clothing, and shelter by making what they need, that is, by producing. For that they need raw materials, which they find in nature, and their labor power. And in order to produce more and do it more easily than is possible with their bare hands, they devise instruments, from flint tools to computers. Thus, with every new contrivance the system of needs becomes more complicated, since the means are also needed to prepare the instruments. The more complicated the work becomes, the more the workers have to specialize; a division of labor is produced, exchange takes place, a market arises, property is formed, money as a means of exchange comes into being, labor power can be bought, and is exploited to generate surplus value, capital accumulates. . . .

The organization of work and exchange comprises the relations of production. Their foundation is property, their mode is the legal order, their explanation is ideology–at first providing explanations for natural phenomena that are not understood, but later on for more complicated, developing but still not understood, social relations. Mythology, religion, art, and philosophy –these are representations of actual existence in the conscious experience of people. The more limited and distorted their awareness of this, the more fantastic is their ideology; the more extensive and accurate their awareness of it, the more closely does it approach a scientific worldview.

This is the basis of the historical materialism that Marx and Engels developed: the theory of labor, of the relationships of production, of the ideological superstructure. This theory gives us the ability to trace back institutions and thoughts to their real foundations and thereby understand where to intervene to change the world.

Contradictions of capitalism

The root contradiction of all previous societies consists in the fact that the social wealth produced by the people–goods, services, social safeguards, and cultural values–is not returned to the people in any just measure. Instead, the owners of the productive forces skim off a profit, which they are then able to use to increase profits further. During the development phase of capitalism, the profit motive was a decisive factor for technological, and hence social, progress. But now the accumulation of capital has become independent of people, made people dependent, and turned the goal of production into its opposite.

The subordination of people to the interests of capital is well illustrated by the following absurd but true report printed in a Swiss newspaper: "In the parliament of the Canton of Vaud a motion to ban smoking in public places was defeated. The reason: 'A ban on smoking in public places would not lead to any reduction in health care costs inasmuch as the prolongation of life would raise the costs of caring for the elderly.'"

The calculation is clear: a perfect balancing of costs and benefits–German managers use the English word "assessment" these days; the social goal, the economic balance, is secured. The person has become just one factor in the economic calculation.

The example is readily carried over into other areas: How great is safety in the work place? What are the priorities in city planning? What measures for defending the environment can be demanded from industry? Is genetic manipulation permissible? It always boils down to a "balance of values," as lawyers call it, and also to the question of what is valued more highly and what less in the planning of our lives. Business administration to maximize profits, total utilization of the economy, human self-realization (whatever that may be)–perhaps in a religious or "spiritual" sense. But wherever capitalism rules, usefulness can only be expressed in cash value; the profit of the rulers is the final argument.

In life, when we have to make a decision, we consider the question of its meaning. But the dominant answer of bourgeois philosophy since neo-Kantianism, and especially since the theoretical concepts of Max Weber, is that factual knowledge

and value judgments have to be kept strictly separate. Preferences as to value were to be the free decision of the subject (even if conditioned possibly by the cultural framework), but they could not be resolved according to scientific criteria; it was to be left to each individual to decide what to strive for. Accordingly there would also have to be a politically respected pluralism of values, a laissez-faire of goals, which are achieved by means of power or through a majority.

From this freedom to set private and arbitrary goals above the general well-being results the chaos of bourgeois society, in which economic power alone asserts itself. Together with greater wealth, ever more poverty is produced. Wars, ecological crises, misery in the Third World, and unemployment are engendered by it. People are reduced to impersonal machines of production lacking freedom of decision over what is happening to them or to the products they make. Even their free time is cut out for them. Cultural deprivation, resignation, demoralization, consumption of drugs, and criminality are the consequences. The Marxist theory of society has correctly referred to a general crisis of capitalism.

But this characterization of our epoch should not have been allowed to obscure the fact that capitalism can do well during its general crisis. For a type of society that arose out of a basic contradiction, crisis is its normal form of existence. This type of society reproduces itself through crisis, just as an organism does–although at the expense of the majority of people. This strength of capitalism, that in its competition with the socialist countries it was able to force onto them its laws of crisis (arms race, impoverishment of others economically weaker) was for too long underestimated by the political leaders and theorists of the socialist states and the Communist parties. Wishful thinking was superimposed on the historical-materialist analysis of the systems.

Illusions and ideology of the bourgeoisie

According to the concept of the market economy, bourgeois society rests, on the one hand, on the firm ground of scientific and technological knowledge and manufacture (the sphere of

production) and, on the other, fluctuates in a chaos of needs, wishes, and forces. Underlying this is the anthropological conception of Thomas Hobbes, introduced in his theory of the state, of the struggle of each egoistic individual against every other, rendered even more sharply by the quasitheological optimism of Adam Smith, as an "invisible hand" that let the general welfare result from the egoistic striving of individuals against one another, as in a kind of parallelogram of forces. This concept of humanity, science, and society (which reflects the illusions of rising competitive capitalism, but no longer the reality of monopoly capitalism) is the theoretical foundation of our Western legal and constitutional forms, as well as of bourgeois democracy. The free play of forces and individual choice of private goals are taken as basic principles that are made to appear as inviolable human rights.

The internal inconsistency and irrationality of these concepts were recognized by Hegel, and more completely by Marx and Engels. Scientists undoubtedly assume that there is an order to the natural and social world that is accessible to scientific investigation (as is confirmed by the results of the factual sciences and their technological application). If this is so, then the needs, wishes, and values of people also arise from this objective structure of reality. The point is what we are supposed to be able to do is not arbitrary, but is determined by the natural and social conditions in which we live; it can also be based on factual knowledge and be determined by it–for example, ecological reasons for a speed limit on the highway. It is not really an individual obligation, but a public one, hinging on a necessary respect for the life and work of society. And, lastly, there is room for latitude, because in every real situation there are possibilities for further development, those that we foster through our actions and those that we suppress; otherwise reference to a question to be decided would be senseless.

Through their themes and methods the sciences are quite involved in these difficult problems; but it is demanding too much of the individual sciences, with their jurisdictions limited to separate areas of reality, to ask that they provide solutions. Because, as Adorno used to say, "the totality of things is

involved here." The sciences have "need for philosophical reflection," as the great physiologist Johannes Müller once put it. For philosophy asks for the whole, seeking interconnection and the sense of things.

Of course, there is no need for a philosophy that feeds us with contrived Taoist speculations (having nothing to do with original Chinese Taoism) or offers us other private speculations or cynicism of their various authors. Philosophy is a scientific, scholarly discipline with a history of two and one-half thousand years of development over which it has become capable of a degree of generalization surpassing the domains of the individual sciences –not as a superscience or a metalanguage, but as reflection on the limits of the particular (negative dialectical, critical) and as a project for provisional, hypothetical models of interconnection (positive dialectical, "speculative"). Both functions are necessary for orientation of one's activity: mere criticism of our limits would only cripple us; mere speculation would be inimical to reality. At one and the same time philosophy remains tied to the sciences and goes beyond them.

In this sense we philosophize all the time, even though we do not do it methodically and are unaware of it. Gramsci spoke, in a genuinely positive sense, of everyone's being a philosopher: we have a conception of the world, often confused and generally inconsistent, within whose framework we try to find our way. In our example the council of the Vaud Canton was thinking in categories of costs and benefits that can be expressed as money values in a budget. Those who rebel place life and health differently in the hierarchy of values. Another example: When Father Grundlach, counsellor to Pope Pius XII, proclaimed from the pulpit in the fifties that it would be better for humanity to die in an atomic war than for all their souls to be consigned to the godlessness of communism, there was a storm of protest from those opposing atomic death, among them of course dissenting theologians. This was a reaction that went beyond emotions. There was a duel between differing conceptions of the world, and the swordplay was with arguments. But to meet arguments an arsenal of well-founded concepts, categories, and methods is needed. For this an everyday philosophy does not suffice.

We encounter in our daily lives fundamental problems of the most general and abstract kind. We suffer, for example, from air pollution, bringing asthma, allergies, and heart problems in its wake. But it is not enough for me in Basel or Frankfurt to change from a car to a bicycle, since the dirt also comes by wind and weather from the industrial region in Belgium, from the Rhine and Ruhr. And further, a twenty-percent decrease in the number of cars sold would mean hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in a key national industry that has thousands of firms providing it with supplies and support. Quick protests and isolated alternatives are dilettantish and accomplish little; large-scale economic and technological relationships have to be reorganized in order to develop realistic concepts for saving our conditions of life. Political changes are thus necessary, not simply emergency programs at the most urgent locations. Social processes cannot be brought under control by piecemeal management, as the pluralistic Karl Raimund Popper and his school would have us believe, and certainly not by self-regulation of the market, but only through goal-directed structural changes on the basis of theoretical penetration of the relationships involved.

Models of networks, of variations of possibilities, of hierarchies of value and action, of the compatibility or incompatibility of contradictory tendencies, therefore, have to be developed. The sciences are challenged to work in an interdisciplinary fashion, cutting across legal and political boundaries. The conceptual points of departure in systems theory and structural theory have provided worthwhile insights to do this.

A merely formal-logical and analytical method of thought, such as prevails in the usual scientific theories and is indispensable in broad areas of individual scientific research, does not suffice here. Dialectical methods and constructions– already at the root of Leibniz's program for the organization of science– must be taken up and worked out in order that the relationship of technological rationality to the complexity of the world not become irrational and self-destructive. Of course, there are many efforts in this direction; it is in the nature of things that, with respect to content, the dialectics of a given subject matter

cannot be deduced from textbook formulas, but always has to be worked out afresh on concrete problems.

Our choice of a conceptual framework for dealing with pressing world problems–especially those we call global–is not independent of our fundamental philosophical view. If we follow the guidelines of current bourgeois philosophy, we are obliged to understand our knowledge as determined, in one way or another, by subjective forms given to our consciousness. That is true even for the Frankfurt School, according to which nature is given to us only through the mediation of labor. This idealism in epistemology, which turns things that are known into functions of the human capacity to know, has catastrophic consequences for our relationship with nature. Nature, constituted through subtle interdependence and reciprocal action, is seen as the product of a subjective "constitutive process," and thus simply as an object that suffers our manipulations and the operations of our instruments. The ecological crisis reveals the failure of a subject-centered view of the world. In contrast, a materialist theory of knowledge, which proceeds from an objective and unending process of approximation to the knowable self-contained existence of nature, leads to a dialectics of nature that understands humankind and society as comprising a new form of being–derived from nature, yet independent of it–and so is able to combine in one concept our subjection to nature and our liberation from its constraints.

If knowledge is considered as a process of approximation to objectively existing things, this also means that no one period can claim that its state of knowledge is the whole and final truth. On the contrary, each truth at any definite historical point in time is relative, first, in relation to the unlimited number of objects of knowledge and relations in the world (any picture of which is incomplete and unfinished), and, second, in view of the fact that any standard of interpretation under which people fit objects of knowledge into their worldview is itself subject to historical change. If the form of society by which people organize their living together and their relationship to nature changes, then the vantage point of their knowledge changes too. Nevertheless it

makes sense to speak of relative truth only in the sense of a transitional concept pointing toward absolute truth. And scientific truth is unconditional in that its criteria are internal, and only internal, to the world–that is, its framework can only be the laws of matter and its forms of development.

Scientific and technological development, an expansion of the productive forces, has led humankind to the point where the existing property relations have become not only an obstacle to the rational and humane use of the new knowledge and means of production ("scientific and technological revolution"), but also an acute threat to the existence of the human race. This threat is by no means only from weapons of mass destruction. The destruction of the conditions of life for humans and most other forms of life (contamination of air and water, the ozone hole, risks of atomic radiation, genetic manipulation, etc.) is directly connected to the irrationality of a profit-oriented market economy. Misery of the masses in the Third World and high unemployment in the industrial countries are consequences of the independence of capital accumulation, instead of people, as the primary productive force. We have already spoken about the loss of meaning tied to these developments and their consequences ("mental pauperization"). In spite of–even because of–the constant growth of its productive capacities, capitalism as a system is a system of crisis.

Class struggle

It was Marx who recognized the historic mission of the working class. Those who do not own means of production also cannot skim off surplus value. Thus they have no private, egoistic interest in exploiting people or nature. The class interests that they fight for are those of the human species. Workers fight for the emancipation of all people while fighting for their own.

Nothing has changed in this relationship even if the outward conditions of the working class, those who depend on wages, have improved since the time of Marx, and exploitation has become less obvious in the rich industrial countries (thanks to the struggles of working-class organizations). The crisis

phenomena of capitalism that we notice every day despite the glittering supply of goods can only be mastered by doing away with the contradiction from which they arise, the private appropriation of social wealth for an increasing accumulation of capital.

The political front that runs through our society remains just as described by Marx: Here the exploited, there the exploiters. National and global problems, the doing of capitalism, can only be solved by the undoing of capitalism. Questions of humanity, precisely because they are questions of humanity, are first and foremost the contents of the class struggle. A universal humanism cutting across class lines is a bourgeois illusion, possible only in the mind. Humanism becomes real only in class struggle.

This self-consciousness must be won back by communists, by the whole labor movement. This they can do if they retain their scientific self-understanding, whose foundations were laid by Marx and Engels–not "turn back," but proceed on its basis and analyze the present situation with the conceptual instrumentation with which they are equipped in Marxism-Leninism, so as to be able to guide their activity.

Political action, however, is more than just the conversion of theory into practice. It also involves above all the visualization of historical experiences, the successes and the failures in our own history. The international labor movement and the communist parties have a long tradition of class battles, of victories wrested from the bourgeoisie as well as setbacks that threatened defeat. The construction of socialism and the international struggles of communists took place under extremely difficult conditions, which reproduced themselves in contradictions, mistakes, and frightful deformations. But these too belong to our history and must be assimilated into it–not through mourning (as we are advised), but scientifically, with a stern look backward and a resolute look ahead. On that account alone is the call "Back to Marx!" false: Marx, Engels, and Lenin are obviously an integral part of our theoretical consciousness, which must be continually tested and renewed. The history of the Third International, the fight against fascism, the great and victorious

liberation movements in the formerly colonial countries: Cuba, Nicaragua, and the experiences of the Chilean resistance–these too are parts of our identity. Since the October Revolution there have been political and theoretical developments in Marxism-Leninism, positive and negative, that belong to the reality content of our present-day consciousness.

It is the task of communists to stand at the advanced point of developing class consciousness because they have access to a scientific worldview. Although it may be hard at times to fulfill this task, whoever would be a communist must take it up.

2
Fundamental Questions of Marxist Theory

1. Recalling some self-evident propositions

Political thinkers and activists who call themselves communists necessarily share certain assumptions. One must of course respect those who base their political practice on other theoretical assumptions even when one regards those assumptions as unsubstantiated. Furthermore, many political activists are honorably inspired by other than purely theoretical motivation. Communists share with others indignation over injustice, exploitation, oppression, and dehumanization, as well as fear of possible extinction of all civilizations or humanity itself, but also act on the basis of scientific recognition of the general laws of history. Respecting (often sharing with others) religious, moral, and psychological motives, communists enter alliances without seeking domination, but only asking respect for their own views. What distinguishes them as communists, however, is a systematically elaborated, rational, explanatory model of the world they seek to change. This model is the basis for their political activity and does not rely on supernatural and unknowable factors to explain world events.

This explanatory model is Marxist-Leninist philosophy and political economy, the worldview of scientific socialism. Communists are open to reasoned discussion of this worldview with everyone. In discussions among themselves, however, communists seek to develop this worldview in an accepted theoretical framework. In this development, a foundation must remain, otherwise it would become a different worldview. The propositions brought together here as theses are of course only a

skeleton of the rich theoretical content of Marxism-Leninism. Those who no longer agree with these theses might usefully offer to indicate the bases on which they continue to regard themselves as communists.

Ten theses of Marxist-Leninist theory

1. Communists distinguish themselves from other supporters of socialism in that their conceptions of the future social order and the path leading to it are based upon a theory of history, historical materialism, the essence of which was worked out by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. The theoretical content of Marxism-Leninism is determined and enriched by practical political experience. The theory still retains the experiences of the workers' movement in the period of its formulation in the mid-nineteenth century. It reflects these struggles as they developed historically, including the controversies and contradictions. The truth content of the theory arises from the fact that consistent positions have been drawn from these struggles. Even wrong positions, later corrected, had not been adopted without reason; one must learn from them, just as one learns from all mistakes.

2. As a theory of history (drawing upon a comprehensive understanding of processes of nature and the relationship between nature and history, upon dialectics of nature and dialectical materialism), Marxism-Leninism, by its very essence cannot be a dogma but a theory that assimilates history. Where it became mere dogma it very quickly lost touch with reality. Loss of creative theoretical development led to errors in the development of its practice and false conclusions. The communist movement has experienced such errors in its theoretical development even while its creative development continued.

3. That a theory is capable of development does not mean that it can be changed in any *arbitrary* way. Marxism-Leninism would no longer be itself if it were to discard the recognition that all history is a history of class struggles. The basis of its scientific analysis of historical processes is the insight that the decisive driving force in history is the development of productive forces and their corresponding production relations, and that the development of productive forces proceeds in ever-present

contradiction with the institutionalized stable form of production relations. Analysis of an existing social (and that includes political) situation and development of an appropriate political strategy depend on this insight and are based on the understanding of the general foundations and structural essence of the social formation, including its numerous particular operational mechanisms and contradictions. Indispensable to Marxism-Leninism is also dialectics, in its twofold aspect as a universal principle of the interconnectedness of the contradictory forms of motion and as a method of representing these contradictory forms of motion. This means that reality is a multifaceted unity: it is continually changing; its motion results from the mutual interaction of contradictions on each other; and in this motion the qualitatively new arises from the accumulation of quantitative changes. A basic understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory is that social consciousness is determined by social being. The contradictions of social being express themselves in social consciousness so that human beings confronted by the contradictions of social being arrive at their various individual positions on the basis of their interests, traditions, experiences, and understanding. Finally, basic contradictions manifest themselves in class positions.

4. Human beings are not the helpless objects of a fatalistic historical process, but are always the active subjects of history. Nonetheless human behavior, when guided exclusively or primarily by private interests and personal motivations, can have unanticipated results. Opaque social structures change intended outcomes, as it were behind the backs of the individuals. Good will alone, therefore, does not suffice to make the world better; mere morality is not a political principle (no more than charity can remove the source of poverty); a theoretical understanding of the relation between individual and society is necessary. A political movement to change the world to reach a specific goal cannot succeed if it derives its strategy and actions simply from the desired outcome or a cross-section of average individual opinions. This would be to reproduce the errors of bourgeois conceptions of democracy. The desired change in society, whether through planned reforms with the final goal of

revolutionary transformation or through a revolution, requires a theoretically guided organization, that is, a political party sustained by the collective will of its supporters. In order for the will of all to become a common will capable of being translated into action, individual members must subordinate themselves to the organizational form, reining in their individual particularities –of course not without prior participation in forming that common will; this principle of discipline is a simple condition of survival and effectiveness for all revolutionary parties.

5. The basic contradiction of all class societies is the private appropriation of social wealth–whatever the form of the relations of production. In previous historical stages, each change in the relations of production shifted only the structures of appropriation, and shifted the responsibility for the use of the social wealth from one class to another. With these shifts, the mechanisms of exploitation became ever more abstract and opaque. This abstraction has reached, under capitalism and especially in its highly developed, state-monopolistic, and transnationally organized form, this abstraction has reached a level in which the overwhelming part of humanity is excluded from the appropriation of surplus value and decisions about its use, and in which the mechanisms of the accumulation of capital, the creation and reinvestment of surplus value, have also become independent of the decision makers. The class interest of that class at whose expense and against whose self-interest social wealth is created lies in the alteration of property relations–and, because it is the only class that is opposed to these structures of appropriation, the establishment of a new social order is its *historical mission,* which it has the possibility of achieving. The opposition between capital and labor establishes the identity of the *working class* (regardless of the differences in the character of the work performed by its members) as the class that is in a position to abolish the capitalist relations of production. To materialize itself in activity as a *class* (and not just a sum of individuals) and thereby become the subject of this historical mission it must acquire consciousness of the situation in which human beings in general and members of the working class in particular find

themselves, that is, a *class consciousness*. Various levels of class consciousness will obviously arise from different experiences and not at all solely through theory; but class consciousness must always be grounded on the theory of class society and class struggle.

6. A new qualitative element in the development of the productive forces emerges in connection with the scientific and technological revolution. On the one hand, science and technology can today guarantee a generally high material standard of living if a just system of appropriation and distribution were institutionalized. On the other hand, science and technology also make possible the destruction of the human species and large parts of nature. Indeed, the humanity of the human species is threatened by genetic or psychophysical manipulation. The capitalist form of production relations, which makes the accumulation of capital and its private control and appropriation the law of motion of social life, cannot solve this contradiction. Rather, the contradiction is intensified many times in mass misery (as in the Third World), in the continually growing danger of war, and in mental impoverishment and the distortion of the free unfolding of the personality. Only a socialist society provides the perspective of a human future worthy of humanity.

7. The perspective of communism connects the objective laws of history, which are the laws of reproduction of human conditions of life, with the subjective striving of each person toward self-realization and happiness. *Self-realization,* however, is not conceivable without reference to and consideration of fellow human beings; self-realization is not the right of the fist of the individual at the expense of others but has its foundation in the insight that the individual can only be himself or herself in solidarity with others. *Solidarity* and consciousness of the *social nature of human beings,* that is, a socialist morality, underlie the program of the *Communist Manifesto,* that "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx and Engels 1976, 506). In capitalist societies the new attitude toward life is formed in the struggle for socialism, in socialist societies, in the struggle for the construction of socialism. This

struggle requires an organizational form: the theoretical understanding of the social and political processes of the present and the proposal of goals for the future must be worked out collectively by the members of an organization, mediated by them, and translated into political action. A communist party is the organization in which this occurs (including the errors that always occur in real-life decisions); as the "place" where the conception of a socialist future is proposed and where the present strategy is worked out with this conception in mind, it is the *revolutionary vanguard of the working class* (even in a non-revolutionary period).

8. The historical mission of the working class and the task of the communist party therefore have two aspects: first, the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and thereby of the private appropriation of surplus value brings about the changes in the relations of production that have become necessary because the development of the forces of production in the scientific and technological revolution can no longer be sensibly controlled by private interests; a comprehensive plan for the entire society is required. Second, the working class in its struggle for self-determination against exploitation, oppression, and injustice brings about the goal of establishing a society in which free and equal citizens can develop their talents in full; only such a society, a communist society, can guarantee human rights.

9. The construction of socialism, with communism emerging from it, will be a long and contradictory process even after the abolition of the capitalist property relations. Presocialist forms of consciousness and behavior last long after the institutional changes, some for several generations. Class positions do not disappear in one fell swoop; that is, the class struggle also continues, most of all the struggle over the new socialist worldview; accordingly, theoretical work and ideological clarity acquire great importance. This is the more so, as the path to socialism does not run parallel and simultaneously in the world as a whole, but rather must be traversed by some socialist countries under conditions of competing systems in which the metropolitan centers of capitalism will still be economically stronger.

Thus the construction of socialism essentially depends upon the communist party *giving leadership to the social development and providing guidance to other social forces* in the socialist countries. This leading role must not be permitted to solidify into bureaucratic mechanisms (a danger to which it is subject at all times), but must be achieved and maintained with political power.

10. It is well to remember the insight of Karl Marx that "no social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed" (Marx 1975). Capitalism today, in the development of its productive forces, begets external contradictions to the point of threatening the extinction of humanity–in this respect it prepares in its womb the transition to socialism. However, capitalism is still capable of organizing within its own framework the continued development of the forces of production, even though with increasing deterioration of the quality of life. For this reason, the struggle against capitalism is still the main task of communists throughout the world.

Unity, plurality, pluralism

Naturally, one may argue whether the theoretical foundations of Marxism-Leninism are still valid under the conditions of the epochal changes in world society. After all, the *Communist Manifesto* was written one hundred and forty years ago, and Lenin's theory of imperialism is already more than seventy years old. Neither Marx and Engels nor Lenin could have foreseen the shattering effect of the problems today called global. Capitalism has been shown to command reserves and strategies that still allow it a way out of its general crisis, thus finding the means for a provisional survival, although ultimately there is no way out.

Marxist theory is challenged to react to this historical situation, to find answers to newly emerging questions–economic, sociological, psychological, political. Many of these answers will at first be experiments; new ideas will be tested in practice and have to be corrected. Knowledge does not develop simply through the finding of truths, but always through a detour over

errors and corrections. The progress of knowledge involves a plurality of concepts. But in such a plurality of ideas, not all are equally valid and equally realizable. Truth is not something arbitrary, about which one could come to an agreement in a compromise between contradictory opinions; rather it is the correct representation (in thought) of reality and the possibilities that lie within it. Epistemological pluralism is nonsense, therefore, while pluralism of opinions is necessary as a path to a truth.

Development of Marxism today must proceed via many contradictory ideas. But this does not mean that anything and everything should be included. Scientific knowledge develops in manifold ways within a "paradigm" (as the theoreticians of science call it), and also within an explanatory model and framework of reality. This framework is defined for Marxism-Leninism by a series of basic conceptions, the most important of which our ten theses attempted to summarize. The new historical developments give no reason to depart from the following basic conceptions:

The material exchange of humans with nature, that is, the preservation and development of the human species, occurs through production, not only through consumption. Therefore the unfolding of the forces of production and their organization in the relations of production is the determining factor of history. Since the dissolution of ancient society, the relations of production have been determined through class division, and political history has proceeded as class struggle. Class struggle is reflected through class-based worldviews and conflict between them. Hence questions of theory are not only abstract questions of truth but also always questions of class. Historical truth lies with the class that is the carrier of social progress. It can be the carrier of social progress only in an organized form. The political organization of the class struggle of the working class is a communist party, which thereby becomes the medium in which historical truth emerges and prevails. The emergence of truth requires a plurality of aspects, and its victory is tied to unity of action and to an action-oriented perspective. Therefore in a party striving for unity of theory and practice there can be no pluralism.

This series of propositions forms a logical sequence; each one follows from the preceding. These propositions constitute a system, and one or another cannot simply be discarded. Those who are sufficiently convinced that the explanatory pattern that appeared in the first propositions is relevant to history and therefore that the Marxist "paradigm" is not outmoded must also derive their organizational understanding and their political action from their concept of truth. Renewal of theory and of the party must occur within the framework of a fundamental understanding of Marxism-Leninism. To do otherwise would destroy the communist character of the party. Nobody escapes from the logic of the interconnectedness of knowledge. The political capitulation of the social democratic parties confronting capitalism and their purely reformist accommodation to its system are a warning example; neither of the world wars nor fascism could be averted with such accommodation.

This is said without polemical intent, and only in order to mark the limits that establish the identity of a communist party, the self-understanding of communists. For a long time to come communist politics within capitalism can only work for and achieve reforms. It is not the "small steps" and the "piecemeal improvements" that are an evil; they are the content and reward of day-to-day politics; that which is achieved also contributes to making concrete the long-range goal, which after all should be not just an imagined utopia but a real, that is, realizable, possibility. Without an understanding that the capitalist system –regardless of its reforms–will never lose its inherently antihuman, exploitative, and crisis-ridden character, the day-to-day struggle with its possibility of small successes ends in opportunism or resignation. Illusions never pay–and those who do not take seriously as an economic-political reality the formation of the largest armament concerns in Europe at the very moment that disarmament agreements are expected to ensure peace have lost all reason. They are letting themselves be deceived by thinking that these small but absolutely important steps can do more than partly offset the continuing tendency of the system to generate new threats and dangers.

This example should show how decisive the capacity for

political judgment and direction of action is in viewing the momentary situation and day-to-day problems from the standpoint of a knowledge that establishes interconnections and can explain the parts of the whole. To ascend from the many to the unity of appearances, to understand the conflict and the unity of contradictions, is the method of dialectics. It is the heart of the Marxist-Leninist theory that maintains the movement of the plurality of experiences, generalizations, and aspects, and at the same time avoids its disintegration in a self-destructing pluralism.

2. Humanity and the shaping of society

Humanity today no doubt is confronting problems that had not posed themselves during the time that the economic and political theory of Marxism-Leninism was being elaborated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the Third International. Scientific and technological development has been accelerating at a pace that could not have been predicted one hundred or even fifty years ago. On the one hand, the means of creating social wealth for the kind of life worthy of humans have expanded to an unanticipated level. External conditions have been created that could allow human beings to lead a self-determined life, to satisfy their needs, and to unfold their talents. This is the positive side of the scientific and technological revolution.

At the same time, this development has brought with it increasing specialization of the production process and requires an ever-growing bureaucratic structure for organization of the highly specialized division of labor in production. As a result, alienation of labor (as well as suppression, rather than unfolding, of human talents) and estrangement of the individual have intensified and become more unfathomable. The activity of the individual is very broadly uncoupled from the social effects of this activity. The social processes are no longer immediately observable as a whole and can no longer be made comprehensible in a simple graphic way. As production, reproduction, and the use of leisure time interpenetrate, they appear accidental, chaotic, and guided by innumerable individual acts of will, thus giving rise to the illusion of freedom and realization of personality.

Knowledge of the laws that dominate this apparent plurality of forces and modes of existence as well as this multiplicity of contradictory tendencies, and knowledge of the laws that determine the unitary character of the epoch under a variety of appearances, require theories with a high degree of abstraction. Hence, in order to be able to codetermine responsibly one's own life as a part of social life, each person needs a scientific worldview more than at any other time in history. The elaboration of such a worldview is becoming increasingly difficult. Therefore, the individual is prone to fall prey to pseudoscientific errors, sectarian ideologies, and hasty conclusions based on incomplete knowledge. This occurs when the objective consequences of the scientific and technological revolution become so alarming as to require one to settle upon a worldview.

The universality of global problems

People in the developed industrial countries, even if they belong to the socially weaker sectors, share to some degree in the immense growth of social wealth (as reflected in their general standard of living compared to that in the developing countries). On the other hand, they are becoming increasingly conscious that this living standard–as well as the conditions for improving life in the poor countries–is today broadly connected to a rapidly progressing destruction of nature that threatens the biological requirements of human life in general. Moreover, humanity lives under the pressure of the accumulated weapons of destruction, the use of which, whether planned or accidental, would put into question the continued existence of the species. The possibilities of interference with human genes cause uneasiness as an incalculable threat. The growing poverty in Third Word countries concurrently with a rapidly increasing population growth appears to be an unstoppable spiral and is generating the conditions for a political explosion. In short, dark scenarios are to be found on the basis of various perspectives.

These are problems that concern all of humanity and that can be solved only by a comprehensive political strategy that treats the world as a whole. Capitalist as well as socialist societies are equally affected by the dangers to the human species. No matter

where one stands politically, one can hardly will one's own demise. The problems of humanity obviously go beyond class. Therefore a coalition of reason must be possible, but only if reasonable understanding is first widely disseminated. The kernel of the political strategy would then be formed by enlightenment, allied with mutually acceptable proposals for reform; a radical change in the social order must be postponed because the universal problem of assuring the survival of humanity has priority over the special one of creating better and more just relations of production.

At first glance, such a strategic conception appears plausible. It seems as if it could be accepted by consensus. Indeed there are already a number of problems that are being dealt with through international cooperation, sometimes institutionalized, that transcend the bounds of the social systems. Capitalist countries also have requirements for survival that must be taken into account.

The plausibility, however, is deceiving. Human interests are general interests, and as soon as contradiction arises between them, the special interests of classes, nations, groups have to be subordinated. But the essence of the existence of capitalism as a social order is bound up with the investment of capital. To let this interest take second place to the general interest would mean to negate the domination of the principle of capitalist investment and thereby of capitalism as a social order. It would mean that the ruling class would voluntarily give up its power, that the capitalists would abandon capital out of conviction, and that each capitalist would be transformed so to speak into a St. Francis. Naturally, compromises, accommodations, and reforms will be wrested from the owners of capital or will result from their own limited rationality. And nobody–especially no communist–would argue that such reforms are not meaningful and useful or that it is not worthwhile to struggle for them. But the only changes that will come about are those that do not abolish the principle of investment of capital for the realization of profit. Profit itself however is the realized contradiction of special interests versus general interests; this contradiction forms the essence of capitalism and is not to be eliminated within capitalism itself nor within the framework of coexistence of capitalism and socialism.

The expression of this contradiction is that the class that does not own the means of production must engage in all forms of political struggle to assert successfully the general interest over the special interests of the owners of capital and that it cannot hold the front lines of this struggle unless it has clear knowledge of class contradiction and its roots in the economic structure of the social formation. The principle of realization of capitalist profit makes human beings mere cogs in the system of production. Within capitalism there is an inversion in that the interests of capital are functionally put above the interests of humanity –and consequently the relations of production, the real purpose of which, after all, is to satisfy the needs of human beings, actually becomes an aim in itself in that the needs of human beings are subordinated to it. This inversion of the human meaning of production is the structural contradiction that resides in each class society and to the highest degree in the capitalist one.

Capitalism has no strategy for doing away with the mass misery in the poor countries of the Third World, but has strategies for reproducing the contradiction between exploiters and exploited on the national terrain of each country. The shamelessness with which the theoreticians of the free-market economy and the bourgeois politicians present the so-called two-thirds society as an acceptable model for the coming decades demonstrates the unreadiness of capitalism to guarantee everyone a proportionate share in the social wealth, even in their own countries. A society in which a human being is only a functioning element in the relations of production will deal with the threat to the environmental conditions for human survival not for the sake of human beings (as a highly developed being of nature), but only within the framework of preserving the economically necessary conditions in which human beings function as consumers–in whatever way they are made to fit into the system. Peace remains–as we have seen since 1945–only because war with a global political goal cannot be limited regionally, although the military plans of NATO already envisage the possibility of an armed conflict in Europe that would not threaten the United States with nuclear destruction.

This is only a sketch of an analysis of global problems. But it shows that while global problems universally concern humanity as a whole, only class struggle can resolve these problems because of the contradictions immanent in the system, contradictions between the special interests of the rulers and the general interests in which the ruled find themselves. Its internal contradictoriness makes bourgeois society irrational; and in an irrational society there is no "coalition of reason" (on what other principle should reason coalesce?), but only a coalition of the reasonable ones, who gather themselves together, obviously, at first, for reforms, but in the long run for the creation of another, more reasonable, social order.

Of course this is the communists' view, based on historical materialism as a scientific theory of history. One who proceeds from other assumptions may well see the irrationality of existing circumstances and yet come to another conclusion about how to change them. There are common actions–like political alliances –that are possible and desirable; practical and sincere compromises are an irreplaceable moment of strategy but not at the price of giving up views and aims that are recognized as valid. Compromises between communists and their allies are made in the formulation and achievement of common aims (in a coalition of the reasonable ones), but not in the communist program itself. The latter must be developed on the basis of one's own understanding of history.

Crisis and strength of capitalism

Thus, the new global political features of the present epoch, as defined by our global problems, are a challenge to Marxist theory. Environmental destruction, threats to peace, and underdevelopment (= pauperization) for a large part of mankind are the main evils (calamities) of our time. Their roots lie in the conditions of production which no longer correspond to the level of development of the productive forces. The scientific and technological revolution entails a high degree of generalization of production. It is no longer up to the individual enterprise to decide how modern technologies are to be applied and what these technologies accomplish. These decisions concern vast

portions of society–in many cases humanity as a whole. Risks have to be taken by all, although they are not participating in decisions or profits, as can be shown with the examples of nuclear energy, damage to forests, destruction of the ozone layer (to name only three). Bad investments have to be absorbed by the general public, while private capitalists skim off the profits. The state institutions must serve to underwrite capital accumulation. And this continuing accumulation leads to increasing concentration of capital in ever fewer hands and power centers.

The traditional model of bourgeois democracy–a parliamentary constitution with the parties as means and carriers of the formation of the political will–was based on the competition of equal interests and a compromise between them. After the emergence of political organizations of the labor movement and their participation in the legislative bodies, this compromise was restricted exclusively to elements within the ruling class. The increasing concentration of economic power leaves little or no room for such pluralism of interests; the decisions have long since been made by those in power, and the economically powerless remain excluded from them anyway. More and more matters concerning society as a whole are being settled by representatives of the various economic power complexes in the service of their special interests. The mechanism of public control does not work. The powerless, therefore, organize outside the institutions of parliamentary democracy into social movements or into regional and local citizen initiatives on behalf of various special interests, unable to achieve any general social changes because of their fragmentation.

These are the popular forms of protest which express the uneasiness with the present situation. They are a manifestation of the crisis of capitalism, but not yet a consciousness of this crisis; for that we would need a theory of the causes and forms of development of the structural inevitability and the basic impossibility of eliminating the contradictions in the social system and the resulting social deformations. A political-economic theory is especially needed that can explain how the capitalist system deals with its crisis, how despite this crisis, to all appearances, it seems to flourish, and what price in inhumanity it has to pay in

return. A strategy to overcome the contradictions and deformations requires a concept of the internal laws of motion of capitalism at its present stage of development and within the present-day global economic and political system. Such a theory is required of Marxism if it is to preserve its historical explanatory power; it exists, at best, only partly (which actually means that it is not yet a fully formed theory). But–and this must be made perfectly clear in view of the idle talk of the "crisis of Marxism"–Marxism has the methodological tools to comprehend the present situation of humanity.

In the dialectics of nature Marxism has elaborated a concept of nature that includes the interconnectedness of the elements of the natural world and its processes, as well as the connection between nature and history, and thus the basis of ecological problems. It has a concept of the social character of human beings that permits it to project the alternative to the ego-individualism of the bourgeois concept of the world. It has a theory of dialectical reason that considers freedom to be not the irrational arbitrariness of the anarchy of competing interests, but self-determination springing from an understanding of the common good and from solidarity among people, and that therefore is able to form a concrete concept of human rights. It has a theory of society that does not let the reasonable behavior of the individuals depend morally on their good will, but that sees it emerging historically as the result of the establishment of reasonable social relations, that is, a theory for changing the world not through appeals to the mind, but through the political formation of social structures. With these instruments of a philosophical-political worldview and the economic analyses furnished by the immense work of Karl Marx, Marxism possesses a scientific, conceptual, as well as methodological, foundation with which it can continue to develop the political-economic theory of today's capitalism and the coexisting social systems.

This means, however, saying good-bye to illusions. With the October Revolution, history entered the era of transition from capitalism to socialism. The consequences of this historical leap cannot be done away with even by setbacks. Meanwhile, the great successes in building the young Soviet Union, the defeat of

fascism in World War II, the victory of the Communists in China in 1949, the liberation of the nations from colonialism, and the leanings of many new states toward socialism in one or another form, all gave rise to the hope that the transition to socialism could take place, if not without a struggle, nevertheless in a continuous progression.

Capitalism seemed to be in decline; its increasing military aggressiveness seemed to be an indication of this decline threatening to drag humanity along into its own destruction. This appraisal of the situation was obviously wrong. It underestimated the structural weakness of the economy of the socialist countries, especially after the devastating losses in World War II, in which they had borne the heaviest burden. It underestimated the economic reserves of capitalism that makes a principle of exploitation and therefore can enrich itself on the dialectic of poverty, according to which the fight against poverty leads to ever greater pauperization. There was no theory of the economic forms of motion in which an increasingly indebted system of global capitalism is able to produce increasing consumer wealth. Theoretical comprehension limped behind actual development and consequently was not able to give direction and guidance for political action.

Thus, communist self-confidence covered up the fact that the peaceful coexistence of antagonistic social systems had to be maintained under conditions in which capitalism continued to dominate. The military threat from the highly armed allied camp led by the United States forced on the socialist states, especially the Soviet Union, an arms race that absorbed valuable resources for economic development. The standard of living in the socialist countries remained behind that of the capitalist metropolises, in some cases far behind. The richer West was in a position to infiltrate attitudes and expectations toward needs in the poorer socialist nations, while the actual social progress of socialism as could be seen from a comparison of the two systems was forgotten. But this also meant breaches in the ideology, in values, in scientific models. “To reach the world level” no longer meant opposing its own concept of good human life under socialism to the capitalist economy of waste, but simply to draw level with

the supply of consumer goods of the richer capitalist countries. Socialism gave up ideological territory and failed to lead aggressively the ideological class struggle in the direction of an alternative consciousness.

In this way capitalism's economic strength and ideological capacity for diversity imposed on the whole world, including the socialist countries, the consequences of the forms of capitalist production. Capitalism armed, so socialism also had to arm to meet the threat. But military production suits the capitalist system because it serves capital accumulation; for socialism it is hostile to the system because it squanders social wealth. Thus socialism suffered more from the arms race. Capitalism satisfied its growing energy needs with quickly available nuclear energy. So socialism had to build nuclear power plants in order to avoid an energy deficit. Capitalism worked with environmentally damaging technologies for the sake of accelerating growth, and socialism went along as best it could in order to maintain its level of productive capability within the competition between the systems. Examples like this should make it clear how absurd it is to assert that capitalists are arming, endangering the environment, etc., but socialists should do better. The world is indivisible, and the stronger system forces certain attitudes on the weaker one. The struggle against the hegemony of capitalism can be carried out only by breaking up its inner contradictions; it is not a struggle between two blocks but the struggle for a change in a world system in which the interests of humanity are being sacrificed to the interests of capital accumulation. It is a struggle within the system, and where socialist states had emerged they constituted bastions of this struggle within the capitalist world system–bastions that were always threatened.

We must understand the international nature of the class struggle as characteristic for our era. Only with such an understanding can we comprehend global problems as global ones and at the same time as the absolute critical point of the class specificity of capitalism. Global problems cannot be solved either individually or through isolated reforms, even though it is necessary to tackle them instant by instant, and singly, wherever their effects show up. Piecemeal action, however, the method of

bourgeois social sciences and of the mere reformers, is not sufficient. Global problems must be seen in the overall context in which the different circumstances are mutually dependent. There can be no real solution to environmental questions while the impoverishment of the poor countries is not being overcome. But under capitalist conditions of development the impoverishment of the poor countries continues–a process to which we referred earlier as the dialectics of poverty. There is no permanent guarantee for peace as long as capitalism produces hunger, misery, and oppression. There will be no just distribution of social wealth, and therefore no realization of human rights, as long as the principal condition of production is the private appropriation of surplus value. Global problems constitute an insoluble complex. Materialist dialectics is the method that can penetrate this complex to define its contradictions, to restructure its shape and laws of motion, and to design a system in which these contradictions and their self-destructing effects are removed.

The crisis of capitalism consists in the fact that it cannot solve the problems engendered by its mode of production within the framework of its conditions of production. Socialism could have done it, but it was still too weak to be able to be the dominating voice in the competition of the systems. The weakness of socialism is the strength of capitalism, which of course plays on this weakness, although at the cost of aggravating its inner contradictions. It must not be the politics of communists to pretend to a strength they do not have–much less, however, to open up to capitalism and to compromise with it out of weakness.

Communist politics are based on recognition of the contradictions under capitalism; the masses must be made aware of them, their victims must be mobilized, fronts must be established at the boundary positions of these contradictions in order to erect political positions that make it difficult or impossible for the rulers to declare their special interests the uncontested norm. Struggle for the strengthening of the influence of trade unions, for codetermination, against unemployment. Struggle for humane living and working conditions, against discrimination against women, minorities, and foreigners. Struggle against the curtailment, and for the restoration, of democratic rights.

Struggle, through citizen initiatives, against environmental destruction, against arbitrary government officials and companies. Struggle, above all, for the preservation of peace. In short, struggle for everything humane that is being denied and destroyed by capitalism. But not simply struggle to alleviate this or that shortcoming here or there, but combined with the explanation that there is a social alternative–a social system, socialism–in which the structural causes that have led to inhumane conditions will be eliminated, an explanation that this alternative is not a utopian dream, but is based on scientific knowledge of history. The struggle for socialism will also be a struggle for the solution of global problems and not the reverse–and for the solution of global problems we need a Marxist theory.

3. Historical perspectives and the question of organization

The weakness of the communist parties in most capitalist countries and the manifestation of their crisis in the former socialist countries give us cause to reflect on the identity and the claims of the party. Disappointment in the failure of the party in its role as leader in the socialist states, anger and desperation over the examples of breakdown of socialist morality of some, but certainly not all, communist functionaries, and the marginal minority position of the communists in most capitalist metropolises bring up the question of why one should still remain or become a communist today, and what a party should be like that has the name "Communist Party." A problem with the revolutionary identity and organizational form of the party arises for communist parties that are active in capitalist countries without the possibility of a basic change of the social order in the near term and that therefore must concentrate on a politics of reforms within the capitalist system.

The communist movement is international. International solidarity is part of its identity and its political perspective for the future in a world that is increasingly forming one indivisible unity of the market–its economic strategies and institutions. But the political tasks differ for socialist, capitalist, and developing countries. The problems of the form of organization of the party in countries where it can determine its relationship to the power

of the state in a positive way, where it must demarcate the roles of party and state with respect to one another, are different from those in countries where it has to lead the class struggle against the ruling class and its exercise of state power. Our discussion here refers to communist parties under conditions of capitalist rule, and especially to the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP [German Communist Party]) of the Federal Republic of Germany.

To avoid misunderstandings: What is said here is not a description of the present state of the DKP; rather the question of what a communist party must be like to fulfill its historical function, what self-identification should give it direction, so that it is identifiable as a *communist* party and not just any party of the parliamentary-democratic system of electoral mechanisms. Precisely because the DKP often did not meet its own requirements and gives every reason for a self-critical stocktaking, it is necessary to think about the yardstick that lets us point out organizational mistakes and recognize the conditions for revitalizing party activity. It is appropriate here to recall the historical role of the communist movement.

Historical basis for class struggle

Social progress does not fall into people's laps. The powers helping enforce the special interests of capitalist exploitation against the general interests of humanity will not be disbanded by themselves. Politics is the struggle in which one side maintains itself as the masters and the others are made into servants–a struggle "for life or death" as Hegel said; but the masters are few and the servants are many, and so politics is also a struggle of the many to disempower the few. So long as the masses of the exploited and oppressed do not recognize their common interests, they cannot take up this struggle at all or only spottily; so long as they do not see through the mechanism of the ruling system of the exploiters and oppressors, but observe only its surface phenomena, they cannot carry out this struggle correctly. Without a theory as a critique of the present and a design for the future, the masses remain divided and their weapons remain blunt.

Society is divided into classes, and it has been since the end of primitive society, that is, since the beginning of "political history," which is not to say that open class struggle was already then taking place. Relations between the rulers and the exploited can exist with the sufferance of the ruled, and this was the case over long periods of stability in all social formations. As long as a ruling class knows how to satisfy elemental and strongly felt needs of the ruled (for example, security against external enemies, organization of provisions, compensation for work), privileges and the regulated exercise of power are accepted. Ideologies emerge that legitimize the existing system and fortify it in people's minds. That which exists and to which people are accustomed is taken as naturally necessary or wanted by the gods or God. Only when conflicts arise do people become conscious of class antagonism.

At the same time, only a few rebel against enrichment and arbitrary rule. They convert the dim dissatisfaction of the masses into individual actions of resistance. At their side they have advanced thinkers who furnish arguments showing why things should not be as they have become and how they could be better. The rebellion acquires a theoretical basis. The worldview on the basis of which the rulers had the consent of the ruled begins to be torn down. Hegemony–that is, the acknowledged leadership in ethics and law, faith and science, customs and culture–crumbles. The oppressed classes win self-confidence. Their more active parts organize themselves and put forth demands. A social change is in the making.

All this does not happen overnight. Changes in consciousness need time; political experience must be gathered; mistakes and setbacks occur. The understanding that only united action can empower the powerless needs yet to be spread; the contradiction between the life interests of the exploited and the power interests of the exploiters needs to be felt in everyday life and recognized in thought; a new order must be seen as the goal before a revolution, that is, the establishment of a new social order, can take place. Some revolutionary movements failed because the masses let themselves be guided by legendary or idealized images of an old order, instead of looking forward to a form of society that

has never existed before. In the Peasant War, large parts of the peasants demanded "the good old laws" under which they had been, after all, in bondage to the feudal lords; this seemed to them to be better than the later despotism. What an error! The book of their revolution should have been Thomas More's *Utopia*; anticipation of natural law would have been progressive. Thomas Müntzer even had simple communism for the peasants and artisans in mind. He "went far beyond the immediate ideas and demands of the plebeians and peasants, and organized a party of the elite of the then existing revolutionary elements, which . . . always remained only a small minority of the insurgent masses" (Engels 1975b, 427). Among them, however, social impulse and the tendency to social progress fell apart–until their defeat: "Defeated we go home, our grandchildren will carry on a better fight."

The peasants of 1525 could not recognize the contradiction in which they had been enmeshed. They suffered precisely from the *progress* in the mode of production because they had no part in it. There was no economic and thus no social theory that could have made the contradiction transparent and so could have shown the correct class perspective. Only in the developed form of capitalism did it become apparent that power structures are an expression of the conditions of production and that the conditions of production are based on ownership of the means of production. Marx emphasized that only from a higher level of society can the character of the earlier levels be understood. Therefore only the naked and anonymous confrontation of wage labor and capital brought the antagonism of class relations clearly into evidence. Now not only a revolutionary ideology was possible, but also a scientific theory of social change in its evolutionary and revolutionary phases–a theory that became the heir of utopian socialism (as a project for a social alternative), of bourgeois national economics (as a description of the basis of social processes), and of classical philosophy (as a method of thinking in terms of the whole). In this constellation of theories, from which Marxism was born as a scientific worldview, was manifested an epochal transition. The organization of all production under conditions of capitalism meant the evolution of a

single class of all wage earners, the proletariat. For the first time a class could understand the differentiation of classes as a *logical contradiction* between owners and nonowners of the means of production. Marx, Engels, and Lenin have outlined the theory of this epoch, that is, the era in which we are still living.

The recognition of this growing confrontation between two class opponents implies the understanding that in class struggle various interests of groups of owners and those of the strata of the exploited, in striving for their respective egoistical concerns, do not ally themselves with each other or thwart each other according to circumstances, but that they assume a *two-valued logical form* (that is, there are only two, mutually exclusive members, *A* and non-*A*) from which Lenin's rejection of a "third way" was derived.

It is an illusion that competition between groups of capitalists or the differentiation in the forms of wage labor also generate different class interests within each class. Whoever wins in the competition between corporations, the accumulation of capital will always advance; and in whatever area of production or service wage earners work, they remain subject to the general relations of capitalism, set in motion by others as dependent elements that produce surplus value.

Of course, in view of the separation of functions in the process of production, the class identity of those dependent on wages is now seldom experienced directly. To recognize this takes an effort of abstraction that springs from a theoretical analysis of social processes and structures. The less clear the relations and dependencies of the members of a society become, the more difficult it is for an individual to define his or her position. Opposed to a spontaneous development of class consciousness is the growing differentiation of job qualifications, which creates the appearance of individualization. Limited goals such as those pursued by citizen initiatives, for example, seem more sensible than complex problems of complete social change. In this respect the level of consciousness has clearly changed from what it was since the great beginnings of the labor movement. The mode of production of late capitalism did not change anything in the dualistic structure of class antagonism, but it has

spread over this structure the appearance of plurality and the illusion of individualization. Its character must be exposed again.

Action and theory

The make-up of our society is revealed in our political debates. Interest groups and parties are the institutions in which the opposition of the classes becomes politically apparent: employer associations and trade unions, bourgeois parties and workers' parties. Parties try in principle to win the support of all citizens independently of their class affiliation. They want to be "parties of the people." But this is an illusory aspiration because either they are representatives of the capitalist system and the ruling class, and thus not really of the people, or they represent the concerns of the people and must therefore oppose the interests of the ruling class. The mechanisms of parliamentary democracy disguise this antagonism and serve to integrate the parties of the nonowners into the power structure of the owners; the history of social democratic parties gives evidence of this.

The consciousness of class opposition as the historical reality of the society in which we live can only be awakened and maintained by a party whose mode of existence is critique and whose only identification is with the working class. This means that the working class must be the origin, subject, and object of this party. The origin, because such a party can arise only out of the working class; the subject, because the working class is the support of the party and affects the political action of the party through its assessment of society, its interests and hopes; the object, because the party that is made up of the active forces of the working class directs itself to the mobilization of the class as a whole. In a society that is divided into bourgeoisie and proletariat (to use the classical terms), a party that chooses the side of the proletariat exclusively can and must fulfill the role of the vanguard of the working class (cf. theses 5 and 7 in section 1 of this chapter).

What does this mean? Not that the party is omniscient and will always do the right thing; nor that it cannot learn from the experiences of people and the discoveries of science. It does mean that it is the spearhead and vanguard of the working class

in its struggles to realize its interests, and therefore also stands at the leading edge of the struggle for human interests. And it means that it assumes the risks and sacrifices associated with such an advanced position. The vanguard does not take its own path; it adopts the line of march of the leading forces of the class, but keeps a step ahead of it. It may not act spontaneously, but must check the facts, weigh the possibilities, and develop a plan. In doing this, it is possible for the party to make mistakes and necessary for it to accept defeats. Its losses are gains in experience that benefit the entire class. Vanguard experiments, even failed experiments, contribute to knowledge.

The word *vanguard* is derived from the French military term *avant-garde*. It refers to the party's function in the battle between the classes. But it implies something else just as important. Military action follows a strategy. A strategy is a concept of action based on knowledge. The vanguard can only be in advance of the class when it has a theory of its own action. It needs a developed and reflective consciousness of its class position and the special historical situation in which it finds itself. A theory can be true or false as demonstrated politically in action and errors can always be corrected in the course of action. Theory-guided practice is self-regulating–that is, the theory becomes modified in the processing of experience in practice. This is necessary, because the reality to which our actions are directed is always changing in and of itself (it is dynamic, not static), and it also changes as the result of our influence upon it. Every theoretical truth is therefore historically relative; it embraces a particular temporal situation and must change as that situation changes. Dogmatism is the paralysis of the vanguard, just as a lack of principles would be its collapse. But reality does not only change; it also has persisting, permanent elements that must be reflected as constants in a theory (cf. thesis 3 in section 1 of this chapter).

Knowing that dogmatism in theoretical discussions and bureaucratic execution of strategies by the party leadership are detrimental because they run against the dialectics of development and fail to activate the consciousness of party members does not mean of course that dogmatism and bureaucracy will be

avoided. Every organization has a tendency to bureaucratic rigidity, and all theoreticians run the risk of absolutizing and becoming rigidly locked into their own particular points of view. Appeals to good will are not sufficient here. Inner-party democracy (an organizational structure that includes its basic units in the process of shaping its position) is an indispensable aspect of communist party life, the neglect of which necessarily leads to distortions. The constant involvement of the membership in the process of theory development is the prerequisite for a process of position-formation that corresponds to the real vanguard function of the party. Theoretical knowledge and its translation into directions for strategic action may well reflect the objective situation of the working class, but that does not mean that the majority of its members are conscious of such knowledge. Rather, because this knowledge, in its experientially based and historically elaborated form, is developed only in the struggles of the vanguard, it does not at first form the content of general class consciousness.

For this reason, the theory and practice of the vanguard party, by being accepted and tested, become learning exercises through which the class consciousness of the working class as a whole is developed. A communist party that satisfies this lofty responsibility gradually assumes the leading role in the working class. It is self-evident that this is not a status that can be written into a constitution or program as something given; it needs to be proved constantly. But it is also evident that a communist party must set itself the goal of achieving the leading role in the working class, the only way it can realize itself as vanguard and standard bearer of progress.

This connection between theory and action determines the special relationship of a communist party to science. Scientific research and its results are not something external to it, that can be either accepted or rejected. Rather, the scientific nature of its worldview and guide to action is an essential characteristic of a communist party. If the unity of theory and practice were given up or demoted to a mere "alliance between theory . . . and the political movement" (Hans Jörg Sandkühler, *Unsere Zeit,* 10 November 1989), that is, to a cooperation of two different things,

then it would no longer be itself. It is in this unity that the party actualizes itself; it is the point at which the theory of history becomes historical action itself. This is the original meaning of the *criterion of practice,* a criterion that is much appealed to but often pragmatically misunderstood.

The historical identity of the party

In summary, a communist party is part of the working class (and only of the working class, and is therefore not a bourgeois-democratic collection of just any voters). In its hands the scientific worldview with its foundation in dialectical and historical materialism becomes realized. Its understandings and actions must therefore feed back into the workers' movement so that they contribute to the emergence and development of the class consciousness of the class as a whole. By its nature, a communist party is not just one of many instruments of political dispute within capitalism. Rather, it is the institutional mode of existence in which the historical movement that will lead (if successful) to the abolition of class society achieves its conscious (reflective) form. This is a historical-philosophical-categorical definition, not an empirical description. It remains valid even when the communist parties fall behind—whether this is due to the incompetence of functionaries or to structural contradictions in the historical situation. That the party is the ground on which a historical force is realized is the basis of its self-affirmation. The cruelest persecutions and bloodiest exterminations have not led to the disappearance of communist parties. Factions and splits have not destroyed them. No matter how weakened, communism has always reorganized and regenerated. A communist party is the form in which the class struggle uncompromisingly concentrates itself.

In times of weakness, such a claim may sound rash and unrealistic. But it is justified by the logic of class society. As long as class differences continue to exist there will be a struggle of the ruled against the rulers, and this struggle will always have need of an organized group of militants who are ready for action. The existence of a communist party is necessitated by the class structure of bourgeois society. Even if it is small, it can carry out

the conceptual preparation needed in advance of and parallel to the spread of class consciousness. Growing class consciousness, in turn, leads to the organizational growth of the party that represents the class standpoint without compromise, no matter how long this process may take.

Such a party takes its ideas and understandings of itself from its roots in the history of the workers' movement. It does not start here and now out of nothing. Its theory is a theory of history and thus of its own history, beginning with the emergence of the proletariat as a class and continuing in the class struggle. Experiences are brought together in this history and generalized into concepts and theories, errors are made and corrected, knowledge gained, and plans shaped for the future. What can be thought and done here and now takes place on the basis of this history; it is a part of our present.

Even when we criticize the developmental phases of the party, we cannot separate ourselves from them. And why should we if we are communists? The history of communism is a great and heroic history. It has had high points in the Paris Commune, in the October Revolution, in the struggles against fascism (in the Spanish Civil War, in the underground, and on the fronts of the World War II), in the Long March of the Chinese communists, in the Vietnamese war of liberation, and in the overthrow of the exploiter regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua. Historical-materialist analysis must inform us how and why the purity of communist norms was not maintained in the terrible struggles for survival against a flood of enemies, how the necessary violence of revolutionary change in society transformed itself into tyrannical repression, how emancipation and oppression became combined in the same situations and persons.

Moral condemnation of injustice is understandable, but the commitment it generates diminishes for subsequent generations and with the passage of time. We have to learn to see the contradictions and come to understand the people caught in their midst, having to make decisions, with the knowledge that they are at a crucial point in the class struggle. We must endure the memory of these contradictions and deduce from them norms for future conduct–the struggle for a classless society will never be free of

contradictions. Reappraisal of the past should not be made into a matter of the historical and political identity of the party, such that it derives its firmness only from memories of past struggles. On the other hand, the condemnation of past deeds is a moralistic exculpation that does not help the innocent victims. It can, however, make historical sense if one learns from the past what could have been done differently so as to have avoided the injustice. This kind of learning process is the true vindication of the victims. We know that great progress for humanity is not achieved without sacrifice. Only a humanity liberated from its prehistory (as Marx called it)–the historical contradictions of class society and class struggle–will be able to avoid the creation of innocent victims of personal despotism and structural power. It is precisely for this liberation that communists struggle.

The party, with all its contradictions and inadequacies, is the general medium within which the struggle of the classes, and thus also the struggle for the liberation of humanity, takes place with the most advanced (scientifically grounded) consciousness. No individual person can assume this historical position. Each is bound to his or her own standpoint and the perspectives it affords. Individuals can only contribute to the strength and orientation of the party by bringing their knowledge and effort to it and joining together with others. As we have said, a mode of production that engenders in each individual the appearance of his or her unique and separate individuality is an obstacle to insight into the collectivity of political conduct. To subordinate one's own will to that of the party in these times of individualistic ideology seems to be a quite unreasonable demand (we will return to this topic in section 4 of this chapter). The communist must tolerate this demand. Party discipline is indispensable in an organization of struggle.

A pragmatic view would be superficial, however. If the party is the organized vanguard of the working class, then the merging of the individual wills of its members–given all their various understandings, points of view, and motives–into a common action for acknowledged reasons is the form in which class consciousness achieves its advanced, militant reality. The *historical truth* of a situation (relative to the class position of the

historical subject) lies not in the abstract correctness of individual knowledge (although in some cases this may be superior to that of the collective), but in the sum total of individuals' knowledge relative to the accomplishment of a goal set by the politically active community. This sum total is arrived at through organization and fervent cooperation of comrades. Particular individuals may be "ahead of their time," and they should assert their ideas so as to keep the perspectives open, but in the unity of theory and practice they remain bound to the party and its capacity to act. Being thus bound is the condition that gives the party its effectiveness, and its formal principle is that of voluntarily acknowledged party discipline. It is this that determines the shape of *historical truth*, and only as such is it also a prerequisite for correct political action. Here, again, a communist party is different from all other parties of parliamentary democracy, for which claims to historical truth are precluded by the logical structure of class society.

It would be a misunderstanding to equate party discipline with a top-down command structure. There is obviously the danger of hierarchical distortions in every organization, and these must be vigorously resisted. This danger exists because in a process of policy-formation that originates in and is carried out by the basic party units, a unified strategy, coordination of activities, and capability of rapid response to changing peripheral conditions must be guaranteed by a cadre of functionaries. A party of struggle cannot be effective without a central leadership. What makes this centralism *democratic* is its constant linkage to the lowest levels of party organization and the involvement of the whole party in carrying out the party line worked out by the basic party units. In this communication process, it is possible for every comrade to express his or her opinions and views, and to take part in the settling of differences among comrades. The roots of the party in the class from which it has arisen and whose interests it represents are maintained only as long as such communication between the functionaries and party members is not broken off. To make the apparatus independent would be to detach the party's activity from the class foundation from which it takes its existence.

The apparatus must not make itself independent, but it is equally important that independent groups, tendencies, and factions not arise in a communist party. In bourgeois parties that are given to the semblance of representing the interests of diverse sections of the population, such divisions are merely the conspicuous expressions of such semblance. A communist party, the existence of which is based on the reality of two and only two classes, can hardly give in to this illusion of pluralism, which is the product of the ideology of its class opponents. The party has as many different voices in the formation of its opinions and positions as it has members, but it is *one* party *with one* line and one aim. It is part of the communists' identity to share, with their differences, in the unity of their party.

The communist party is conceived as a world-historical force in the epoch of a society made up of bourgeois and proletarian classes. Often, perhaps even as a rule, reality does not match the idea. That something is not yet that which, according to its nature, it could be, creates the opening in reality for the possible. *A is not yet A*–from this proposition, Ernst Bloch developed the principle of an open world. That communist parties actually match what they see themselves as ideally becoming is not a given; to believe that would be to commit the idealist error of equating reality with idea.

Whether or not party life approaches our idea of it in everyday practice depends on the involvement of comrades bringing themselves actively to the task with all their various personalities, experiences, and understanding, shaping together a political strategy, and preserving the unity of the organization and its activities in a disciplined way. Only then will the party have the kind of strength it once had, and that permitted its members to claim, "Wherever a comrade is, there is the party!"

4. The subject of history

What does it mean to be a communist today, at a time when the collapse of socialist societies is eroding the very force that, beginning with the October Revolution and continuing through the period of competition and coexistence, has defined our time as one of transition from capitalism to socialism. Currently, we

are experiencing a setback that appears to put this definition into question. Capitalism is rehabilitating itself. Even in the bastion of the socialist camp, the Soviet Union, there are tendencies toward restoration of presocialist relations of ownership and production, mixed in a strangely chaotic way with the socialist economic order. And a constitution placing power in a presidium is hardly the political form prescribed as a path to the classless society by the Marxist theory of the state.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have suggested the following emphasis for a situation that appears confusing to many Marxists: a basic insistence on dialectical- and historical-materialist theory, recognition of the origin of global problems in the capitalist economy, and the organizational form for political struggle against the dominant order of bourgeois society.

These analyses and reflections lead to the conclusion that class antagonism, and thus the class struggle, continues to define the economic and political constitution of world society, even if in some industrial centers this is disguised by relative well-being. But where are the subjects who are leading the class struggle? What are their prospects in this world of altered political forces?

Since the establishment of Soviet power by the October Revolution, and especially after the formation of a strong socialist camp after World War II, the class struggle has been carried out on two not always smoothly meshing levels: first, in the countries ruled by capital, as a domestic struggle of the exploited classes against the exploiters and their supporters; second, as the global political clash between the socialist and capitalist camps. The successes of the Soviet Union and its allies were successes for the communist movement as a whole. They gave strength to the revolutionary forces and compelled the ruling class of the capitalist countries to make social concessions, but also led to intensified political repression. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the sequence of the banning of the KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands [the Communist Party of Germany]),[1] the emergency laws, and the *Berufsverbot* [employment ban] was a prime example of dominance. The communist parties and liberation movements of the world could count on support from the socialist countries. The socialist countries could expect that the

strategies of the communist parties would be oriented to keeping up the strength of the socialist camp. Of course there were frictions between the national class struggles and global political considerations, but these were usually settled in a spirit of solidarity. In principle, the guideline of "what serves the Soviet Union also serves the advance of communism" remained valid–and this was logically and politically correct, because the Soviet Union was the spearhead of the new socialist order and the guarantor of world peace.

Growth and contradictions of capitalism

In the meantime, capitalism has begun to infiltrate and absorb the distinctive production relations of the former socialist countries; this will, however, introduce new and stronger contradictions into the basic opposition of wage labor and capital. On the one hand, the possibility of capital expansion in the massive potential market between the Elbe and the Sea of Okhotsk will mean an enormous stimulation for capitalism, because it will find there what it needs for the classical process of capital accumulation: a place for the investment for its accumulated surplus value, permitting the transformation of capital into surplus production, thereby creating new capital. On the other hand, this expansion will lead to intensified exploitation–social dismantling in the former socialist countries, reduction of workers' and trade-union rights in the metropolis, and increasing political repression. Moreover, technological development will increasingly relieve the profitable extension of production of human labor power, so that capital expansion will not mean a simultaneous increase in the number of jobs. Economic growth and mass unemployment do not exclude one another; instead, they go hand in hand. Capitalism has geared itself for the "two-thirds-society."

The economic success of capitalism–that is, the increase of social wealth in the possession of a minority–shows its inhuman face once again. Even if it succeeds at first, at least in the centers of capital, to keep the standard of living of the exploited and those disfranchised by exclusion from the production process above the absolute poverty level through "social cushioning," it

will leave people with a meaningless life, uprooted, excluded, and without prospects for the future. And this "mental impoverishment," to which Werner Hofmann shrewdly–although it was widely misunderstood–referred as "atrophy of the worker's entire humanity" (1967), has a corresponding physical side in the impoverishment of the masses in wide sections of the developing countries. The ruling class will be able to respond to both phenomena only through state-sponsored repression.

The assessment of the present strength of capitalism can start neither from the experience of the ever-recurring crises of capitalism nor from its constant general crisis, because crisis is precisely the essential form of motion in which this system exists. Nor can we start from the experience of its inhumanity, because, as Hegel already knew, this is its eternal and inseparable "dark side." Neither crises nor inhumanity stands in the way of capitalism's continued "blossoming" existence. Rather, in accord with the well-known passage from the preface to Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, we have to look to the relationship between the development of the productive forces and capitalist relations of production.

> No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. (Marx 1975, 262)

The scientific and technological revolution, which began and continues to grow within the framework of the capitalist relations of production, has certainly not yet reached the limits imposed by the social formation or by its own potential. As long as technological development enhancing human culture can advance under the domination of capitalism by its own methods, whatever the cost, capitalist relations of ownership will continue to thrive.

But in its bosom arise contradictions. The most conspicuous are those that we today designate as *global problems*–like mass misery in the disempowered countries of the Third World,

destruction of the environment, threats to peace, and violations of human rights (see section 2 of this chapter). Less conspicuous, but just as serious for future political tendencies, is the discrepancy between the higher qualifications and all-round intelligence demanded of the workers by the rapidly growing complexity of the new technology (meaning further development of personality, increased education, and associated feelings of self-worth) and the increasingly transparent way in which people are kept socially and politically dependent through the denial of rights to self-determination. The linkages among mechanisms of dominance and manipulation created by data-processing systems lead to still further loss of rights.

Moreover, the life-threatening risks linked to the use of nuclear-energy sources and the inhuman possibilities of gene technology will be impossible to restrict in the confrontation between the profit interests of the owners of the means of production and the self-preservation interests of those on the receiving end. In short, the organizational forms of state-monopoly capitalism are no longer controlled by human, rational criteria. The natural limits of growth and the pressures for the accumulation of capital cannot be harmonized. Everywhere in society, points of conflict are becoming obvious.

Dialectics of the economy

The totality in which the conflicts are disguised by the appearance of community ("social partnership") is the result of an abstract homogenization created by "the independence of money as process" (Marx 1974, 937), that is, by the constant movement of consumer goods in the process of circulation: money→commodity→money. This appearance of homogeneity is experienced by individuals as their "freedom" to be individual consumers. In fact, however, society does not consist "of individuals, but is the expression of the sum total of the relations in which these individuals stand to one another" (937). People are individuals only outside society, as Marx said. Concretely, they are "social determinations, relations of persons A and B. Person A is as such not a slave. He is a slave in and through society" (176). In their social determination, people enter into opposing

relationships–on one side of the totality stands the exchange of commodities, while on the other is their production. If money is the universal use-value on one side, it is the production of commodities by labor power that is the use-value on the other. "The only use-value that can be an opposition to and completion of money as capital is labor, and this exists in the labor power that exists as subject. As capital is money only in relation to that which is not capital, its negation in relation to which it alone is capital" (943). Capital presupposes labor and therefore the subjective nature of the subject, but it ignores and negates it by transforming labor, and with it the person who performs living labor, into a commodity. This contradiction of having need of a subject in order to annihilate it as subject and make it into a mere instrument of production is an indelible characteristic of capitalism and cannot be eliminated within capitalism. Its economic side is exploitation, the creation of surplus value through labor, a surplus value that not only must be produced by the workers in the form of the exchange-value of the product, but must also be realized by them through consumption. Thus the "imposition of consumption, . . . the accumulation of needs" (Hofmann 1967, 53ff.) becomes part of exploitation. The moral side of the contradiction of capital and labor is the denigration of human beings, their reduction to objects of manipulation, to mere tools for increasing capital.

These reminders of some fundamental and undeniable insights of Marx about the changing forms of capitalism lead us back to the question of freedom and self-determination, that is, the individual's role as subject in bourgeois society. It is harder to see this here than in any other form of society. The relationship of slave trader to slave and of master to servant was immediately visible as a personal relation of dependence–whether in cruel oppression or patriarchal kindliness, in sullen subjugation or voluntary loyalty. That was also true to a certain extent for patron and wage worker in early capitalism. As Engels described "the condition of the working class in England," the exploitive relationship was comprehensible from the fates of individual human beings. Child labor and excessively long workdays, early loss of employability and mortality without

protections, starvation wages and slums, all these were obvious indices of the inhumanity of the system. Less than a century ago clerks had to bring their own coal to heat their workplaces in winter! Workers and minor employees felt want and oppression on their own persons (Engels 1975a).

The anonymity of developed capitalist relations has disguised class oppositions. The high-living boss with the fat cigar familiar to us from cartoons could be experienced as an opposite to one's own position. The wealth and power of the stockholders and their representatives in the banks are, by contrast, distant and blurred. And the image is further obscured by its treatment in the mass media. Wherever a strong workers' movement has struggled successfully for higher wages and better social security in recent years, wherever the gap between "middle class" and working class has been reduced and the culture of the working class itself leveled into a general, undifferentiated consumerism, the obvious manifestations of class society have become less visible, easier consciously to grasp in theory than to experience in everyday miseries. This means that the development of class consciousness today demands abstractions that are greater in both number and complexity. Moreover, with technological progress the type of productive labor changes–fewer personnel are required and physical demands are lighter, and the number of those working in the service and administrative sectors is on the rise. The immediate horizon of work experience, and thus also the manner in which the relationship between wage labor and capital is represented in one's own life, has changed.

Capitalist economy also needs those who keep circulation (money→commodity→money) moving at an ever-accelerating pace, people with money to spend on consumer goods, at least in the heartlands. That will determine to some degree the policies on wages and social programs, but also the image of the so-called consumer society. "In contrast to the early stage of industry, . . . today's production depends to a large extent on mass sales and therefore above all on the earning power of non-independent workers. . . . As is amply apparent from a publicity system gone rampant, a large part of the business community is dependent on prosperity and gullibility in the hunting grounds of

the consuming masses, and even the biblical widow's mite is not spurned" (Hofmann 1967, 52). The integration of the broad masses into the circulation of money and commodity is part and parcel of the appearance mentioned earlier. Of circulation, Marx said, "Its immediate being is therefore pure appearance. It is the superficial appearance of a process that goes on behind one's back" (Marx 1974, 920). This process is the production of commodities in which what is produced for the owners is what enters into circulation and brings them new money. The real (not merely apparent) circulation is

money→production→ commodity→sales→more money.

At the level of the market, it looks like this: $money_1$ is put into the commodity, which yields $money_2$, and this can create the illusion that $money_1$ corresponds to $money_2$. The fact that money here is multiplied–through surplus value–is not apparent to the buyer. "Given the form of circulation, what becomes, what emerges, what is produced is money itself and nothing further" (Marx 1974, 926). Money is produced at the expense of the workers, who then become the consumers. They produce the commodity at a certain price, which they then pay for it in the end. The spiral of surplus value→investment→more surplus value is the true principle of the movement of capital. It demands constant expansion of markets and constant creation of new consumption.

Consumer slaves or free development of all

The creation of new consumption means the awakening of needs, whether this is done through the opening of new market areas by assimilating a simpler level of need and consumption into a more complex one, or through the intensification of consumption in an already opened market by extending the range of new products or variations and innovations of old ones. In this process, the need for a particular product can be separated from its actual use-value, because needs are shaped by social patterns of behaviors. "The means of advertising and enticement of consumers have the effect of lending things a specifically *social use-value* quite independently of the purposes that derive from their

physical nature" (Hofmann 1967, 55). With clothing styles, furnishings, and even technical equipment, especially automobiles, needs are clearly determined by "trend setters." The cunning of sales pitches based on promises of illusory utility lies in the fact that they address consumers in the appearance of their individual freedom of choice. Basic human needs are in fact natural and presocietal–even if in the meantime their satisfaction has become mediated by social production. As a needful being whose original drives for satisfaction are directed by biologically inherited needs, each individual person experiences himself or herself as an individual self. It is true that the human mode of satisfying needs through the intervention of instruments (means of production) has created a complex domain of derived social needs that have inserted themselves between the individual and the natural satisfaction of his or her needs. But this "system of needs" in which the nature of the person is manifested in the "ensemble of social relations" can only be understood through historical, technological, and sociological analyses, whereas the particular wish to consume appears to the individual as an expression of the individual self. Thus it is possible at the level of consumption for individuals to imagine themselves most immediately as free subjects, and the purchase of a commodity is experienced as "freedom"–quite independently of the individuals' actual purchasing power.

Meanwhile, in fact, "the need to consume has become the real need of industry." But today, "in this time of mass production, of production for the masses, of increasingly extravagant advertising wars, of ever-craftier and more aggressive methods, the needs of production become felt by consumers as their own. . . . Things lose their innocence as objects of personal satisfaction and in the act of choice by the purchaser an alien will is introduced. Thus at the center of the supposedly remaining sphere of individual freedom there occurs a progressive infiltration and collectivization of the will. . . . Impoverishment can take place in consumption itself, an alienation from the human purpose of available things and from the very needs of those caught up in the process" (Hofmann 1967, 53–55). Under the guise of free choice in the satisfaction of needs, the person as consumer

becomes a transmission belt in the production process, guided by alien forces in accordance with the spiral of surplus value→ investment→production→circulation→new surplus value. The needs of human beings, presumably those needs associated with the most private and inner aspects of their personalities, become dictated by the accumulation mechanisms of capital. The sham freedom of the individual in capitalism is in reality the compulsory domination of the person by the laws of capital utilization. In place of the "free development of each" individual demanded by the *Communist Manifesto*, we find the subsumption of individuals under capital. Not even individual capitalists can escape the constraints of these relations of production. Their privileged positions only allow them to create for themselves more spacious, more luxuriously outfitted cages in which to seek their pleasures.

But the basic contradiction does not lie in greater or less pleasure, consumption, luxury, or even in wealth and poverty. If this were the case the problem could be solved in a simple fiscal manner by creating a more "just distribution" (as suggested by many social democratic theoreticians and politicians). Rather, the basic contradiction is that of capital and labor–not of capitalist and laborer. The determination of production relations by capital accumulation leads to the dehumanization of the people. The system of needs becomes not a medium in which the all-round development of human possibilities and the individual personality can take place, but is degraded to the ground on which circulation (money→commodity→money) takes place. Only its victims can combat this dehumanization. The subject of historical progress in our epoch is created by the basic contradiction of capital and labor.

Class consciousness and political action

In order to become an actor in the political-historical process, it is not sufficient simply to be a victim. It is necessary to know it and to rebel against it. Rebellion against an institutionalized power apparatus has a prospect of success, has a sense of bringing about historical progress, only if knowledge of exploitation and repression is coupled with a recognition of the forward

positions, tendencies, and laws of history within which the revolutionary movement actualizes itself. This recognition brings insight into the structural opposition of capital and labor as it expresses itself in the opposition of the capitalist and working classes. The capitalist class commands the power apparatus of the state, whose mechanisms of domination are also brought to bear on the contradictions among particular capital interests and groups in order to balance them out and give them a common denominator. The exploited must create for themselves the power required for unity and the balancing of special interests in their own ranks. This can be done only if they acknowledge the laws of motion of capitalism in all its various and contradictory forms and the fundamental contradiction of bourgeois society. But this is not easy. The required knowledge does not lie ready to hand in everyday experience.

Production is today, as it always has been, social production, even if it takes place under private ownership. But individual producers, the workers, are separated from the social production process. They experience themselves as replaceable, estranged, isolated in this or that place within the production organization, not seeing the whole process, and they certainly do not have a part in directing it. They feel themselves consuming as individual selves among many others. The ideologues of individualism and pluralism (see part 1 of this chapter) reinforce this appearance and encourage the tendency to mind one's own business. The advantage to the power-holders comes from the rule of *divide and conquer*.

Class struggle takes place on many levels. It is a struggle for a greater share of the social wealth, for higher wages and for the maintenance and broadening of social programs. It is a struggle for a voice in the workplace and in the processes that shape the national and global economy of our time (e.g., in the European Community, development policies, world trade). Such influence is only possible when it is organized. It is the struggle for trade-union rights in policy making. Class struggle is also a struggle for human interests against private interests (global problems) and from the start it must be recognized that the class interests of capitalists are opposed to human interests. Anyone not taking

that to heart will be forever dealing with mere symptoms, and no matter how important that may be, it is not enough. In the final analysis, then, class struggle is a political struggle of the working class for power. It is this that raises the question of organization. Only the politically organized working class can be the subject of historical progress. "The free development of each" does not happen in the beginning; it is the result of organized struggle. It is the victor's prize that falls to humanity when the classless society has been won.

Today, the nature of work has changed in the wake of the scientific and technological revolution. There has been a shift in the composition of wage earners from production to the performance of services. Individual activity spaces have become more common, bringing about a corresponding alteration in the way workers think of themselves. It becomes easier to think of social conflicts as isolatable differences of interest that can be resolved by individual actions than to see them as manifestations of class opposition (which is why in matters of the environment, for example, the citizen's initiative has been so popular as a means of achieving political ends). This kind of understanding remains inside the capitalist order and therefore in principle changes nothing in its contradictions. There are thus varying relations among the masses of wage earners regarding their own class position. Most common are illusions about the reformability of capitalism; theoretically informed class consciousness is rarer. Not everyone understands what is structurally important. "Independently of the substantive peculiarity of labor, members of the working class are those who are forced to live from the sale of their labor power and are forced by capital to perform unpaid surplus labor, those who function as living instruments in the process of the reproduction of capital and are thus exposed to the alternation of accumulation and crisis as long as capitalist relations continue to exist" (Peter 1983, 26). Surely the unionized workers immediately engaged in the production process have more opportunities to become conscious of their class membership. On the other hand, the appropriation of theoretical concepts that belong to the development of class consciousness is easier for those who are accustomed to dealing with higher-level abstractions in the workplace. It is probably

less possible now than it was in the time of Marx and Engels to link the understanding of the class character of one's own political subjectivity "to the concrete labor activity of the individual worker" (Peter 1983, 25). It is fundamentally true, however, that all who must sell their labor power as a commodity are victims of the inhumanity of capital.

Science and philosophical worldview

Activation in the class struggle does not follow spontaneously from dependence on the relations of wage labor, but is a political process. It presupposes the "politicization" of the individual and is tested in both political engagement and theoretical reflection. It needs the political "focus" on which experience, practice, and theory are combined, and the individual perspective matures into a class standpoint in collective action. The understanding of economic relations can sometimes be gained individually, but its translation into political action demands organization. It is true that the potential subject of the class struggle is the class of wage laborers as a whole, but the real subject is the organized community of the politically active, the party of class conscious workers. Its task is to develop class consciousness and inject it into the working class, to manifest the theoretical principles and perspectives of the class struggle, and to prepare and carry out the actions required by the class struggle. The state of consciousness in the working class has still today many of the characteristics we have described. The individual as consumer, as the carrier of artificially developed needs, is dominated by value notions furnished by the ruling class. This system of production, needs, and consumption, along with its ideology, alienates people from reasonable self-determination and self-development. As a consequence of its own compulsion for expansion, this system may, in the foreseeable future, following increasingly intensified intervals of crisis, finally lead to the extinction of the human species. It must be opposed by an alternative system, socialism, which must be publicized and struggled for if humanity is to survive with dignity. Whoever works for this–by setting reasoned goals and working to achieve them–will contribute to

the possibility that the political subject of progress can take shape as a collective subject. In this sense, the communists–and I mean those who share a Leninist understanding of the party–are certainly not the subjects of history, but they definitely are (and I intend this in a strictly logical sense) "exceptionally special" subjects. They are those who, under the most unfavorable conditions and in small numbers, are the first to pave the way on which then the main force of progress can advance. As Gisela Elsner writes, "We are just beginning again to seek the beginning of the beginning of the way that will eventually take us to our goal" (1990). Without such optimism a communist cannot exist.

3
Philosophical-Political Perspectives of Marxism Today

We are experiencing, shocked and confused, the failure of the construction of socialist societies. Socialism, which we wished to develop from utopia to science, seems to have been merely a utopia that does not stand up to reality, at least the reality of our time. Marxist theory was understood as *scientific socialism*. Is the theory, therefore, also invalid? Is the teaching of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, as some maintain, denied by the reality that it encountered? Do we need social democracy without Marx and the associated theoretical tradition?

These questions are not unjustified–because Marxism, as distinct from all previous philosophy, is defined as unity of theory and practice; it claims the criterion of practice as the determinant of truth. Therefore, it must also be tested by its practice.

Marxism is a philosophy concerned not only with this or that aspect of the world, but also with correct thinking (like logic), with the principles and experiences of knowledge (like epistemology), and with the rules of correct actions (like ethics). It aspires to conceive the world as a whole, to present nature and society in their development, and to attain this conception from the insights of science culminating in an overall interconnection as a *scientific worldview*. It stands in the tradition of the great philosophical systems and embraces all branches of philosophy.

Every human being has a worldview–more or less conscious, more or less encompassing, more or less coherent. Without a worldview–for "all men are 'philosophers,'" as Antonio Gramsci said (1971, 347)–no human can assimilate innumerable

daily impressions into a coherent picture that provides a locus on which to base his or her own activities. Marxism is, like every philosophy including an "everyman philosophy," an orientation of knowledge–or as I would rather say–an orienting or guiding model. It is unique in that it offers not only "objective" knowledge, which is simultaneously independent of human actions. It incorporates the interests that guide people's actions in a model that also must be understood as constantly changing. Therefore, Marxism is not only knowledge about history but also historical knowledge.

The basic philosophical outline is well known: the starting thesis that the world is material; the basic character of dialectics as a theory of change and development, of contradictions and their movement with and against one another, of interpenetration within the totality of interconnections; the recognition that the human species reproduces itself through the production and the resulting explanation of human history out of development of the productive forces and their organization into production relations. This basic model is broad enough to include differentiated individual, even contradictory, concepts and to be open to new aspects. In this sense Marxism is an "open system." A theory is dialectical and oriented on reality (and therefore realistic) only if it can encompass changes within itself and can express them within its conceptual framework. A theory must therefore have basic constants that give the theory its identity–here as dialectical and historical materialism–and must have sufficient variables in order not to fossilize the historical. In this sense Marxism does not become outdated or "refuted." Moreover, it is capable of explaining the collapse of the socialist societies and the crippling of Marxism in the institutions of theory building.

The strength of Marxist philosophy

Naturally there also are other theories besides Marxism–or to use the fashionable term–other paradigms that explain nature and history. We have analytic and discourse hermeneutic, structuralist, and openly irrational philosophies (to mention a few types) competing with and mutually relative to one another under the general cover of the postulate of pluralism. The

relativism of the systems–as long as sixty years ago there was talk of "anarchy of systems" (Kroner 1929)–results from the view that every philosophy is able to articulate only partial aspects, isolated perspectives of reality. The view of the whole in its essential interconnections and thereby the ability to orient a philosophy are lost by pluralism.

In contrast, Marxism can maintain its theoretical superiority as a philosophy of the world as a whole. This rests on five characteristics (among others) that seem to me to be the most important.

1. As historical materialism, Marxism is *a rational explanatory model of historical processes.* The dialectics of productive forces and production relations, the dialectics of conditions of nature and human labor, the dialectics of exploiter and exploited, and the laws of surplus value and capital accumulation are the key categories for the movement of social being. The analysis of the expression of these objective relationships in ideological form (philosophy and religion, art and literature, law and economic concepts, usage and meaning, etc.) enables us to understand the historicity of the forms of social consciousness. Consciousness and being are related to one another by the theory of relative and absolute truth. In this model of history people can determine their own place, orient themselves, determine the direction of development of the historical process and its alternatives, and make and explain their own decisions in the interaction between the social general and private individual.

2. As a universal dialectics of nature, or as dialectical materialism, Marxism is *a construction principle of the interconnectedness of all things*, of the totality of the world. The world as a whole can never be an object of our experience because it extends beyond every possible experience; but it is the prerequisite for our experiencing parts and segments of the world, because every limited object of experience includes something from beyond its own limits, it is something "surrounded," from which the limited (segment) "is cut out of." The totality of interconnection, which is not embraced by a given experience, can only be constructed methodically and pictured in a model. This is precisely what the universal reflection theory

achieves, constructing the world as a system interaction, as a system reflecting all its elements and parts, in which contradictions coexist in a law-governed way and are sublated (see Holz 1983).

3. As scientific socialism, Marxism projects *an outline of a humane social order.* It does this not by projecting a finished, utopian picture of humanity in a future society. Instead, on the basis of analysis of the essential laws of historical processes, Marxism discloses the possibilities of the future that derive from the present contemporary forms of socialization. In this way Marxism arrives at a human form of existence that contrasts with the inhumanity of present reality. The understanding of the social conditions that block the realization of the matured essence of humankind makes it possible to engage in political activities to achieve this goal. If we call the realization of the species-being of humankind in its specificity *freedom* ("the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx and Engels, 1975, 506), then scientific socialism foreshadows the way into the "Realm of Freedom."

4. As a scientific philosophy, Marxism articulates *the problems of its time in conceptual form,* that is, it yields not only concepts of them, which according to the aspect from which it is viewed can produce different results, but it displays their historical origins, their interconnections within itself, its unitary character as the phenomenal form of the essential characteristics of capitalistic production relations and bourgeois society. It displays itself in this way also by simultaneously recognizing itself, that is, Marxism, as the special form of reflection of its own epoch, not standing outside of history. It thereby avoids a claim to absolute truth, as was characteristic of previous all-embracing philosophical theories, of metaphysics. It does this without abandoning the right to claim historical truth against pluralism and relativism. Marxism thereby fully corresponds to Hegel's definition that philosophy is "its time grasped by thought" (1970, 26)

5. As a guide to political action, Marxism establishes a *unity of theory and practice.* This does not mean simply that every

practice is accompanied and guided by theoretical considerations, as would be true, in this trivial sense, for every action, including every politics. In Marxism, philosophical theory and political practice penetrate to the core of the way that every theoretical conception is defined as a moment of practice, as a position on the fronts of the class struggle. On the one hand, this means that only scientifically established objective truth can be an integral moment of Marxist theory because false scientific claims would be damaging for one's own strategy in the class struggle. Only on this basis of scientific truth can philosophical totalizing lead to action-oriented moments of practice and thereby form a unity of theory and practice.

Of course, various totalizing philosophical projects are always possible on the basis of scientific knowledge, as would always be true for specific segments of reality; they must, however, be critically differentiated. The three sides of this "triangle" of theoretical project, practice, and theoretical critique are linked through a mutual feedback relationship. From practice comes a theoretical project, which, in turn, influences practice; practical application influences the criticism of theory, and theory, in turn, influences the theoretical project. The separation of philosophy from practice is "transcended" (although it is also of course retained, because theory is something other than practical action) to the dismay of the "pure" philosophers who believe they are protected from the raw winds of social reality in their contemplative corner.

These five points outline what Marxist philosophy accomplishes. At the same time, they indicate what Marxism *is not* at present and what it was not in the past. After all, not every system that considers itself or calls itself Marxist is Marxist. This is a self-evident truism, which applies not only to Marxism. Every great advance in thought has also given rise to a deformed variant.

The Marxism that is spoken about here has at no time degenerated to a deformed stage (as self-deprecating lamentations sometimes try to convince us) and is in no way in crisis, as its political opponents, particularly the most petty ones,

deliberately maintain. One can see that this is not so when non-Marxist theoreticians busily make use of Marxism's conceptual instruments–even though with different intentions. If we want to analyze the crisis of socialist practice, that is, the downfall of socialist societies, we would do well to apply Marxist theory. It is not sufficient to say that Marxism was originally a critical form of self-reflection of capitalism and expressed the internal contradictions of bourgeois society, a function which it perhaps can continue to fulfill. After the October Revolution, Marxism-Leninism was also the theoretical expression of the construction of socialism in a differentiated historical unity. Original Marxism, along with its critical content on the self-contradictions of bourgeois society, also included a project for the future (which no one will seriously deny) and in the Soviet Union attempted for the first time to bring it into being in a long, contradictory, and now failed process.

Theoretical errors

The collapse of socialist construction obviously had primarily an economic basis. Russia had been a backward country ("weakest link in the chain") compared to the Western capitalist countries. Campaigns of intervention were mounted, external threats imposed (during the entire existence of the Soviet state), and consequently the arms race (contrary to the nature of the system) was forced on it. The destruction from World War II also added to the Soviet Union's difficulty in overcoming its backwardness. (Details must be discussed elsewhere.) The chance to build and stabilize a socialist country even under these unfavorable conditions certainly existed, but to do so required an accurate theoretical analysis and a correct characterization of the epoch and its forces. On this foundation the social and political strategy and education for a socialist consciousness could have been built. At least two *fundamental* errors were made in the application of Marxist theory to this task. From these errors came a series of mistakes, illusions, legitimation ideologies, and the setting of unrealistic goals, followed finally by a general stagnation in theory and practice.

1. The description of the internal contradictions and signs of decay in the capitalist system resulted in *the correct theory of the general crisis of capitalism.* In fact, capitalism, since World War I, has been in a permanent crisis, although with wave-like movements. The crisis means more than stock market crashes and bankruptcies. *General* crisis means that the free-market system, which characterized the economic character of bourgeois society with its progressive idea of human self-determination, along with the culture that corresponded to this idea, was destroyed by the formation of monopolies and oligopolies; this view of society became a fiction. The plundering of nature grew to the point of threatening humanity; the riches of the industrial countries grew in an ever-greater disproportion to the misery of the exploited Third World; technological progress escaped from all social control; permanent mass unemployment developed in the "first world" countries, despite their differences and temporary fluctuations; wars somewhere in the world always originate from or are provoked by capital, among them two world wars in thirty years; a creeping devaluation of money continues inexorably; education and moral systems collapse, crime and drug consumption increase. The indices speak a clear language, and no historian would hesitate to speak of a crisis when looking at such a society.

Nevertheless, it was *false to conclude* that the general crisis of capitalism also meant its increasing weakness and collapse, and that socialism would continue to gain strength and necessarily, if it could protect itself from aggression, win the competition between the two systems in the not-too-long term. First of all, the resources of social wealth at the disposal of capitalism to use against the exploited were grossly underestimated. Second, it was not understood that *crisis is a form of motion of capitalism,* in which internal contradictions form a unity of opposites and that the contradictions had by no means reached the limits of tearing that unity apart. Third, it was not recognized that a controlled development of the productive forces was possible within the framework of capitalist relations of production; problems arising from this development could be overcome even

with decreasing expectation of long-term stability. Therefore, although the general explanatory model was not wrong, inadequate concretizations and the incorrect, schematized way in which they were applied led to mistaken estimates, errors in intermediate- and long-term planning, and unjustified self-confidence. The dialectic of mediation between general and particular was incorrectly understood.

2. From the correct thesis of the general crisis of capitalism and justified pride in the victory of the October Revolution, the era was designated as *the transition from capitalism to socialism.* If, in the long-term analysis, this characterization referred to the potential tendency of social processes, then it was certainly not false and would only be proved wrong if the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production led to the extinction of the human species (already a real possibility). In this view, socialism was perceived as the worldwide goal of the history of our time and the real, existing socialist societies the first steps of its realization. The internal difficulties and contradictions of these socialist societies were greatly underestimated. It was often thought that these problems could be solved by administrative methods. The problems were, however, of a structural nature. They arose from the economic weakness of the socialist countries in relation to the industrialized capitalist countries; from dependence on a world market dominated by capitalism while in competition with it; from the persistence of presocialist consciousness and forms of action in much of the population as a reaction to externally imposed socialist institutions, and the consequent prolongation of the dictatorship of the proletariat through the working-class party, all of which increasingly weakened the revolutionary acceptance of the state of affairs.

In practice, this ongoing strained situation led to living beyond one's means, to overestimation of, and excessive reliance on, the "subjective factor" (despite theoretical assurances to the contrary). The demands made on the people therefore exceeded their capacity and readiness to respond. In theoretical terms, this disparity was expressed in the illusionary estimate that the working class, with a socialist consciousness, had already

achieved hegemony in the society. With this hegemony supposedly assured, implying also the support of the masses, it was no longer necessary to debate the correct foundations of theory and develop it further. Hegemony was simply proclaimed as if it were a generally accepted cultural value. The classic basic theoretical positions of Lenin and Gramsci on hegemony were thereby ignored.

What is hegemony?

The false estimate of the development of the general crisis of capitalism and the underestimation of the contradictions and countermovements in the epochal process of transition from capitalism to socialism (as the specific negation of capitalism and its historical alternative) necessarily led to abbreviating the concept of hegemony. As a result, on the one hand, the appearance presented by administratively controlled culture was equated with the actual processes and content of consciousness in the socialist countries. In the capitalist countries, on the other hand, there was talk of "a breaking-point situation" in the working-class movement in which it was "necessary and also possible to move from isolated and partially defensive struggles to class struggles of an all-embracing, hegemonic character and strike out at capitalist relations" (Geisselbrecht 1987).

The task is to probe the fundamental content of the concept of hegemony as a category of developed historical materialism. It is essential not to define the hegemony concept too narrowly and one-sidedly. Hegemony refers to the structure of the relationship of *dominance* in a class society. Dominance means leadership in alliance with other classes *before* the revolution. *After* the revolution, leadership and rule in the state are based on power in the hands of the working class. Strategically, the hegemony concept applies to the struggle of the working class for political power, which should enable it to abolish class relationships. Theoretically, the hegemony concept in a class society denotes a fundamental formation-specific method of effectively taking power, securing the emergent production relations by institutional guarantees of property, establishing social and technological labor relations, communications, family structure, education, scientific

work–a way of life in general, norms of behavior, setting of goals and horizons of expectations, and expressing them in morals, art, religion, and philosophy. The totality of this institutional and ideal objectivization that more or less coherently lies at the base of these all-embracing conceptions we call a *worldview.* The dominance of a ruling class consists in its being able to achieve a consensus that includes the ruled and exploited people, a consensus based on acceptance of the essential features of its worldview so that it needs to use only limited repression or open force. Hegemony of an exploiting class in regard to worldview and culture signifies that the internal contradictions and mechanisms of oppression of the social order are made acceptable to the exploited or remain hidden from them in the framework of an integrated model associated with the worldview. The hegemony of a class thus means the general acceptance of it own worldview (for example, the polis-based Greek mythology, the ethos of the Roman Republic, the Christian religion of feudal society in the middle ages, the ideas of the French Revolution).

These examples show that the hegemonic worldview is characterized by a complex system of dominant and normative modes of people's behavior. Questions about the meaning of the world, about the causes of natural occurrences, about the accepted social values, the correct method of thinking must be capable of being answered and integrated by a hegemonic worldview so that the individual can react positively to it. "Positive" includes also a critical stance as long as it remains within the framework of the overall model. It is obvious that a historical-materialist worldview must not stand in contradiction to the concrete needs of the people that are historically conditioned by the mode of production if the worldview is to have a binding, guiding role. (For this reason ascetic movements have never been able to gain dominance in history.)

It is now a fact documented by many examples of acculturation that the structure of needs in regions that are more highly developed technologically and economically are seen as worthy goals to being aspired to, or even as ideals, in regions at the next lower stage of development. Marx thus had reason to see that the

development of communism was tied to the level of the productive forces and an abundance of social wealth that could guarantee the all-round satisfaction of material needs.

On the basis of an immense, rapid process of technological innovations, capitalism generates an offering of goods that substantially shapes and channels the needs of the people at the cost of balanced development and, of course, at the cost of the exploited sections of the population and others who contribute to the creation of this great wealth but who do not share in it. The socialist societies were based on a different system of needs but were not free from the temptations of the apparent riches that this range of goods represented. Since socialism was economically weaker than the capitalist metropolises, it was inevitable that in the competition between social and cultural achievements on the one hand and overcoming the lag in consumer-goods production on the other it increasingly failed to construct an alternative to the bourgeois social outlook. The people reacted with apathy toward socialism and developed illusions about what capitalism would bring them, while the governments reacted with bureaucracy and restriction of individual freedom.

In this way the struggle for the hegemony of the revolutionary working class in the socialist countries was lost. Bourgeois ideology began to infiltrate the socialist countries and gain strength by attaching itself to elements of the presocialist worldview. Since the overall view of scientific socialism could no longer be brought into harmony with people's expectations, it retreated to abstract generalities about everyday life; theory was calcified in schematics, philosophy no longer integrated with the specific objective practice, the latter thereby surrendering to positivist, regressive, piecemeal thinking and methods that were implicitly taken over from the worldview of Western philosophy of science. Not that it would be bad to acquire knowledge from other systems of thought. Science is inconceivable otherwise. What was bad was that without conviction in one's own worldview, the ideological interpretation of the useful knowledge was also taken over from the other system.

The failure of the socialist camp to gain hegemony meant the reduced attractiveness of the socialist alternative model, and with

it also the weakening of the ability of the Communist movement to struggle for hegemony in the capitalist countries; the basis for revolutionary change became ever weaker. A paradoxical situation arose. On the one hand, Marxism's explanatory power was increasingly recognized even by non-Marxist philosophers, writers, and others and was at least partly expressed in their work. On the other hand, Marxism's capacity for imparting social-political guidance increasingly diminished. We now find ourselves in the final stage of this decline.

Philosophy in the scientific age

There is a saying: when one is in the valley one can only go upward. But this topographical metaphor is incorrect. Without action there can be no upward motion; one remains at the bottom. One must put on one's pack and scout the territory in order to find the correct path. What is the task then of Marxist theoreticians today? Where is the path to be trod?

The scientific method became a significant component of the worldview of our century not as a consequence of the Enlightenment, but in the wake of the development of science into an important force of production. The norms and forms of scientific method shape even the rhetoric of unscientific, pseudoscientific, or antiscientific concepts. The growth of irrationalism in the bourgeois world does not contradict this, because even irrationalism subjects itself to the principle of rational argument, in effect to construct irrationalism rationally. The claim of scientific rationality is even extended to its contradiction. Irrationalism is only an expression of the attempt to legitimize the failure of bourgeois ideology to sustain the postulates of its own scientific method and thereby to hypostatize and establish a "constitutional status" for the contradictions of bourgeois society (see Holz 1981, 1985).

The scientific character of its worldview is the source of the actual modernity and superiority of Marxist-Leninist socialism. This is in contrast to a worldview of an agnostic character that separates off fact from value judgment and regards only the collection and logical analysis of data as scientific, leaving no scientifically substantiated basis for guiding life's direction. All

theoretical *and* practical actions are subordinated in Marxism-Leninism to norms of a scientific character enriched by the totality of reflections. Not narrowed scientistically, such a universality of scientific character as an attitude toward life is first made possible by the elaboration of the (materialist) dialectic, making it possible to understand contradictions as moments of "reason in history" and thereby to construct a rational system of historical progress. The Marxist scientific worldview can therefore offer a project for a homogenous guide to knowledge capable of further development, one that can embrace the ideals and institutional variety of our world relationship in accordance with a unified principle and can explain their meaning. It then has the potential, even within the bourgeois world, to overcome ideological helplessness and open new perspectives.

Marxism, I have argued, offers a worldview capable of development because it is a scientific worldview. Science embraces the empirical testing, modification, and correction of its own content (including the elimination of concepts that have been shown to be false or have become untenable theoretically). A scientific worldview, accordingly, is subject to the criterion that the state of scientific knowledge must not contradict its self-correcting advances. It is therefore both critical and self-critical: critical in that it indicates inconsistencies of theories and their interpretations, and self-critical in that it corrects its lagging-behind scientific progress of knowledge and correspondingly modifies, expands, and renews its concept of a model. Only by being critical and self-critical can a worldview adequately provide guidance in a scientific age. Otherwise, it would oppose the historical process of the unfolding of knowledge and the productive forces and be "reactionary." It is evident that the self-correction of the guidance of knowledge is guaranteed only if no damage is done to the particular class interests that should be protected. The scientific worldview first becomes hegemonic in a society in which the production relations must lead to elimination of classes, for which the transition to a classless society is decisive. The development of science into a dominant productive force expresses the tendency already present in capitalist society to make the worldview scientific. Marxism expresses this

tendency in the unfolding of its theoretical positions in the struggle for the historically necessary change in the consciousness of the masses; thus it leads the struggle of worldviews for cultural hegemony.

The result is a new historical situation in relation to previous social formations. The hegemony of a class implies that its own worldview prevails. In the transition from one form of class society to another, parts of the ruling class maintain their form of exploitation by adjusting to the new production relations. For example, in the transition from feudalism to capitalism (sustained by absolutist social institutions and forms of organization), many old ruling structures and constitutional forms were retained. In correspondence with the demands of the new mode of production, the contents of the worldview of the rising class became hegemonic under the old ruling relationships. The representatives of the feudal nobility who were moving into capitalist forms of production with new class structures were coming closer to the bourgeoisie in class interests and could, at the same time, accept significant elements of its worldview. The French *Encyclopedia*, which organized and unified both knowledge and worldview, is a visible evidence of this ideological process. The cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie as the leading class over the nobility was established even before the French Revolution and prepared the way for it.

The working class is in a different situation. Its historical mission is to eliminate the particular class interests of the exploiting classes so that no classes remain that can carry over their special interests and reassert them under socialism. This means that the working class cannot simply reproduce in itself the profit interests of the bourgeoisie in a changed form. The bourgeoisie has no motivation for accepting the worldview of the working class–scientific socialism as an expression of historical progress in which the bourgeoisie as a class, even though a changing class, could participate. There is no organic transition from bourgeois to proletarian interests. Thus, a model that was successful in the eighteenth century for gaining cultural hegemony under the conditions in which the old ruling relations continued cannot be applied to the ideological struggle in the period of

transition from capitalism to socialism. The bourgeois concept of conversion to a new worldview attempted in the sixties and seventies by progressive intellectuals as a political strategy for changing the system did not correctly take into account questions of class structure. Despite the strong representation of these progressive groups in education and the mass media at the time, this strategy was necessarily ineffective (though one cannot say it was routed).

After the failure of the first attempt to construct a socialist society in one part of the world, it should be clear that the question to be posed is that of the strategy for the future of socialism. The single-mindedness and brutality with which all forms of existence and institutions of cultural life of the former socialist countries are being destroyed today in order to absorb them in the ideological apparatus of bourgeois society leave no doubt about the uncompromising and determined worldview of the bourgeoisie, notwithstanding the dissenting and well-intentioned stand of a few. Included as a significant and indispensable part of a scientific worldview are also political actions taken with the basic assumption that history can be shaped in accordance with *scientific principles*–the priority of the general over the particular interest on the basis of the recognition of what is good and necessary for the human species (and not only for some people). A politics based on such a scientific and historical philosophy is necessarily in conflict with the special interests of the ruling class. Therefore in order to protect itself a scientific worldview must oppose the splintering of the social consciousness into the arbitrariness of "equally valid opinions." Pluralism is the strategy of the bourgeoisie to defend its hegemony.

On the other hand, the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution can only be absorbed and integrated into the life goals of the people within a scientific worldview. We need a project for the future in which our technological abilities, human needs, and natural conditions of life are made compatible with one another and that enables us to plan our actions. Scientific rationality, not only in detailed research, but also in the dialectical construction of the overall interconnection, is a necessity for the survival of humanity. In our time no

worldview other than Marxism projects a rational concept of the world as a whole, of history, and of the historical relations of humanity to nature. This constitutes the potential superiority of Marxism and its future perspective. The more pressing the problems of humanity become, all the more will humanity again seek guidance in Marxist theory.

Therefore everything depends on not allowing any dulling of this theoretical instrument, keeping it open for developments taking place in the world. It must be precise in its conceptual structure and method, free of schematics, critical of mere wishful thinking, and militant in its consciousness that progress is effected only through overcoming particular interests.

Marxism remains the only contemporary philosophy in the modern tradition not permeated by irrational influences. The rising bourgeoisie, struggling for its hegemony, achieved dominance of its worldview in the sciences in the seventeenth century –as documented in the works of Galileo, Descartes, and Bacon. Between 1600 and 1830, philosophy, science, and technology developed in unison, which led to the establishment of capitalist production relations with bourgeois-democratic political forms institutionalized in the course of the nineteenth century in the constitutions of the leading industrial states. It is illusory to view this struggle for bourgeois hegemony, in the class interests of the bourgeoisie, as an expression of the general interests of humanity. At the same time, the political and philosophical theory of the bourgeoisie, as its class interests are realized, imparts to these "heroic illusions" a content that points beyond, and increasingly comes into contradiction with, that supposed reality and the practice derived from that theory. The Marxist critique of capitalism can tie into the intentions of the Enlightenment, incorporate its tendency to universal rationality and science, and deal with the more complex forms of the contemporary methods of production resulting from the scientific and technological revolution. Bourgeois ideology, to the contrary, must deny or oppose the essential contents of its own tradition–as it has from Nietzsche to today's fashionable postmodernism–without being able to propose a new interpretation in its place. All worldview offerings of the

twentieth century (except Marxism) remain splinters and surrogates (cf. *Bruder Nietzsche?* 1988; Gedo et al. 1990).

Relation to heritage

Every class, as it struggles for social dominance, for hegemony, that is, during its ascent to the status of a ruling class, produces a worldview that can interpret its interests as those of all humanity. This means that every class has its "heroic illusions" about its own role in world history and the realization of an ideal goal or human species-being. This is not the place to discuss the philosophical problems that lie in the hidden or explicit norms of such a concept–a historical-materialist culture theory must deal with that. In any case, in all social formations, whatever the ideological perspective, there exists in symbolic form a self-expressed anticipation of a fulfilled humanity, a promise that cannot be realized under the conditions of class society. In the course of its development, every class society comes into contradiction with the program associated with its own worldview.

Since we have a "now" relationship to humanity's past, we can seek in the cultural works of past historical eras a timeless relevant content. From a historical-materialist standpoint the extraction of such anticipated content must be grounded in establishing the relation between an ideology or symbolic form to the basis that brings it forth (including the difference between the ideal and basis). A historical differential analysis separates out the heritage from the old residue that must be pursued or rejected. Rejection also has to be included here, of course, because of noxious traditions that point in an undesirable direction (for example, Nietzsche)–therefore the political-ideological positions in the class struggle must be determined and adopted. In the narrower sense, one can see in the manifestation of a historically self-unfolding humanity the heritage that we are ready to accept under the postulate of "progress in the consciousness of freedom" (and which we must accept if are not to cut ourselves off from the roots of our own existence). The struggle for hegemony of the working class is the struggle to realize a humanist concept of history.

The contradiction between the "historical illusions," the "utopian vision," the ideals expressed in their class worldview on the one hand, and the sorry aspects of the reality of an exploitative society and a "dying culture" on the other, naturally is not hidden from the members of the ruling class. Ideological resignation, escapist movements, and cynicism–or morally influenced cultural and social critique–are reactions to the dilemma between ideal norms and the harsher reality. Precisely because of this pure negativity an integrated worldview cannot be achieved. Here arises a new front in the ideological class struggle, in the struggle for hegemony of the proletarian worldview. The conscious appropriation of the cultural heritage, the identification of socialism with the humanitarian content of human history, arrived at and understood on the basis of historical materialism, and the defense of this content against destruction constitute a worldview-based program that large sections of a disillusioned citizenry can support. They can form a common framework for a corresponding political alliance, within which the greater political, theoretical, and moral power of the proletariat and its perspective for the future become the basis for its acquiring the leading role. The class basis of this real possibility lies in the fact that broad sections of the bourgeoisie, particularly the petty and middle bourgeoisie (including the intellectuals), have long been declassed and do not participate with the monopoly bourgeoisie in ruling society, so that their specific interests are no longer satisfied by economic relations and find only unreal expression in the traditional ideology of the classical period of the bourgeoisie.

If the working class uses the chance of its historical conditions of existence and incorporates the cultural ideals and hopes of humanity into its worldview, if it shows real possibilities of realizing these ideals while overcoming its own class limitations, it can mobilize for progress those sections of the bourgeoisie that have objectively lost their class bonds to bourgeois society as a result of the transition to monopoly capitalism (even if they are not subjectively aware of this). If a transition from one class society to the next through the transformation of interests of exploitation and rule creates the conditions for hegemony of the newly rising class, then, similarly, in the period of transition to

socialism the transformation of the worldview ideals of the declassed part of the bourgeoisie into the worldview of the proletariat can fulfill the same political function–and that particularly in the moment of danger.

The concept of the antifascist alliance policy and the strategy developed by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International gave the working-class movement this task. This task is not outdated, but must be newly reexamined from the roots. It is therefore clear that the leading role of the working class in this alliance, after achieving the distant goal of political rule on the basis of ideological hegemony, that is, with the agreement in principle of the majority of the population, must pass over into a state-institutional form of dictatorship of the proletariat precisely because it must take and keep power against the might of the monopoly bourgeoisie. All attempts to exclude the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the strategy of the communist parties must be rejected. The classical theoreticians of the hegemony concept (such as Antonio Gramsci) have always emphasized these connections. Hegemony and dictatorship of the proletariat are elements of one and the same theory of class struggle. This theoretical connection remains valid even after the collapse of the first socialist societies.

With the division of labor between physical and mental labor, the production and dissemination of the content of a worldview as well as the institutional establishment of systems of values have mainly fallen to "intellectuals." They thereby acquired primary responsibility for effecting the hegemony of the ruling class. Science (including its ideological consequences) is always bound to development of the productive forces. Therefore within the stratum of bourgeois intellectuals, called "traditional intellectuals" by Gramsci, and even within the individual intellectual, contradictions can arise that, together with the transformation of the cultural heritage into working-class ideology, are favorable for an alliance between the working class and intellectuals. The transformation process itself, however, will be carried out by intellectuals who come out of the class struggles of the proletariat as carriers of special theoretical functions and who either come out of the working class or who identify themselves with

it. Gramsci speaks of them as "organic intellectuals." Gramsci firmly maintained that every human action and, especially, every conscious political action requires accumulated intellectual accomplishments and every class-conscious worker and above all each functionary is an "organic intellectual" of his or her class. Theoretical schooling is therefore an indispensable aspect of the organized working-class movement and a means for transforming the cultural heritage.

A developed theoretical level of historical materialism is necessary in order that the working class achieve this transformation critically and from its class standpoint. This means that an indispensable aspect of the practice of political and ideological class struggle is that it *include* the elaboration of theoretical concepts of the scientific worldview of socialism–not only the polemical elements of ideological criticism to demolish the opponent's position. Theory is not a secondary, spontaneous element of politics entering into a practice dictated by circumstances. Rather it is an aspect of practice itself. All behavior is permeated with worldview-based mechanisms of guidance. But only a scientific worldview that is reflexively self-critical raises practice above the simple relationship of action and reaction and above merely raising utopian goals to a new level. This elaboration of a theoretical totalizing (and not merely pragmatic) concept becomes a condition for a scientific practice. In this concept, then, the contents of the heritage are sublated, so that they do not remain as a foreign residue from *another* worldview (and then work into the new worldview and distort or decompose it); rather, they become parts of its project of meanings. Only in the course of development of its own consistent theoretical model of history, culture, and general interconnection can the heritage be incorporated and remain alive in the new formation.

The status of a *scientific* worldview that should be practice-oriented and the claim of theoretical consistency prohibit the treatment of diverging solutions to the same problem as of equal standing in principle and equally valid. The intention of a plural or pluralistic Marxism with unresolved or even unresolvable variants contradicts the integrative character of a worldview

aiming at a hegemonic position and is itself a product of a late-bourgeois mentality, that is, the exact opposite of the working-class worldview. Disagreements within Marxism, differences about the usefulness of hypotheses, about the truth content or the correctness of theoretical positions, do of course occur, but with the expectation that such differences are in principle resolvable and that, in order to guide practice, must be resolved. Naturally, ongoing criticism and self-criticism leading to correction of existing theories also occur and are indispensable. The basic concept of the historicity of knowledge and of relative truth gradually approaching absolute truth is opposed to a dogmatic immobility (which may require great critical effort to resolve). But there cannot be several "Marxisms." This could only occur at the cost of splitting the working class and abandoning the understanding of history as a law-governed "system of goals" and a society organized according to a unified principle. Pluralism, institutionalized and recognized as an ideological principle, would mean exclusion of the question of truth, legitimation of subjective concepts of strategy, dissolution of unity of theory and practice attained in the organizations of the working class–and thereby the special character of the working-class movement's political form–and the collapse of class consciousness. It is the *philosophical* sense of Leninist party theory and the objective designation of the communist party as "vanguard of the working class" that the objectivity and the historical truth content of theory be accepted as an integrated aspect of practice (and not a dispensable additive) and part of Marxist-Leninist organizational concepts. The historical mission of the working class–to make for the first time in history not particular interests but humanity's species-being the class purpose, the content of hegemony–leaves no room for a pluralism of worldviews.

Marxist theory (in its systematic unity) considers the many-sided nature of the initial historical-social conditions of class struggle in various countries and, along with the economic variations, particularly considers different cultural traditions in formulating its strategy. Only in this way does the appropriation of a specific national culture became a requisite for achieving cultural hegemony. Internationalism and national peculiarities do not

contradict one another, but rather mutually interpenetrate. Communists have always been aware of this when, notwithstanding the solidarity within the world revolutionary movement, they emphasize that the revolution cannot be exported and must grow out of the prevailing contradictions in each country. The progressive intellectuals of each country have the task of formulating on the basis of their own national cultural heritage the theoretical concepts that express and guide the struggle for the transition to a new form of society.

What lies ahead?

A scientific worldview is not merely knowledge about the world that merges into an overall world picture. A "picture" is a stationary view, the static result of reproducing or forming a portrayal. A *worldview* presupposes a picture that one can refer to, but presents the real world as a moving, self-changing process in which everyone must find his or her own place. Worldview is not primarily based on knowledge but rather on practice, and a scientific worldview is knowledge that guides practice on the basis of scientific understanding. The first task of Marxist philosophy, which in the case of practice is not merely an external "advisory tool" but rather an effective moment in it, must be to work constantly on its own concepts, to clarify and determine the situational, self-changing world relationships of people. The problem field today is produced by the new quality of technological activity and knowledge, by the new expansion and restriction in the space of freedom, by structural changes–hitherto inconceivably ignored by Marxists– in the system of needs, by the so-called global problems, by the new phenomenon of intensive cultural contacts and interpenetrations, by the new form of production of appearance in social consciousness arising from the omnipresent media (to touch only on the obvious). Here philosophy has productive conceptual work ahead of it and, moreover, it must make itself certain of its methodological, epistemologically critical procedures.

This positive task of further elaborating determinants of the content and form of the worldview cannot be accomplished without simultaneously countering ideologically based systems

of interpretation that oppose scientific methods and/or legitimize the perpetuation of existing production and ruling relationships. Ideological criticism–often understood too exclusively as the business of Marxist philosophy–remains an indispensable component. There are two reasons: first, refutation of false theories and/or unscientific explanations is necessary to advance and guarantee scientific progress (partisanship for the truth); second, ideological interpretations of knowledge always have a value in the political debates on the organizational form of social life and therefore in the class struggle (partisanship of science for social progress). The former is theory of knowledge; the latter is the ethical component of the scientific method and to exclude it would be scientistic reductionism. Here we can still learn from Book 6 of the *Nichomachean Ethics* of Aristotle.

More generally, ideological criticism goes over into a third, more encompassing task of Marxist philosophy. Appearance, which as a whole lies over bourgeois society and is produced by it, masks its true essence. One thinks, for example, of the institutional forms of democracy, of the fiction of freedom and human rights, of the ideology of affluence, and much more, or (as Adorno says), "interconnection of delusion." These must be unmasked by a general philosophical theory of late-bourgeois society. There must be innumerable supporting individual analyses if the multimedia manipulation of social consciousness is to be broken through. Certainly, class consciousness does not arise *through* theory; but it is also certain that it does not arise *without* theory, the knowledge of which guides political struggle with clarity in action.

As such a theory, Marxism is not in crisis. On the contrary, it provides an explanatory model for understanding the crisis of bourgeois society, and the historical necessity of its self-contradictory nature, and for showing (where other theories can only indict and lament) the way out and into a new society. In order to do that it must be able and willing to explain the defeat that socialism had to suffer in the competition between social systems.

4
The Failure of the First Socialist Societies

An obviously incorrect individual reaction to the downfall of socialism[1] is to push to the fore those factors which happen to have been predominant, or even singular, in one's own experience. No scientific investigation, whatever its methodological school, would be satisfied with such a subjective mode of explanation. The factors in a historical process hang together in some systematic way. Their place in the process is not chosen arbitrarily, but is derived from the presuppositions about the fundamental relations and interdependencies that form the "architecture" of the system. Within that system, then, findings cannot be changed at will.

From the manifold reciprocal action of all the elements of social relations with one another, including the most ideal forms in which they express themselves, historical materialism understands the economic sphere as the basis. The reasons for doing so have been discussed earlier and do not require further exposition here. A historical-materialist analysis of the rise and fall of socialist societies must likewise begin with economic conditions, proceed to the contents and forms of social consciousness, examine the consequences that resulted for the organization of social life, and finally pose the questions that result from a theoretical treatment of this sort.

The reader will understand that a short chapter in a book intended for discussion of topical questions will only be able to provide a tentative and simplified outline of an assessment that in the course of further investigations must become more precise and detailed and, if need be, corrected.

1. Immaturity of the economic conditions

Historical materialism finds the motor for social advance in the development of the productive forces and in the class struggles arising within a social system. As soon as its form of organization (production relations) comes into contradiction with the state of its productive forces, and their tendency to further development, and is no longer able to solve related problems, then a transformation to a new form of society comes about–and not without struggle, since the ruling class in an established order does not willingly give up the conditions and system of its rule. According to this fundamental model of historical progress, the economic conditions for realization of the next higher social formation were supposed to have ripened within the preceding one, especially since the level of social productivity was to have risen so far as to create a new "system of needs,"[2] the basis for a new consciousness with changed expectations for people's lives.[3]

Accordingly, the revolutionary transition to socialism had to take place in the capitalist countries that were the most developed economically and technically, in which a developed socialist consciousness already existed among broad strata of the people. This is known to have been Lenin's expectation during and after the October Revolution. It is known too that he regarded the revolution in Russia as the initiating spark that would set off revolution elsewhere, especially in Germany, with an organizationally and ideologically highly developed working class. The "weakest link" under capitalism was to break down first. In any case, that the new social order to replace it would have to be built alone was in fact a divergence from the basic theoretical model of revolutionary change.

Undoubtedly in today's terms the Russian empire in 1917 was a "threshold country" within the capitalist system. There were centers of industrialization; capitalist relations were general, but still relatively undeveloped, and in many ways tied to feudalistic practices that took the role of precapitalist economic formations. The greatest part of the population was by far still active in agriculture and pursuits dependent on it. There were stark differences in the level of civilization between one area and another. A high percentage of the population was unable to read

(with regional variations). The form of government was a feudalistic regime with the character of an extensive police state. A religious orthodoxy lacking a developed theological system held the masses of the people in a stifling, unenlightened religiosity. The formal liberation of the peasantry from serfdom (1861) had occurred just fifty years earlier. In fact, actual serfdom was still to be found to some degree in all the provinces.

The people were prepared to throw off the yoke of the titled landowners, the boyars, and the czar. The confrontation of the undeveloped provinces with the urban areas of growing bourgeois affluence occurred at the level of development in which needs capable of being awakened and satisfied by capitalist production arose. Of course, where the old peasant traditions of village communal societies ("mir") still survived (they were dissolved by Stolypin only in 1910), the people could have activated these and gone from precapitalist to postcapitalist thinking without any transition period whatever. Upon the collapse of czarist rule, which was a liberation for the whole people, a weak bourgeoisie came into conflict with a militant proletariat that was even weaker. But having compromised itself all across the country by its many accommodations with absolutism, the bourgeoisie was much less attractive to the peasantry than was the working class, whose origins and standard of living were much closer to their own. The revolution became a movement led by workers with the cooperation and support of the peasantry—and the courage and sacrificial spirit of the people in those revolutionary years in driving away the oppressor deserves our admiration (as again later during World War II).[4]

But this revolutionary upswing did not extend the industrial basis for production in the country. To the contrary, some of the previously existing material resources had been destroyed in World War I, and in the civil war and the intervention. The economic boycott by the industrialized capitalist countries against the young socialist state made reconstruction even more difficult. Thus, in the first phase of its existence the Soviet Union remained a threshold country economically. It had to exert colossal efforts to make up for the difference in economic level

through forced industrialization, all the more intensely because capitalist states, highly armed (Western powers) or rapidly arming (Germany after 1933) threatened the country with military encirclement and blackmail.[5]

Thus the development of the Soviet Union before World War II took place under economic and social conditions in no way favorable to a transition to socialism. The country lacked an economic base, a working class highly developed qualitatively and quantitatively, masses experienced in the struggle for, and day-to-day utilization of, democratic institutions. Also lacking was a broad, deeply rooted educational and ideological movement corresponding to that in Western Europe.[6] Nevertheless, a radical revolution in production was accomplished under the leadership of the small, selfless, and militant Communist Party, and was successful only because the Party, as "vanguard of the working class," took over the tasks of administration and education. Had the conditions allowed for an "organic" process[7] of internally generated change, these tasks should have been carried out by the masses of the working class after the majority of the population had been won over in support of them. Consequently, a bureaucratic Party apparatus arose not as a "deformation," but rather as a social form required by the organization of socialist production relations under conditions of economic and social immaturity.[8] Under these conditions, dictatorship of the proletariat could only be a long-lasting dictatorship of the Party (called an "educational dictatorship" by Werner Hofmann). Anyone unable to accept this had no choice but to abandon the very attempt to build a socialist society after the victorious revolution. Submission to imperialist power was the only alternative. Under the dictatorship of the Party, the collectivization of agriculture, construction of huge new industries, and extension of a far-reaching popular educational system were accomplished with enormous speed. These steps demanded immense sacrifices. The brutal repression of any resistance became a prerequisite for success. On the other hand, they did bring a clear improvement in living standards and material security to the broad masses. The resistance of the Soviet people to Nazi propaganda (even in the occupied territories) and their willingness to defend their

motherland and its socialist system indicate that the bulk of the population had experienced the Soviet system as a historical advance. Further, the period of reconstruction following World War II, which had totally destroyed the most highly populated and technologically developed regions, still evidenced this fervor and this emotional concurrence with the political system.[9] Even secret fears of the terrorist power exerted by the Party apparatus did not change that.

Development was directed primarily at raising social productivity and secondarily at adequate enhancement of social and individual well-being. In view of the great backwardness and the losses due to the war, the main emphasis for development and satisfaction of material needs was placed on an improvement of living conditions. This in turn depended primarily on growth of industrial production, which, despite successes in individual sectors, remained on the whole far behind that of the capitalist industrialized countries. The growth of capital-goods industries therefore remained political and economic priorities for a long time, including the period after World War II. The goal of material well-being, therefore, necessarily continued to lag behind the greater goal of industrial modernization. Intensified by the consequences of the war, the period of "communist construction" with its deprivations contrasting with the economic conditions in the Western industrialized countries was to continue for another generation.

It appears that too much weight was put on the "subjective factor," the demands on the people being excessive. My personal impression in the mid-sixties was that the preparedness for sacrifice to build socialism was still alive, but that expectations for consumer goods, certainly present beforehand, had been stirred up by the adventurous promises and illusory goals that–for whatever reason–had characterized the Party's course since the Twentieth Congress in 1956. The dilettantism and lack of realism in the slogan of "catching up" with the West within a period of five to ten years were already mischievous enough. More serious, however, was the resulting stimulation of needs and cravings oriented around a Western style of consumption while the development of socialism was operating to bring about

a new system of needs, new expectations of a meaningful life, in short, a new world outlook.

Objectively, the turnabout from criticism and destruction of a system based on commodity fetishism to submission to such a system was connected to the real backwardness in satisfying material needs as compared with Western society. The latter offered not only superfluous things, which could have been renounced in favor of new values, but also actual means for an easier and improved life–things that were not available in one's own country, but that were acutely desired. The luster of the world of goods was not readily comprehended, and the stereotyped explanations of the then current philosophy were inadequate for a critical understanding. A better theoretical treatment of the contradiction would still have only contributed a degree of awareness in face of the fact that the real experience of the deficiencies made the seductive appearance of goods in capitalist society an obvious reality of life.[10]

In addition to objective conditions, however, there was also a subjective problem: "human productive power"–that is, the ability of people to overcome objective difficulties–was not stirred into action and the driving element of enthusiasm for a plan of the future (which could have had real, although limited, effectiveness) was no longer utilized. This enthusiasm, which is itself part of the material relations and plays an important role during revolutionary periods, was even shunted aside for an orientation toward the Western system of meeting demands, and thus toward a Western hierarchy of values. The competition between social systems was no longer over the goals of life, but over levels of consumption. If the battle could ever have been won against a world offering superior goods–and one may ask whether there was ever really a chance of this–it would not in any case have been on the ground of consumer-goods production, but on the basis of an orientation stressing a culture of alternative values predicated on the development of the whole human being.

That the state of thinking in the Soviet Union permitted the changes at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, and possibly even demanded them, takes us back to the initial situation, the immaturity of economic conditions and class structure. The level

of material satisfaction then available could not be compared with that offered by capitalism; nor was there in 1917 a proletarian mass base with sufficiently developed class consciousness that could have transformed society while becoming the bearer of a new standard of values and noncapitalist attitudes and expectations. The rapid growth in the number of workers during the period of industrialization meant the integration of other strata into the working class–poorer peasants and, to a lesser extent, strata of the petty bourgeoisie–prepared to sacrifice externally for the preservation of their own socialist society and internally for the development of the means of production, but incapable of generating resistance to bureaucracy and stagnation.

In these circumstances, socialist society was forced into a rivalry with the capitalist metropolises. This had two aspects: First, there was the bitter necessity of an arms race to maintain a "balance of terror" against the threat of intervention. And second, there was the self-imposed demand to produce that "immense accumulation of commodities" in which the wealth of capitalist society presents itself,[11] which was tantamount to coming under the law of capitalist production, of unlimited accumulation of capital, and, in the final analysis, giving up the alternative presented by socialist society. (Gorbachev's economic policy was the consequence of a way of thinking that had long been blinded by the sheer mass of consumer goods, the appearance of social wealth under capitalism, which brings with it an expanding gross social product.) Undoubtedly, the competition between the two social systems was an outcome of the ability of capitalism to maintain stability in its metropolitan centers for many decades without revolutionary disturbances. Only a radically accelerated increase of productivity could have given socialism a chance in this competition and the related struggle for development of the Third World. Clearly, to carry out such a program would necessarily have meant a further reversal of the humanist, democratic intentions of socialism, but in this historic system-related contradiction, taking a middle road was surely the worst choice. Although the Twentieth Congress gave up relentless pursuit of the primacy of developing the productive forces (thereby assuring socialism's defeat in the

competition between the systems), it also failed at democratization. Thus, despite a reduction in terroristic, oppressive methods, the power of the people for renewal and achievement was weakened. Bureaucratic stagnation was the consequence.

2. The problem of bureaucracy

From the arguments of Max Weber it would follow that the process of bureaucratization in the building of a socialist economy and society is unavoidable.[12] The increasing specialization of knowledge in mass societies and the increase in requirements for utilization of that knowledge in various administrative areas (production, trade, distribution, and communications) lead to the independence of an apparatus of experts–and as soon as the ruling power changes, altering traditional social structures and behavioral norms, then a stable stratum of supporters and mediators of the new order is needed even more. After the October Revolution the role of the Party as bearer and stimulator of social change became intertwined with that of the state apparatus, the organ that implements these changes while maintaining a functioning society.[13] The reason was the relative underdevelopment of the masses of the people and their consequent inability to assume self-management of the production relations. The concept of Soviets in the October Revolution faltered because the necessary conditions for it were unripe (educational backwardness, inadequate level of class consciousness among the masses, relative weakness of the working class).[14]

Undoubtedly, an important precondition for building up an economy in a fresh and innovative way is the participation in public life by the greater part of the population, whether it is directly in the production process, in the shaping of the basic social conditions, or in the distribution of political responsibilities, at least on the local and regional levels. Democratization of decision making promotes identification with the social order, a sense of responsibility toward the community, release of the capacities of the individual, and, ultimately, readiness for involvement beyond mere compliance with orders. Democratic cooperation and participation in decision making offer the greatest chance for the development of the productive powers of the

individual. Compared with bureaucracy, on the other hand, with its formality and centralized organization, democratic cooperation is accompanied by considerable losses due to disagreements and postponements. In the short run, bureaucracy is more effective for realizing the goals of the community.

The pressure for industrial expansion in the Soviet Union, due to external conditions, gave urgency to a hierarchical command structure, especially since a concept of society to replace the anarchy of a free play of forces by an overall economic plan did not come already equipped with a well-organized and professionally competent administration. The Paris Commune, in the seventy days of its existence, showed that it is not so simple to run a modern state, with its long-term programs of investment, organization, and education. A desirable balance between central planning and direction and grass-roots democratic initiative and control requires, among other things, a long formative process of political experience, a high level of general education with a certain many-sided theoretical homogeneity, removal of the grossest inequalities in the distribution of social wealth, and, in the case of variegated and ethnically differentiated states, an adequate knowledge of the different regional conditions, with the whole population prepared to understand them. In the Soviet Union in 1917 none of these preconditions had been fulfilled. The manifold, strenuous efforts of the CPSU to create these preconditions for socialist democracy cannot be dealt with here; only a malicious polemic could reject them. But these efforts were thwarted by fierce class struggles. They were weakened by the centralization of state power as foreign policy became increasingly oriented toward defense preparedness, and were finally brought to a standstill by World War II. Forty years of cold war further inhibited the readiness to experiment with internal political changes in the organizational mechanisms of the state. To leave everything as it was seemed to be the least dangerous way to govern, and the maintenance of the status quo conformed perfectly with a bureaucratic apparatus running itself.

The fateful timidity at the prospect of internal political innovation and risk during what has become known as the "period of stagnation" is, of course, not merely an expression of

the incompetence and indolence of a (non-Marxist) stratum of functionaries that had become rigid; it is also a superstructural manifestation of the economic backwardness in the competition between the systems. Any internal disruption due to setting up new democratic state structures would at the same time have been an impediment in the competition of social systems. In view of the threat to the Soviet Union from the policy of encirclement by the United States and its allies (the NATO, CENTO, and SEATO military pacts), the entire social system would have been in actual danger. Indeed, for this reason the so-called "de-Stalinization" of the Khrushchev era was not carried through institutionally and politically, being based on moral rather than historical-materialist grounds.[15] These considerations made it that much easier during the "period of stagnation" under Brezhnev to block the needed institutional decisions.

The critical and experimental function of theory fell victim to bureaucratic careerism in the scientific institutions.[16] This itself was an aspect of the penetration of all branches of social life by the bureaucratic mechanisms of the Party-led cadre policy. But the Party, going against its political function, had become the executor of state inertia, since under the special conditions of construction in the Soviet Union it had also been necessary for it to take over state tasks, with the two functions combined in the same people.

The bureaucratization of the Party apparatus took hold of the whole life of the nation, driving out all criticism and critical discussion and leading to an attitude of apathy and opportunism, followed by collapse of the Leninist norms of Party life. Thereby the impulse toward a "socialist morality"–part of the subjective factors referred to earlier–wasted away. Such phenomena as corruption and criminality in the economic sphere were not the primary causes of the collapse of socialist society, but instead were consequences of stagnation and regression toward the values of the bourgeois worldview. The ethos that had developed out of the period of revolution, struggle, and reconstruction (of which the early Soviet literature provides evidence) was undermined by this revival of the presocialist approach to values, and so the development toward a new human being with a new world

outlook was turned back ("counterrevolution"). The struggle for the people's consciousness was no longer pursued, but was bureaucratically replaced by decrees on political education. Those who declared their nominal agreement with the content satisfied the formalities. Criticism and self-criticism, constitutive principles in a socialist society and in the life of the Communist Party, became stunted or turned into empty ritual. Under this cover a variety of ideological positions–subjective opinions and attitudes–were disseminated.

3. The impoverishment of theory

The breakdown in the ability of the Party's worldview to guide activity meant that Marxist theoreticians (and the Communist Party, which sought to be the locus for the practical realization of the unity of theory and practice) lost sight of the practical side of their analyses and goals. In interpreting reality and projecting a goal-directed perspective, the point is to unmask and eliminate the false consciousness that springs out of current contradictions. Even though an ideological class struggle against the "bourgeois philosophy" of the West was undertaken in the Soviet Union, it was rather frequently carried out with blunt weapons, as an enumeration of standardized "errors" according to the norms in the Marxist texts. In the meantime the contradictions within their own society and their ideological reflections as real foundations for the expression of bourgeois ideologies were subject to little examination. In this way philosophy set itself at a distance from reality, shut itself up in an ivory tower of strictly guarded doctrines. It lost the ability to study new developments, constellations of categories, and modes of interpretation that could have served as a guide for people in a changing world.

As Marxist philosophy in the Soviet Union lost its combative reference to the scientific problems of our time and to the life of Soviet society, its value to reality and actual history–the substance of dialectics–evaporated. It was not the textbook schematism of the "fundamentals of dialectics" that doomed it,[17] but rather the thoughtless reduction of manifold dialectical processes and configurations, which are only determinable

through the specificity of their concrete contents, to these schema (well-suited as a sketch for a first approximation, and therefore useful for a "short course"). The impoverishment of dialectical theory had direct practical consequences: the theoretical basis of political practice was displaced by legitimation of political pragmatism after the fact. The low level to which the Party's political competence to develop correct policies descended is shown in the superficial babble of the programmatic book *Perestroika* by Mikhail Gorbachev, which purported to announce the beginning of a new epoch of Communism.[18]

The basic theoretical errors caused by the rigid formalization of dialectics–the false evaluation of the general crisis of capitalism and the imprecise determination of the transitional character of our epoch–have already been discussed.

Still, in considering the reasons for the failure of socialist societies in Eastern Europe, we should not minimize the role of the deterioration of Marxist dialectics as a theoretical instrument. We have mentioned objective grounds: the economic backwardness, the undeveloped consciousness of the masses, and the political form of organization of the state and Party. This could give the impression that the failure of socialism was inevitable due to the contradictions at the very beginning, so that the October Revolution was a heroic, but misguided, premature birth. Only one who disregards the role of reflection (and that means the purposeful intervention of the individual in history) can accept such a deterministic fatalism. Sound application of the theory could have led to an understanding of the contradictions in the first socialist social system arising initially from the immaturity of the conditions and then from the coexistence of two antagonistic social systems. This understanding could have led to strategies other than those that have now brought about the dissolution of socialism.

Of course no one can tell whether alternative economic and political decisions or both (for example, in 1956) could have been successful. At issue here is not the idle imagining of a historical "If . . . " The observation that although the underlying trend of the epoch was correctly understood, the political

strategy of the socialist states rested on a *preventable* false evaluation of its concrete nature, nevertheless implies a second observation that a different political practice would have been possible on the basis of correct theoretical evaluations. The scientific world outlook of socialism is based on the unity of theory and practice. If one element of this unity is curtailed and incorrect approaches consequently emerge, then an important reason for the failure of the socialist system has been found. Without continuing formative and critical work on theory, there is no socialism.

What remains from the truncated theory is political voluntarism. "Good will" (morals alone count, according to Kant) replaces the determination of objective possibilities and tendencies. Was it voluntaristic to push ahead with the October Revolution in 1917? Surely not. There were revolutionary forces that pressed toward a socialist transformation–notwithstanding the immaturity of the conditions. There was a real possibility that the spark of revolution would ignite the developed industrial countries, and with that the construction of socialism would obtain a solid base. It is in the nature of possibilities that they are not necessarily realized. The October Revolution took place, but the revolution in Germany did not follow. As of today the resulting specific contradictions of that transition have still not been treated theoretically, still less the contradictions created by the unimpeded explosion of growth under capitalism, or the specific contradictions created by the combination in the Third World of population explosion and mass poverty. That capitalist conditions of production do not present a perspective for the survival of the human species is in the meantime understood by some, and felt by many. What socialist politics ought to look like is unclear, however, and without a system of socialist states, we do not yet know. Deliberation over the theoretical foundations of historical materialism and materialist dialectics is mandatory; these are our instruments. That they not be destroyed must be our next concern.

Of course, the political failure of socialism in those states in which its real existence was shaped has brought forth much

heartfelt turmoil. Instead of investigating the multiple causes of the defeat–the conditions of worldwide confrontation of systems, as well as one's own mistakes, so as to prepare new material for outlines of future strategies of the international class struggle –instead of this, some are questioning or even abandoning the assured and time-honored principles of the theory itself. Under the absurd principle that sick people best conquer their sickness through suicide, "theoretical reformers" are today savaging the supporting elements of historical materialism, and then stand there entirely without ideas. Among the many who have given in to such defeatism, and whom to analyze individually would be a waste, we choose as an example the professors Aleksandr I. Volkov and Yuri A. Krasin (the latter, none other than the rector of the Institute of Economics of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and therefore not without influence, and so a conspicuous example of the collapse of theory). In an essay signed by both of them "Socialism Yesterday and Tomorrow: Different or the Same?" (1990)[19] the two authors advance certain theses whose acceptance would certainly destroy the theoretical substance of Marxism.

(a) Marx defined the special character of socialism merely as an alternative to early capitalism "in that he contrasted capitalist private property precisely with social = socialist property" (5). Accordingly it follows that "Marx's socialism and that of other theoreticians of the past expressed the realities of their time. Today there are different realities" (1990, 23). Thus, classical theory has been overtaken, not only in its time-dependent details, but in its elementary assertion that formation-specific property relations = relations of production.

(b) Capitalism gives rise to "features and tendencies that lend themselves to social regulation of the economy." In the associated "organization and perfection of institutions and forms of social guaranties and social protection for all members of society, including the weakest, those unfit for useful work," "institutions of government and society" are formed "that do not operate merely in the interest of one class" (8–10). The text continues: "Can it be that the contradictions between the development of the subjects of labor and the political-economic

conditions of this labor can be solved under capitalism? Many other contradictions have already been solved, though previously they had seemed explosive. . . . At the present time it has even been borne out, in a developed system of organization of the labor market, that the distribution of the products of labor is such that employer and employee appear as equal partners, and not as exploiter and exploited, that the appropriation of surplus value by one side is put into doubt, since the accumulation is in the interest of both sides" (9). Therefore, the thesis that the class struggle is the universal motor of history is no longer valid.

(c) Accordingly, for Volkov and Krasin there follows "an ever greater social influence on the functioning of capital" in capitalist systems whereby "democracy develops," and thus a convergence between capitalism and socialism takes place. "This coincides with our concepts of the movement forward on the way to socialism (11). In a society of such social harmony "the political culture of consensus in the correlation of classes" will rule (20).

(d) The theory of socialism is therefore reduced to providing "simply a guide" to the "totality of socialist values" (15), and it can in the sense of Eduard Bernstein (to whom the authors explicitly refer) offer the workers' movement no more than "a definition of its principal direction" (15). "With such an approach, an inventory of the features of socialism given once-and-for-all no longer makes sense (common ownership of the means of production, a planned economy, the leading role of the Party, etc." (15).

Continuing consistently, the rector of the Institute of Economics of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union writes that "a Bad Godesberg is also necessary for us,[20] an opening of the whole breadth of a truly creative conception of socialism" (16), and he asks in wonderment why "should the social democratization of our Party . . . frighten us?" (15). Let us disregard the remaining pages of theoretical wand waving in this essay and concentrate on the main points.

Comment on (a). Marxist theory (and its further development as Marxism-Leninism) has elaborated categories and explanatory models that describe what is formation-specific in the overall

movement of capitalism until it reaches its "fated negation," socialism. The basic tendency of capitalism overall is the subsumption of all social relations into capitalist relations. Pressure for growth, stemming from the incessant process of inner-capitalist accumulation within the society, brings forth the insoluble contradictions that now present themselves as "the general crisis of capitalism."

The clearer it becomes that these contradictions can neither be dissolved nor really made compatible, the more forcefully will system-specific concepts be counterposed to them. A conflict-rich period of transition from capitalism to socialism has broken out; the October Revolution was perhaps its starting signal. Even the failure of the first attempt to establish a socialist society cannot turn back the process that is the worldwide historical product of capitalism.

Comment on (b). The contradiction between capital and labor is not superseded in the developed capitalist countries; it is merely masked by so-called "safety nets," and is fully visible in the threshold and developing countries. But also in the industrialized countries an ever greater depersonalization takes place of the human being as a forced consumer (always an appendage to production)–quite the reverse of the ideal of a many-sided flowering of personality. Only on the basis of social and cultural destruction is the class compromise, the contemporary paralysis of the workers' movement, bought by material concessions on the capitalist side in the wealthiest countries of capitalism (Hofmann 1967b, 56ff.).

Comment on (c). The class compromise characterizing the current period of late capitalism in the developed capitalist countries (and only in these) is not the structural dissolution of class contradictions; it is a temporary reconciliation that, on the one hand, was necessitated by the existence of an alternative system of society and, on the other, by the capitalist interest to maintain consumer demand high enough to prevent a permanent crisis of overproduction from hampering the growth of capital investment. At the same time, within the framework of these compromises, however, the "social influence on the functioning

of capital" was lessened (since the functionaries of state monopoly capitalism gain ever-greater authority) and democracy was reduced to an illusion.

Comment on (d). A focus on values turns socialism into a question of individual morality, away from changing the structure of society, away from social and political action, harking back to the "standpoint of the ideal" of Friedrich Albert Lange, a neo-Kantian social democratic version of dampening the revolutionary struggle (1974, 981ff.). Instead of state power and ownership of the means of production, a way of thinking is said to be what matters. What then results in fact is that power remains with those who have it, and the powerless are kept dependent, merely able to appeal to the moral sense and good will of the powerful.

In any case, Volkov and Krasin's "socialism of tomorrow" is not a different socialism, but no socialism at all. It is possible that the "period of constructive pragmatism" (2) draws the practical lesson from the decay of socialist society and the lack of conceptions on the part of socialist theoreticians, but it outlines no program that has anything to do with socialism, and its proclaimers gaze wishfully at a harmonized picture of capitalism, a picture that will soon go up in smoke when faced by reality.

Without a solid theoretical foundation the retreat to pragmatic treatment of problems and contradictions ends, as we see, in plain opportunism. The conceptual helplessness of such prominent authors as Volkov and Krasin does not come by accident. It is the end result of that theoretical apathy, numbness, and rigid formalization that constitutes a substantial moment in the downward trend of East European socialism during the past twenty years–a moment in the web of conditions and causes. We have sought here to indicate some objective conditions that made possible the formation of this web. In many instances, correct decisions at the right time could have torn the web apart, allowing the development of socialism to take a different course. It is always possible to ask why precisely then and there a wrong decision was made–only rarely do accidents play a role in changing the direction of history. Often, preconditions for

alternatives did exist, and incorrect decisions are always a consequence of theoretical emptiness, that is, a lack of conceptual penetration of a situation.

The contradictions of capitalism are there by necessity; they are a characteristic of its system. The chance of the socialist movement to produce out of these contradictions the better alternative of successful socialism is connected to correct cognition in evaluating the situation and to a correct strategy for political and economic action. Socialism does not arrive automatically, but only through the struggles of people who understand the interconnections. Theory is an indispensable and independent motive force of practice. Whoever would act powerfully must have a powerful theory. After a lost battle, we must begin our political work again in a small and modest way. Work on consciousness belongs to the beginning: the formation and strengthening of class consciousness, conceptual power in analyzing the tendencies of our age, unsparing self-criticism in the discussion of past and present mistakes, discipline in thinking and, as a consequence, organizational unity. Opportunity must be provided for political activity and work on consciousness to combine and facilitate each other. We are not individuals each of whom can think correctly about everything.

Those who fight for something new are always in the minority at first and often for a long time. But the "organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party . . . ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier" (*Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels 1975, 493). The communists "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent . . . the future of that movement" (518).[21] The future is the historic possibility embedded within the present. To fight for it and make it into a reality, it must be understood both as purpose and goal. Hence, without theory gripping consciousness, history is blind; and without masses gripped by theory, theory would be powerless.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. In the 1950s the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands [KPD]) was banned in the Federal Republic of Germany. Although the ban was never formally lifted, the party subsequently resumed legal activity after changing its name to the German Communist Party (Deutsche Kommunistische Partei [DKP]).—EDS.

Chapter 4

1. We discuss here the Eastern European socialist societies, especially the Soviet Union, and do not include the possibly different development in China, begun under different economic and cultural conditions. A discussion of China requires a separate analysis.

2. For a discussion of system of needs, see Hegel 1970, 346ff.

3. Connected to the change in consciousness is the problem of hegemony, to which we referred in the previous chapter. See also Holz 1990.

4. The great literature of the revolutionary period, for example, Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* (1964) and Aleksey Tolstoy's *Road to Calvary* (1946), bears impressive witness to the suffering during the revolution and the civil war and what was achieved as a result of it.

5. The framework of the period of Soviet economic and domestic policies that today is called "Stalinism" must always be taken into account when considering the history of the development of socialism in the Soviet Union, and in other countries when the Soviet Union was the leading force in the world Communist movement.

6. See also Werner Hofmann (1967a).

7. We use the term *organic* in the sense of Gramsci's theory of "organic intellectuals" of the working class. See Gramsci 1971, 3–23.

8. Even the vehement critic of Stalinist bureaucracy Leo Kofler recognizes "that in the interim period of transition from capitalist to

socialist society, the new society cannot easily do without bureaucracy" (1979, 33).

9. Those who traveled in the Soviet Union during the first two decades after the war had plenty of opportunity to feel this identification of the people with the system. See the two collections of essays edited by Bethke and Jaspert (1967) and Mochalski and Kogon (1967).

10. The problem of "reality of appearance" is not sufficiently discussed in Marxist theory. See Fischer 1978.

11. Thus the famous beginning of *Capital*, "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities'" (Marx 1967, 35).

12. "For the needs of mass administration today, [bureaucratic administration] is completely indispensable. The choice is only that between bureaucracy and dilettantism in the field of administration. The primary source of the superiority of bureaucratic administration lies in the role of technical knowledge which, through the development of modern technology and business methods in the production of goods, has become completely indispensable. In this respect, it makes no difference whether the economic system is organized on a capitalistic or a socialistic basis. Indeed, if in the latter case, a comparable level of technological efficiency were to be achieved, it would mean a tremendous increase in the importance of specialized bureaucracy" (Weber 1947, 337–38).

13. The experiment to separate the functions of the government (as an organizational structure of social life) and the party (as an organ of control over government functions and stimulator of changes) was undertaken in the Chinese cultural revolution. It was effective only for a short time and led to disruption of the social order.

14. In the Soviet Union, moreover, the long tradition of czarist authoritarian bureaucracy with its pre- or early-modern absolutist structures appeared somewhat attractive to those administering socialist construction. See also Jacoby 1967, 183ff.

15. Space does not allow me to address here the phenomenon of "Stalinism." It becomes clear from what has been said previously that "Stalinism" should not be taken for an explanation of the collapse of socialism, but should be understood as a phase within the contradictory development of socialism. See "Zum Desiderat einer 'Stalinismus'-Analyse" in Hofmann 1967. See also Hans Heinz Holz 1972, 7: "From the viewpoint of political science an analysis would have to present the

historic conditions–independent of Stalin the person–which led to the apparent picture of what is called 'Stalinism.' A purely moral condemnation of the despotic traits of Soviet communism in the years of encirclement of the Soviet Union may have honorable motives, but does not lead to comprehension of historical processes, which is necessary to understand them and to avoid their errors in the future."

16. Max Weber considers as characteristic of bureaucracy, "to contemplate a career upward-movement according to years in position or achievement or both, dependent on the judgment of superiors" (1976, 127). Compare "In line with the . . . increasing tendency for occupational development and economic security for civil service employees, this development moves in the direction of treating official positions as benefits for those qualified through special training" (Weber 1976, 556).

17. See also Holz 1986, 16ff. and Holz 1990.

18. One should compare this with the precision of concepts in Lenin's *State and Revolution* or his "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" (1963) in order to make Gorbachev's downslide clear. I am tempted here to use Hegel's remark about Fries: "The idea or opinion on which it is based is so shallow . . . that I am spared the trouble of taking any notice of this insignificant publication" (1969, 52n).

19. I cite the essay from the German translation of the manuscript distributed by the Embassy of the USSR.

20. "In 1959 the SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany] adopted a new programme. It declared itself a people's, not a class, party and on economic policy it accepted the formula of as much competition as possible, as much nationalization as necessary. It thus not only eliminated the remains of its original Marxism, but placed itself only slightly to the left of centre" (Ryder, 1973, 511).–EDS.

21. The ellipsis here is for the omitted phrase "and take care of," added by Engels in the English edition of 1888 and not present in the German edition cited by Holz.-EDS.

Bibliography

All citations in the text are translated from the German edition unless an English-language edition is indicated in the bibliographical entry. All references to MECW refer to *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*. 50 vols. New York: International Publishers, 1975–.

Bethke, Hildberg, and Werner Jaspert, eds. *Moskau–Leningrad–heute.* Frankfurt on Main: Stimme-Verlag, 1965.

Bruder Nietzsche? Wie muss ein marxistisches Nietzsche-Bild heute aussehen? Symposium in Wuppertal, 9–10 April 1988. *Schriften der Marx-Engels-Stiftung* 7. Dusseldorf: Edition Marxistische Blätter, 1988.

Elsner, Gisela. "Ruf aus der tiefsten Tiefe des Unlands." *Marxistische Blätter*, 1990, no. 1:21–22.

Engels, Frederick. *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* In vol. 4 of *MECW*, 295–596. 1975a.

——. *The Peasant War in Germany*. In vol. 10 of *MECW*, 397–482. 1975b.

Fischer, Anton M. *Der reale Schein und die Theorie des Kapitals bei Marx*. Zurich: Europa-Verlag, 1978.

Gedo, Andras, et al. *Moderne–Nietzsche–Postmoderne.* Studien zur spätburgerlichen Ideologie. Berlin: Academie-Verlag, 1990.

Geisselbrecht, Holger. "Intelligenz, Intellektuelle und Arbeiter-bewegung in Westeuropa." Arbeitsmaterialien des Institut für Marxistische Studien und Forschungen, no. 16. Frankfurt on Main, 1985.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Hegel, Georg W. F. *Hegel's Science of Logic.* Translated by A. V. Miller. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1969.

——. *Rechtsphilosophie.* In vol. 7 of *Werke*, by Georg W. F. Hegel, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl M. Michel. Frankfurt on Main: Suhrkamp, 1970.

Hofmann, Werner. *Stalinismus und Antikommunismus.* Frankfurt on Main: Suhrkamp, 1967a.

——. "Verelendung." In *Folgen einer Theorie: Essays über "Das Kapital" von Karl Marx,* by Ernst T. Mohl et al., 26ff. Frankfurt on Main: Suhrkamp, 1967b.

Holz, Hans Heinz. *Strömungen und Tendenzen in Neomarxismus.* Munich: C. Hanser, 1972.

——. "Wider den neuen Irrationalismus." In *Plädoyers für einen wissenschaftlichen Humanismus,* edited by Josef Schleifstein and Ernst Wimmer, 19–33. Frankfurt on Main: Verlag Marxistische Blätter, 1981.

——. *Dialektik und Widerspiegelung.* Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1983.

——. "Dialektik in Konfrontation." In *Dialektik als offenes System,* edited by Jeroen Bartels, Hans Heinz Holz, Jos. Lensink, and Detlev Pätzold, 16–28. Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1986.

———. "Zeichen der Gegenaufklärung." In *Enzyklopädie zur bürgerlichen Philosophie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,* edited by Manfred Buhr, 44–48. Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1988.

——. "Dialektik." In *Europäische Enzyklopädie zu Philosophie und Wissenschaften,* edited by Hans Jörg Sandkühler. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990.

——. "Philosophie und Politik bei Antonio Gramsci." *Marxistische Blätter,* 1990, no. 4:38–47.

Jacoby, Henry. *Die Bürokratisierung der Welt.* Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1967.

Kofler, Leo. *Stalinismus und Bürokratie.* Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1979.

Kroner, Franz. *Die Anarchie der philosophischen Systeme.* Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1929.

Lange, Friedrich A. *The History of Materialism.* Vol. 3. Translated by Ernest C. Thomas. London: Trübner, 1881.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism." In vol. 19 of *V. I. Lenin: Collected Works,* 23–28. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963.

——. *State and Revolution.* In vol. 25 of *V. I. Lenin: Collected Works,* 385–497. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.

Marx, Karl. *Capital.* Vol. 1. New York: International Publishers, 1967.

—— *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie.* Berlin: Dietz, 1974.

——. Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.* In vol. 29 of *MECW,* 261–65. 1975.

Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party.* In vol. 6, *MECW,* 477–519. 1975.

Mochalski, Herbert, and Eugen Kogon, eds. *Sowjet-Sibirien und Zentralasien heute.* Frankfurt on Main: Stimme-Verlag, 1967.

Peter, Lothar. "Krise der Arbeiterklasse? Krise der Arbeiterbewegung?" In *Marxistische Studien, Jahrbuch des Institut für Marxistische Studien und Forschungen,* no. 6, 21–43. Frankfurt on Main, 1983.

Ryder, A. J. *Twentieth-Century Germany: From Bismark to Brandt.* New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973.

Sholokhov, Mikhail A. *And Quiet Flows the Don.* New York: Knopf, 1967.

Tolstoy, Aleksey N. *Road to Calvary.* New York: Knopf, 1946.

Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.* Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947. [English translation of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,* part 1.]

——. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft.* Part 1. 5th ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 1976.

Volkov, Aleksandr I., and Yuri A. Krasin. "Sozialismus gestern und morgen–ein anderer oder derselbe?" [Socialism Yesterday and Tomorrow: Different or the Same?] Manuscript distributed by the Embassy of the USSR. Bonn: 1990.

Name Index

A
Adorno, Theodor W., 24, 99
Aristotle, 99

B
Bacon, Francis, 92
Bartels, Jeroen, 123
Bernstein, Eduard, 115
Bethke, Hildberg, 120
Bloch, Ernst, 62
Buhr, Manfred, 123

D
Descartes, René, 92

E
Elsner, Gisela, 75, 122
Engels, Frederick, 9-11, 19, 21, 24, 20–21, 29, 32, 35, 37, 40, 53–54, 67– 68, 74, 77, 80, 118, 121–22, 124

F
Fischer, Anton M., 120, 122
Fourier, Charles, 10

G
Galileo, 92
Gedo, Andras, 93, 122
Geisselbrecht, Holgar, 85, 122
Gorbachev, Mikhail S., 107, 112
Gramsci, Antonio, 25, 77, 85, 95–96, 119, 122–23
Grundlach, Father, 25

H
Hegel, G. W. F., 24, 119, 121–22
Hobbes, Thomas, 24
Hofmann, Werner, 67, 69, 70, 104, 116, 119, 123
Holz, Hans Heinz, 7–8, 88, 120– 21, 123

J
Jacoby, Henry, 123
Jaspert, Werner, 120

K
Khrushchev, Nikita S., 110
Kofler, Leo, 119, 123
Kogon, Eugen, 120, 124
Krasin, Yuri A., 114–15, 117, 124
Kroner, Franz, 123

L
Lange, Friedrich A., 117, 123
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 12
Leibniz, Gottfried W. 26
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 7, 10–11, 26, 29, 37, 40, 54, 77, 85,102, 123
Lesink, Jos., 123

M
Marx, Karl, 9-11, 21, 24, 28–29, 35, 37, 46, 53–54, 60, 65-67, 69, 74, 77, 80, 86, 114, 118, 120, 122-24
Mochalski, Herbert, 120, 124
Mohl, Ernst T., 123
More, Thomas, 53
Müller, Johannes, 25
Müntzer, Thomas, 53

N
Nietzsche, Friedrich W., 92–93, 122

O
Owen, Robert, 10

P
Pätzold, Detlev, 123
Peter, Lothar, 73–74, 124
Pius XII, 25
Popper, Karl R., 26

R
Ryder, A. J., 121, 124

S
Saint-Simon, Henri, 10
Sandkühler, Hans Jörg, 57, 123
Schleifstein, Josef, 123, 130
Schiller, Friedrich, 20
Sholokhov, Mikhail A., 119, 124
Smith, Adam, 24
Stolypin, Pyotr A., 103

T
Tolstoy, Aleksey N., 119, 124

V
Volkov, Aleksandr I., 114–15, 117, 124

W
Weber, Max, 22, 120–21, 124
Wimmer, Ernst, 123