

essence it is incompatible with the type of centralised administration which will inevitably arise. The latter will unavoidably dissolve into the rule of many separate dictators, and the course of social life will be determined by autocratic forms of rule within the system of democracy. "Thus here also we will see yet a further example of how democracy becomes a cloak concealing the actual imposition of the rule of a minority over millions of working people, exactly as under capitalism. At the very best the workers will have to content themselves with the highly valued "right of co-management", which represents yet another form of disguise concealing the real relations of power.

The rejection of all centralised forms of administration and management of production does not however imply that we have taken our stand exclusively upon a federalised structure. Wherever management and administration of the economy are in the hands of the masses themselves and are implemented through their industrial organisations and cooperatives, powerful syndicalist tendencies are without doubt present; but when viewed from the aspect of the system of general social book-keeping, economic life is seen to be *an indivisible whole*, from which strategic vantage-point the economy is not so much administered and managed as surveyed and planned as a unified whole. The fact that all the various changes wrought upon society in the course of the economic process by the application and simultaneous transformation of creative human energies come to be registered in the one recording organism forms the highest summation of all economic life. Whether one calls this federalist or centralist depends simply upon the vantage point from which one views the same phenomenon. It is simultaneously both the one and the other, which means that, as far as the system of production as a whole is concerned, these concepts have lost their meaning. The mutual opposition of federalism and centralism has been subsumed within its higher unity; the productive organism has become an organic whole.

TRANSLATOR'S POSTSCRIPT

PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSITION TO COMMUNISM

Introduction

Almost 60 years have passed since Jan Appel and his remarkable group of co-theoreticians of the economics of Communism first gave their work to an overwhelmingly sceptical revolutionary proletarian movement. At that time, Leninism, disguised behind its "internationalist" mask of "Marxism-Leninism" and still able to pose as "the Marxism of the epoch of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions", was proclaiming the imminent "death crisis" of imperialism and the birth of a new era of a "developing Camp of Socialist Nations" headed by the "Soviet" Union.

Today, however, imperialism appears stronger than it has ever been, whilst the once-mighty "Camp of Socialist Nations" is disintegrating under the pressure of its own internal contradictions at a speed which defies the ability of even the most experienced of the bourgeoisie's most expert Sovietologists to keep pace with it. For all the talk about "democratisation" and "openness", their chief interest is concentrated upon the economic situation in "the First Land of Victorious Socialism". And rightly so, for it was here, at the fundamental level of the *social relations in production and distribution*, that the most basic flaw in what Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the first of the many "Friends of the Soviet Union" which

reformist petit-bourgeois socialism was later to spawn in their thousands, were pleased to call "the great Soviet experiment", first began to appear at as early a date as 1920.

Alongside the masterfully clear exposition of the elements making up the true economics of the transition to Communism which forms the positive content and greatest achievement of the work of Jan Appel and his team, the basic economic contradiction lying at the heart of "Soviet" society is sufficiently thoroughly exposed in "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution" as to make a careful study of its pages well worth the while of every genuine student of revolutionary Marxism aspiring to obtain, not only a coherent theoretical critique of what many Marxists have despairingly referred to as an unravelling historical tangle defying any rational social analysis, but also, and more importantly, a truly scientific understanding of the dialectics of the transition to Communism, so complex in form yet so simple in essence.

As for the "professional revolutionaries" manning the leadership levels of the many Leninist, Neo-leninist and Trotskyist sects, each one claiming to be the one and only genuine vanguard of the British proletariat, they will doubtless take their place alongside the openly bourgeois or petit-bourgeois "Sovietologists" in either screaming out their vociferous abuse or in attempting to avoid the awkward task of, for once, producing a plausible "theoretical" refutation in place of the hollow doctrinal abstractions to which their now thoroughly lazy and complacent intellects, rotten with bureaucratised platitudes, have long since succumbed by joining in a collective conspiracy of silence. Either way, history and the class struggle will have relegated them all to the gallery of the proletarian revolution's exposed fakes and charlatans long before the development of the revolutionary process will have brought to fruition any opportunity for them to realise their cherished aim: that of seizing control of the bridge controlling the ship

of the proletarian revolution in order to guide it onto the dreary and rock-strewn coast of State Socialism.

The Social and Class Motivations underlying the Contemporary Offensive against Marxism

As long ago as 1971-3, world capitalism came to the end of its long post-World War II expansionary phase. This period, which began shortly after the end of the War, in approximately 1947-8, represented an until then quite unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the capitalist mode of production, for never before had the capitalist system not only withstood all the usual pressures which normally make for the onset of cyclical trade crises - the peaks and troughs of the so-called "business cycle", usually reckoned to be of roughly 10-yearly duration - but, even more significantly, had also succeeded in sustaining unprecedentedly high rates of accumulation in the face of a likewise unprecedentedly high rate of employment - an achievement never previously registered in the history of capitalism.

Broadly speaking, two basic factors were responsible for this unique period of prolonged capitalist prosperity and stability. The first of these was accountable to the significant increases in both the *productivity of labour* and the acceleration of *absolute capital turnover* - the latter the result of the very considerable increases in *labour intensity* which had then become so marked a feature of the production process in many developed lands. It was the latter of these two factors which had been responsible, not merely for negating to a considerable degree the endemic tendency for the rate of profit to fall with a rising organic composition of capital - the classic cause, excluding the troughs of the trade cycle, of capitalist recession which otherwise would almost certainly have brought both the rate of accumulation and the rate of employment down at a

much earlier point in time than was actually the case - but actually for bringing about a significant *increase* in the rate of profit *per unit of time* - sometimes known more succinctly as the *temporal rate of profit*. These were the twin poles which formed the chief support on which the long post-war boom period was sustained.

There was, however, a second factor at work in the post-World War II situation, and this one which acted at the more substantive level of the market and investment conditions prevailing in the economically underdeveloped colonial sector of the world capitalist system. This was the likewise hitherto unprecedented *movement of intensified expansion into the underdeveloped periphery of the capitalist world* which had been made possible by the victory of the Anglo-U.S. group in the Second World War. As a result of this, a wave of capital export of hitherto unknown dimensions and duration into the underdeveloped lands was able to commence under the umbrella of the newly established post-war hegemony of U.S. capitalism. The resultant colonial-type investment was - at least for a time - able to obtain an average rate of profit appreciably above that prevailing in the developed industrial countries, mainly as a consequence of production conditions characterised by a much lower organic composition of capital and a similarly lower indigenous value of labour-power than those pertaining to the developed metropolitan lands.

The end of the post-war expansionary period was approximately coincidental with the end of the situation of *absolute U.S. hegemony* in the capitalist sector of the world which had set in at the end of World War II, and which came to an end c.1968-71. With the onset of that watershed period, the old crisis features of capitalism - chronic underutilisation of both capital and labour, rising inflation, growing social instability - began once again to manifest themselves. Accordingly, the main subjective socio-economic preoccupations of the leading world powers within the camp of capitalism began to be centered around the problem of how to achieve significant increases, not only in the average rate of profit available in the indigenous

metropolitan terrain, but more importantly in swelling the actual *mass* of realised profit available to the capitalist class upon which its stock of new investment capital necessary to the continuance of capital accumulation on an extended scale - the *sine qua non* of capitalism's continued existence, not to speak of its continuing good health - so fundamentally and crucially depends.

It has been these - from the point of view of Social Capital quite understandable - preoccupations which from the outset have formed the overriding, albeit unconscious, motivation underlying the economic policies pursued by the successive administrations representing the interests of Social Capital in Britain. Of these, some have been under the leadership of the left wing of British capitalism, headed by the Labour Party. The majority, however, have been under that of its senior political representative, the Tory Party, culminating in the long reign of Margaret Thatcher which began in 1979, some 8-9 years after the onset, in 1970-71, of serious recessionary symptoms.

The strategy employed by this most dynamically class-motivated and reactionary faction of the British ruling class has from the outset been a dual-pronged one: on the one side, it has been characterised by measures designed to bring about *significant increases in the average rate of absolute realised profit*. This has been achieved largely through the introduction of new technology which has significantly reduced the scale of deployment of living labour - variable capital - whilst simultaneously increasing considerably the already high average intensity of labour. Combined with this set of measures acting at the more profound level of value-generation has been the introduction of others of a more pragmatic and empirically founded character which have been designed to *extend the overall quantitative base of the productive economy upon which profitmaking and accumulation at the new qualitatively enhanced average rate of profit take place*. Where the first of these measures may be seen as the qualitative

aspect of the dual strategy of Social Capital, the second may be taken as its quantitative aspect, one which achieves its effect by bringing about the widespread dismantling of that sector of industry and the economy previously established by the left wing of Social Capital and based upon *state nationalisation*, and which for that reason is not without serious political repercussions. This, in its turn, has of necessity required the progressive destruction of the jewel in the crown of the left wing, the so-called *Welfare State*, in which now (Oct. 1989) even the National Health Service is under threat.

The reflex of the dual or two-pronged nature of these economic measures designed to increase the net absolute profitability of British capitalism, an achievement secured through measures designed to achieve, on the one hand significant increases in absolute capital turnover and, through that, of the temporal rate of profit, and on the other the successful establishment of widely based extensions to the quantitative base of private investment, has been their combined effect upon the conditions of life and labour of the working class. Apart from the marked reduction in both the scope and the quality of social services caused by the - as yet only partial - elimination of the Welfare State, the chief factor in the considerable inroads made into working class living standards since the onset of the "Thatcher Era" has, of course, been the very considerable increase in both the absolute size and the relative duration of the *reserve army of labour*, the numbers of the permanently unemployed or only partially employed workers. This feature of contemporary capitalism, more than any other, adds to the total of hardship and degradation suffered by the working class, and represents the obverse side of the dual strategy applied by Social Capital to that through which the temporality of the labour process is intensified and concentrated in order to achieve a significant increase in the average rate of profit.

The real motivation underlying the political measures adopted by successive thatcherite

governments, the true significance attaching to the "revolution" introduced by thatcherism into, not only the economic foundations of British capitalism but also into its political superstructure, has of course been the far-reaching and unprecedented measures taken to strengthen the central state apparatus of power at the disposal of Social Capital against the contingency of the onset of conditions of rising social antagonism and class struggle. These have included changes to the electoral system which have further enhanced the already appreciable advantages for the right wing traditionally built in to it. The erection of this fortified central state power, parallel with which, of course, a corresponding weakening of the so-called democratic facade of the state in the form of parliamentary representation and control has also been carried through, has both generated a need for a framework of *specifically ideological deception* adequate to disguise the real class character of the economic and political measures taken and also promoted the means whereby that need might be satisfied. The result has been the launching of a campaign of ruthless irrational ideologisation of the channels of public information and propaganda the like of which has not been experienced since the days of National Socialism, a not insignificant component within which having been the mounting of as crude and rabble-rousing an offensive against the broad reformist labour movement, the left wing of British capitalism, and the entire panoply of its political parties and institutions together with their deep-seated bourgeois-liberal traditions, harmlessly parliamentary-reformist in character as these have ever been, as can be found at any point in the entire history of the ideological misrepresentation of Marxism and the historical import of the class struggle, including those launched under the leadership of Adolf Hitler by the National Socialist German Workers Party from January 1933 to the end of World War II. Indeed, the sole element of inappositeness attaching to this parallel is the admittedly rather fundamental one that the threat to the future existence, never

mind the well-being, of German capitalism represented by the revolutionary German proletariat was at that time a very real one, whilst that posed by its British counterpart, at least up till now, never has been.

The parallel which, despite all the massive differences in the economic level of contradictions prevailing at the two utterly dissimilar historical epochs, can be found to exist in the scope and intensity of the ideological crusades unleashed by the two leaderships of the two respective capitalist nation-states, National Socialist Germany and Thatcherite Britain, in fact mirrors the broad similarity of aim which informed the policies of both, for all the marked differences in national traditions and the character of the broad social situation prevailing within their respective terrains and at their respective historical junctures (1933-45 and 1979-89). For all the real and apparent divergence of method between the two, the aim is the same: that of increasing the average rate of profit available to new capital seeking investment in the indigenous market.

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An inevitable consequence of the neverending flood of blatantly pro-capitalist propaganda unleashed by Thatcher's equivalent of Dr. Josef Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, the Adam Smith Institute, has been the attempted relegation of Marxism as a science of history and the development of human society to the museum of ideological curiosities. Comparable with Adolf Hitler's "night of the burning books", a veritable torrent of bourgeois "thought" has descended upon us, a cascade of commonplace and undistinguished prejudices masquerading as "social science" as unprecedented in the sheer philistinism of their wholly ideological and anti-scientific subjectivity as they are stifling in the overwhelming tedium and superficiality of their subject-matter. The net effect of this "counter-revolution of the spirit" upon the contemporary working class movement, including especially its left wing, has been to generate a reaction against Marxism as a scientific

foundation for the class struggle and the growth of a revolutionary proletarian consciousness the intellectual - or rather anti-intellectual - climate of which exactly mirrors, and is itself a reflex of, that rejection of all scientific norms of investigation into and cognition of social and economic reality which is the certain sign of the final expiry of the last vestiges of the classical tradition in social and political thought which once formed so proud a component in the cultural heritage of the British bourgeoisie. This anti-intellectual and anti-scientific trend is particularly marked amongst students and young intellectual workers, amongst whom any knowledge of the scientific foundations of the transition to Communism as the classless society of the future which will be the positive historical outcome of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution as depicted by Karl Marx has been virtually totally extinguished and replaced by the arid landscapes of State Socialism.

The ongoing onslaught upon what is, after all, an incorrectly understood and totally misrepresented Marxism and its likewise misunderstood methodological foundations, as these are currently presented by the leninist, neo-leninist or trotskyist parties and organisations comprising the "broad left", can be confirmed at any time by a perusal of the pages of virtually any of the journals and periodicals comprising the "Marxist" press, from "Marxism Today" on the right - now more commonly seen in the waiting-rooms of City bank managers than the "Economist" - to the frankenstein "Living Marxism" on the left. Such a study will suffice to indicate how little any of these pillars of the Marxist Establishment have to do with true scientific Marxism and its revolutionary method.

One of the most regrettable and potentially dangerous features of the contemporary anti-Marxist crusade has been the limbo of almost total forgetfulness to which it has largely succeeded in relegating all knowledge of the economic system of

Communism - so much so that today, for perhaps the first time in the history of civil society and the class struggle which perpetually rages at its heart, the broad mass of working people are without any even vaguely apprehended conception of an alternative society and set of production relations to those of capitalism. In the midst of their ceaseless struggles to maintain tolerable conditions of life and labour for themselves within the confines of capitalist relations, a knowledge of, or at least a nodding acquaintance with, the alternative perspectives offered by the creative, harmonious and classless vistas of Communism would have an inestimable rejuvenating potential.

What, therefore, the "Marxism" of the contemporary era lacks above all else is a comprehensive and coherent theory of the proletarian revolutionary process, of which the struggle to establish the first rudimentary foundations of the Association of Free and Equal Producers through the establishment and consolidation of a widespread network of Workers' Councils, the class framework of the future Dictatorship of the Proletariat, forms the essential culminative stage. Such a theory would take as its starting-point the analysis of the changing movement of class relations and the likewise changing class composition and balance of class forces, objective and subjective, which have been so marked a feature of the development of the advanced capitalist nation-states since the end of World War II, just as its two central theoretical pivots would be the law of capital concentration and its correlate, the law of *class polarisation*.

In this as in most other aspects of scientific Communism, it is to Karl Marx that we must look for the germinal groundwork which lays the conceptual and theoretical foundations of a fully developed theory of the proletarian revolution. It was he whose theory of capitalist development showed the *accumulation of capital* to be the fundamental motive of all capitalist production, and its dual outcome to consist, on the one hand of the growing irreconcilability of the crisis of capitalism, and,

on the other, of the growth of the class struggle into the proletarian revolution. Thus the basis for a theory specifically of the proletarian revolution - an aspect of Marxist science on which Marx and Engels themselves did very little work, but that little of the very greatest theoretical significance - is seen to be provided by the theory of class polarisation.

Since then, however, and particularly since the emergence of Social Democracy as an anti-proletarian centre operating within the camp both of the proletariat as a whole - its "right" form as a parliamentary-reformist movement - and within the advanced levels of the revolutionary proletariat - its "left" or leninist form - a bulwark has been erected protecting the capitalist class, its socio-economic system and its state from any growth in the level of revolutionary consciousness within the working class. As the theoretical reflex of this in the realm of ideas, no progress has been made towards elaborating the science of the proletarian revolution. As for Leninism, the sparse contribution to this central pivot of proletarian revolutionary theory which it has felt compelled to make for the sake of form alone has been restricted to a few empirical precepts of a purely tactical nature which are, in fact, of relevance only to a bourgeois-democratic or bourgeois-nationalist revolution.

The Role played by Alienation in the Life and Struggles of the Working Class

In seeking to define a little more closely the term "alienation" in the context of capitalist production relations in general and of wage-labour in particular, we must be careful to distinguish between the effects of alienation over and against the individual worker-producer and the primary causes of alienation in a social system based upon antagonistic class-divided social relations. It appears as no more than a truism to have to point out that the proletariat is exploited at at least

two levels simultaneously: at that of the proletariat as a class, and at that of the individual worker. It is their awareness of their collective exclusion as a class from all control over the very social forces their labour ceaselessly summons forth, the half-conscious recognition, unwittingly forced upon them day in, day out, of the ultimate truth that, however successful or otherwise their or their trades union representatives' conduct of the wages struggle may be, they form a class the exercise of whose labour may produce all social wealth, but that, however essential to the continuance of all social life that labour may be, its exercise under the conditions imposed by capitalist society and wage-labour brings no commensurate control, or indeed any control whatsoever, over either the process of production or the product of labour, and hence over society as a whole.

It is here, in this collective class awareness, ceaselessly engendered by capitalist relations, of their powerlessness and helplessness in the face of their lack of control over the production process itself, as well as over the right of disposal of the product of their labour, that the primary source of the alienation experienced by the proletarian wage-slave must be sought. The experience of the collective class causes of alienation has objective primacy over the sense of alienation experienced by the individual worker-producer, and for that very reason the precondition for the emancipation of the latter from the sense of alienation he experiences as an individual is the emancipation, through their revolutionary action, of the class of worker-producers as a whole from those social conditions inherent in capitalist wage-slavery which constitute the primary cause of their sense of individual alienation.

All this, of course, is not to minimise the significance of the sense of alienation felt by the individual proletarian wage-worker. On the contrary, the ultimate and more deep-seated manifestations of alienation

are precisely those which arise within the individual psyche of each individual proletarian. But what we have hitherto spoken of is the source of proletarian alienation. The petit-bourgeois advocate of reformist-parliamentary socialism, whether or not he is aware of the real sources either of the economic exploitation of the proletariat as a class - the mode of generation of surplus value - or of the real cause of the sense of alienation experienced by the worker-producers under capitalism in an unconsciously apprehended lack of control over society and its resources, is conditioned by his entire class situation in society and in particular by his relationship to Social Capital. That relationship is essentially that of a servitor of Capital whose concern is to administer the capitalist system as efficiently as possible and to maintain its social fabric in "a state of good repair" in the interests of his master. Occupying as it does such a relatively privileged social position, it is virtually impossible for the state-sponsored petite-bourgeoisie, and in particular the representatives of its top stratum, the professional intelligentsia, to view alienation from any other vantage-point than that which sees it exclusively in its surface manifestation as an alienative effect upon the individual proletarian wage-worker; of the class origins of alienation in the sense of divorce from all control over both the labour process and the product of labour, which the worker-producers experience day in, day out as one of the most fundamental attributes of their life under the rule of Social Capital, of the mere existence of the causes of alienation in class exploitation, they are totally unaware. And this holds as true for the academic or professional "Marxist" - perhaps more so - as it does for any other professional petit-bourgeois advocate of milk-and-water parliamentary "socialism" and bearer of well-intentioned sentiments towards the proletarian producers, concerning whom the fact that their labour is the sole source not only of the whole of the material wealth of society, but

also of the entire collective surplus value under the control of the capitalist state out of which the often more than generous salaries enjoyed by the professional petite-bourgeoisie are paid, they are as abysmally ignorant as they are of the principles of genuine proletarian Communism.

Of all the many manifestations of the division of society into antagonistic classes bearing a qualitatively differing relationship to the fundamental question of control over the means of production and distribution, alienation, both social - i.e., class-determined - and individual, is the one which produces the most profound and far-reaching consequences for all toiling humanity - consequences which can only be fully and finally eradicated with the attainment of the Higher Stage of Communism.

The Question of the Necessity for a Lower Stage of Communism

Among the more emotively seductive of the various alternative perspectives of the transition to Communism which have become fashionable in recent years as a significant and wholly characteristic component of the current anti-Marxist climate is that which holds that the high levels of technological development characteristic of advanced capitalism, and the correspondingly high productivity of labour associated therewith, have rendered quite superfluous the necessity for any "Lower Stage" of Communism, in which not only production, but also distribution for individual consumption would be regulated by the Average Social Hour of Labour in accordance with the number of hours contributed by each individual producer.

The fact that, in the conditions of advanced capitalism, the average standard of living of the working class has not only risen quantitatively to a point at which it lies significantly above the level of mere survival or subsistence, but has also

changed qualitatively to include material elements of consumption which are not related to the mere subsistence needs of the producers - these two factors taken together must, according to the proponents of this theory, lead to the conclusion that the development of capitalism, and in particular the tremendous increases which have occurred in recent decades in the *productivity of labour*, have already created the material preconditions for the abolition of both absolute and relative scarcity, and that only the persistence of capitalism itself prevents the world from being transported into a state of blissful abundance virtually overnight, one in which the means of individual consumption would be freely available for distribution according to individual choice. To realise this already incipient abundance then becomes the historic task of the Communist revolution, whether or not the leading class force in this is seen to be the modern proletariat, the class of wage-workers which holds no property in, and hence exercises no form of control over, the very economic resources and means of life its own labour has created, and which for that reason can possess no interested motive in preserving the existing mode of social production; or some new class born of new social formations based upon state control of economic resources - the so-called state-sponsored petite-bourgeoisie - to which the proletariat, the worker-producers by hand and brain have, according to some of the more fashionable anti-Marxist theorists of the "Even Newer New Left", supposedly relinquished their former revolutionary role.

According to the proponents of this theory, Marx's view of the transition to Communism as being effected through a "Lower Stage", in which distribution for personal consumption would be on the basis of a defined "right to consume" to a degree determined by the contribution, measured in labour-hours, of each participating producer, has already been rendered obsolete by the development of labour productivity achieved under capitalism itself, before capitalist relations of production and distribution have even ended. Society may

accordingly move directly into a system of economic relations in which distribution for individual consumption is by free choice and inclination, without the need to apply any objective measure related to and deriving from the sphere of production relations. Since Marx conceived of the conditions of production and distribution applicable during this "Lower Stage" as constituting the economic foundations of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, we must assume that this theory also embraces the view that not only the particular features in the economy of the Lower Stage of Communism characterised by the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for personal consumption through the medium of the much-maligned Labour Certificates, *but also the entire concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, must now be considered as having been rendered fit only as an exhibit in a museum of theoretical curiosities !

It is, of course, true that the question of the productivity of labour is of fundamental significance to the mode of transition to Communism. However, it is necessary in this connection to raise the question: does the primary significance of this question reside in the aspect of productivity which relates to *the level of development of the objective means of production alone* ? Or does it rather relate to the role played by the objective productivity of labour in determining the infinitely complex web of social relations social man enters into in producing and distributing his means of life - not so much by acting as a *direct mechanical lever of change*, as the theory held by our contemporary utopians would suggest, but by bringing about those changes at the base level of the economic foundations of society which, in their turn and by indirect dialectical influence, bring about those changes in the broad social practices, cultural and institutional relations, moral and ethical values - in short, the entire gamut of superstructural elements which together make up the surface composition of society, *the active showplace of history* - which in their totality make up the life-conditions of the

worker-producers, the active and *consciously motivated* builders of the edifice of Communism. As we shall see, in Marx's thinking the role of labour productivity is related to the sphere of interaction between the given level of the objective productivity of labour and the *social relations* prevalent at any given moment in the development of society, *the level of social reality at which men become conscious of the social issues involved and confront each other in their resolution.*

In a class-divided society such as capitalism, the mode of interaction between economic base and social superstructure is such that the changes wrought by the former are exerted through the medium of social antagonisms at the root of which, at the level of the economic relations themselves, lies *the class struggle*, but which at the level of the institutional and ideological superstructure, are mediated through the system of political representation through which the various classes and strata - other, of course than the working class, which has no independent class representation other than economic representation through the class struggle itself - fight out their various competitive issues until a resolution of each question is reached.

Under Communism, social development takes a fundamentally different course. Since classes with qualitatively differing socio-economic interests no longer exist, the class struggle likewise has disappeared. The development of relations between individuals remains determined by free spontaneous interaction, but the determination of the development of the social superstructure by the level of development reached by the economic base still constitutes the basic motive contradiction in society. This, however, no longer takes the form of violent, elemental antagonisms which can only be contained through the imposition of an equally violent constraining external framework, the state, but expresses itself creatively and harmoniously in the form of cooperative effort in changing the world and, with it, man himself. The struggle

between hostile classes as the motive contradiction of history has been resolved in Communism, and out of Communism emerges the new motive contradiction, synthesised at a new and higher level: that between creative man and the natural universe around him. The realm of *social necessity* has given place to the realm of *social freedom*. At the centre of all social life, as the now fully conscious instrument of his own destiny, stands Social Man himself. No alienative social force, such as Capital, any longer interposes itself between Social Man and his hitherto largely spontaneous but now fully conscious activity in changing the world.

What we have just described, however, relates to, and can only come into being with, the attainment of the Higher Stage of Communism. Before that stage can be reached, we must concern ourselves with the more complex and intractable problem of the transition from capitalism to Communism. In particular, we must address the question, first raised by Marx himself: can the victorious proletariat, having smashed the power of Social Capital in a Communist Revolution, proceed directly to a Communist society in which distribution for individual consumption is free and unregulated? Or will some intermediate transitional form, defined by Marx as The Lower Stage of Communism, be necessary?

We know the answer Marx gives to this question from our study of the "Critique of the Gotha Programme". Here it is useful to refer once again to Marx's original text, and in particular to one pregnant passage:

"What we have to deal with here is a Communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. ..."

(K. Marx: "Critique of the Gotha Programme"; Progress Publishers, Moscow 1978; p.16)

Are the meaning and emphasis conveyed by this passage really such as to express the view that it was solely and singly the level of development reached by *the objective means of production*, and *the objective productivity of labour achieved on that basis*, which Marx, when he penned the above words, had in mind as the primary factor in the period of the transition from capitalism to Communism?

It was Marx's view, one which is also implicit in the above quotation, that the forces of social labour, together with the objective means of production - themselves the product of past-expended labour, what Marxists term in combination *the forces of production* - do indeed form the material base comprising the primary foundation of society in its movement through class struggle towards its supersession in the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the Communist society. But was it also his view that this *objective* element in social development, fundamental though it be, constitutes the *sole* lever of what is, after all, a qualitative, or *revolutionary*, change in the entire socio-economic structure of society, a change in the sphere of the relations men enter into with one another in producing and distributing their means of life - a sphere which, at any point in social development within class-divided society and its transition into its opposite, Communism, represents the conscious showplace of all historical change, but which, under Communism and in the transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage in particular, must for the first time in human history be structured according to a *conscious plan* and not occur simply spontaneously as a by-product, so to speak, of the act of social production?

The answer given by Marx to this question, and which is implicit in the above passage, is clear: the *forces of production* - which in their turn subdivide into the subjective human agency in production, the workers and their labour, and the objective instruments of production, the tools of

man's economic activity in producing his means of life which are themselves the product of his past labour, and corresponding to which is a given *productivity of labour* - do indeed constitute one pole of social contradiction at the primary or base level of social reality. The other pole of social contradiction at the level of the economic base, however, the dialectical counterpart of the first and in constant interaction with it, is that comprised of the *social relations of production*, the infinitely complex web of relations men enter into with one another in utilising the tools of production. At first glance and from a superficial viewpoint, these might seem to be too diverse as to be amenable to scientific analysis, but a little thought and observation show them to consist at bottom of *class relations*, those between on the one hand a class of proprietors of capital and controllers over both human labour and the objective instruments of production, and on the other a class of producers who, holding no proprietorship over the objective means of production and wielding themselves no control over either the production process or the product of their own labour, is compelled to sell its labour-power in exchange for the means of life. These two poles of social contradiction together form the *first and most fundamental sphere of social reality*, that comprising the contradiction between the forces and the relations of social production.

X The method adopted by our contemporary utopians, however, is to take but one pole in this dialectical duality, or unity of opposites, that represented by the level of development reached by the objective forces of production and their corresponding objective productivity of labour, and to elevate this one pole to be the *sole determinant of social development*, one which for that reason exerts its influence as a *mechanical and direct lever of social change*.

To adopt this view and method, however - one which forms so fundamental a component of bourgeois philosophy - is to wreak violence upon

the complex web of social forces which, in their combined opposition and interaction, make up the many-layered process of social development. In terms of world view and the method which corresponds thereto, it means to *substitute bourgeois mechanical determinism for materialist dialectics*. For the true laws of social development are such that the poles of contradiction represented respectively by the productive forces and the relations of production each constitute discreet levels within the totality of the social organism as a whole, its *first sphere of contradiction*.

Over and above this most fundamental theoretical principle of scientific Marxism, however, and following from it, is the proposition that the medium through which the contradiction for ever active between the forces of production and their corresponding social relations, the expression of that contradiction at the *surface level of social life*, is the *class struggle*. At the level of the class struggle, the consciously motivated social elements involved become aware of the myriad contradictory issues associated with the production of the means of life in a class-divided society and fight each one out to a resolution. Thus the class struggle comprises the *second most fundamental level of social contradiction within capitalist society*, through which the first, that of the contradiction between the development of the forces of production and the social relations of production - to which, as we have seen, a given stage of development of the productive forces and the productivity of labour corresponds - expresses itself at the surface level of conscious social practice.

We have now placed our examination of the transition to Communism on a correct materialist basis governed by dialectical reasoning and analysis. From the class struggle perpetually raging at the heart of capitalism, we can now trace the growth of all the other myriad elements which go to make up the complex fabric of modern

capitalist society. The class struggle, as the most basic and prime generator of social change within a class-divided society which operates at the level of conscious, but not yet fully conscious, social practice, forms the springbed for the decisive historic act carried through by the only class in capitalist society which has no interest in its perpetuation, the modern proletariat. The class struggle reaches its qualitative resolution in the proletarian revolution, and this then dissolves the structure and fabric of capitalist society, at the same time ending for ever the ages-old division of society into classes. For its execution and victorious completion the workers by hand and brain will have been compelled to make Marxist revolutionary science their guide to action, to have elaborated an entire revolutionary strategy based upon a profound class analysis of the main and subsidiary contradictions at work in modern capitalism and to have adopted the most complex methods of revolutionary struggle in order to achieve the victory of their revolution.

But it will be only after the victory of Communism that the workers by hand and brain will be able to proceed to apply their understanding of the laws of social development in general to the profoundly complex problems associated with the transition to Communism and to the practical creative tasks of Communist construction. For this culminative stage of the entire revolutionary process to have a chance of success, some knowledge of the general principles and laws of motion of Communist society will be essential, and it is this which today gives the work of Jan Appel and his team of German and Dutch revolutionaries such a tremendous historical significance for the Communist future. But this generalised, consciously held knowledge of the principles of Communism will not mean that the proletarian victors will enter the portals of Communist society already newborn as the new Communist man, fit to adopt immediately the qualitatively new scale of intellectual, cultural and moral standards and their corresponding values which

reflect the new, non-antagonistic and harmonious production relations of Communism. For this, a period of self-remoulding and self-training will be necessary, and this period will in itself be nothing more nor less than the positive outcome of the class struggle through which that former motive generator of human history abolishes itself and its former protagonists subsume their former antagonistic framework of social activity under the general aegis of the positive tasks associated with changing the world and themselves through their now fully consciously concerted and planned activity. It is to this most profound aspect of the transition from capitalism to Communism, from class-divided to classless society, from alienated to free labour, as well as, within that, to the objective laws governing the transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage of Communism, that Marx is referring in the famous passage quoted above.

Most importantly, this means that the rapid and continuous increases in the productivity of labour which must and will inevitably occur during the early stages of construction of a Communist society as a result of the freeing of the creativity of labour from the numbing and mind-crippling shackles imposed on it by wage-labour and the subordination of the producer to the objective means of production must serve the cardinal strategic need of the entire inaugurative process of the proletarian revolution: the strengthening of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. In the face of the unprecedented difficulties with which the working class will be confronted in the task of elevating itself to the position of dominant controlling class, all talk of a direct transition to the Arcadian idyll of immediate free labour and unregulated individual consumption is just so much idle utopian speculation.

Quite apart from and in addition to the argumentation presented in "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution" as well as in this Postscript, however, we must not for

one moment forget or discount the possibility that the revolutionary transition to Communism will be attended by class war and social devastation on such a scale as will inevitably reduce the productivity of labour to a point *significantly below its present level* - an eventuality which many would consider the more or less unavoidable consequence of the revolutionary destruction of the highest and most developed form of class-divided society known in history. These considerations apart, the fact remains that it is *the attitudes of mind and the values and methods of social practice which they engender amongst the human agents of change themselves, the worker-producers, which must also change fundamentally before the transition to the free distribution for personal consumption characteristic of full Communism becomes a possibility*. Yet more clearly expressed, by far the greatest quantitative and qualitative growth in the productivity of labour must and will be that which takes place *within and as an organic part of the growth of Communist social relations in production and distribution themselves*, which will thus contribute towards strengthening and giving substance and durability to those relations.

Furthermore, what the authors of the deterministic theory which projects a mechanical and direct transition to the free labour and free individual consumption characteristic of the Higher Stage of Communism are forgetting is that every increase in the productivity of labour achieved by capitalism since its dawn has been accompanied by equal increases in *the intensity of labour and in the uncreative repetitiveness and monotony of the labour process*, an intensification of the rate of transformation of labour-power into realised labour which becomes ever more closely interwoven with the production of both social and personal misery as the problems associated with the generation of value and surplus value, and the realisation of the latter as profit, also become ever more contradictory and intractable. In short, as Social Capital struggles to promote its own

accumulation and so fights its way forward against the adverse current represented by the historically endemic tendency for the rate of profit per cycle of investment to fall; and as it, as an organic part of this fight, resorts to an ever-rising *intensity of labour* in order to achieve the speed-up of absolute capital turnover and the resultant acceleration of accumulation which it increasingly sees as its universal panacea for counteracting the above-described tendential fall in the rate of profit per investment cycle, Social Capital in its active operational form, *industrial capital*, quite spontaneously and endemically brings about that ever-deepening *immiseration of labour* and ever-increasing *accumulation of social misery* which is the obverse side to, and *éminence grise* of, the Accumulation of Capital.

For all of these very cogent reasons, much of the *technology* - though not, of course, all, computerisation being a case in point, for this represents perhaps the chief technological lever of Communism already prefigured within capitalism - through which those tremendous increases in labour productivity indubitably achieved under capitalism, particularly in its more recent period, have been realised - to achieve which, indeed, was capitalism's chief historical justification - will almost certainly, and with few exceptions, turn out to be *virtually useless* for the purposes of laying the socio-economic foundations for achieving the transition from the Lower Stage of Communism - in which the Average Social Hour of Labour is applied to the sphere of distribution for personal consumption as a measure of the contribution made by each individual producer-consumer to the social stock of economic resources, measured in Labour Hour Units, in which function it acts as the economic framework for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat - to the Higher Stage of Communism, characterised by wholly free labour and wholly free consumption. As part of the task of laying down the material socio-economic foundations for the Higher Stage, the victorious

worker-producers will almost certainly need to develop *an entire new technological base*, one employing, amongst other resources, a further qualitative refinement of existing cybernetic and computer techniques.

Thus a vitally significant factor in the transition to Communism which the above utopian theory leaves wholly out of account is that *the forms of wealth-creating means of production needed by Communist society, and hence by the new Communist man, will almost certainly differ qualitatively from those which capitalism - which, as we know, is not exactly renowned either for its love and respect for Truth and Beauty or its efforts to promote them - has brought forth into the world, particularly in the course of its more recent development.*

The failure to take into account the main characteristics of proletarian life and labour under capitalism, together with the underestimation inherent thereto of the profound qualitative changes these will undergo in the course of the transition to Communism which so clearly underlies the mechanically onesided view of the role played by increases in objective labour productivity in that transition, is alone sufficient to place the authors of this theory of a direct, empirically managed transition to Communism, a variant of mechanical determinism and one of the staple ingredients of the bourgeois world view, on a par with the work of the Kautskys, the Neuraths and the Bauers of Social Democracy's classic past. Clearly, the development of qualitatively new means of production, tools and techniques which raise the application of the achievements of computerisation and cybernetics to levels as far above the mode of their use under capitalism as nuclear fusion energy lies above the first internal combustion engine built by Otto Benz, will comprise one of the first and most essential of the many creative tasks facing the revolutionary proletariat in its herculean labour of laying down the economic base for the Communist society.

A further element of irrationality embedded in the false logic of the above proposition of a direct mechanical transition to the Higher Stage of Communism, one indeed which forms its *unconscious* corollary, is the notion that, virtually overnight, all members of society, irrespective of their former class status, will have suddenly acquired the experience and idea-world of proletarian producers and hence may be considered, despite the fetichistic excrescences laid over their class-determined consciousnesses by the alienating relations of capitalism, as having been granted by history the degree of "Honourary Members of the Proletarian Class". In this way our contemporary utopians imagine that the laws of class-divided society in general, and of capitalism, its highest and most antagonistic form, in particular, will be suddenly suspended and replaced by a golden aureole which, like the Holy Grail, descends from Heaven to light upon the brows of all non-proletarian sinners, who, touched by this blessed Light from on High, suddenly become as deeply imbued with a knowledge of and love for the creativity of all human labour, with a profound respect for its product, together with an understanding of the mode of labour and production relations under capitalism through which that fundamental creativity is maimed and deformed and the greater part of its hard-won fruit filched from under the very hands of the producers the moment their labour has fashioned it, as other more experienced and senior class veterans have acquired only as the reward of an entire working life spent in Social Capital's Nibelheim and an entire conscious lifetime spent in the task of destroying it and winning the liberation of the working class from the endless treadmill of immiserated wage-labour. As a result of such a god-given revelation, reminiscent of the mass saving of souls bequeathed a long-suffering world by the early Christian saints, all members of society will have been elevated in one fell swoop to the status of constituent members of the revolutionary class, the working class, which thus becomes, overnight, 100% of the population. Class polarisation may, indeed, be a fundamental social

tendency in capitalism - but it hardly moves so rapidly as to complete its complex workings overnight !

In fact, of course, the very opposite of this direct, mechanical course of development is the true one destined to lead to Communism, as Marx himself very clearly recognised. It is the social values, customs, habits, tastes and attitudes of mind of the worker-producers themselves - in fact, the entire aegis of their social consciousness - which above all will need to undergo profound qualitative change before mankind will be fitted to live under those social conditions in which the precondition for complete spiritual and intellectual freedom in social relations is first created by the achievement of complete equality of those social relations. In this process, a rising objective labour productivity may and undoubtedly will form the material economic foundation and so come to act as the dialectically determinant indirect causal factor, *but it will not act as the direct mechanical lever of change*. Full social equality having been established by the proletarian revolution as a consequence of the revolutionary displacement of the class-divided structure of preceding capitalist society, the essential precondition is then also given for the application of that never-too-often to be repeated axiom of Communism, its primary principle: *the establishment of a clear and open relationship of the producer towards both the labour process and the product of his labour*.

Thus it is with the question: "How, as a result of the fulfilment of which new revolutionary and creative social tasks, will the new Communist human being, the new man fitted to enter into relations free of all manifestations of alienation, solipsism and proprietorialism, be born and develop ? ", that the real problem of Communism is posed. To attempt to short-circuit this problem by replacing the infinitely rich and complex process of the transition from the bifurcated, class-ridden man of capitalism to the fully

consciously motivated and creatively developed man of Communism with a simple mechanical scheme, in which the development of the objective means of production already achieved under capitalism directly paves the way to a contradictionless and presumably non-revolutionary transition to Communism, is to descend to levels of philistine vulgarity and shallowness lower even than those frequented by a Lenin or a Stalin. In conceiving and propagating this theory, its authors effectively prove their kinship with the Karl Kautskys, the Eugen Vargas, the Karl Renners and other historically notorious exponents of a *deterministically distorted Marxism*.

A further point of interest to be noted in this vitally significant matter of the mode of transition to Communism is that the above view of a direct transition to full Communism held by the petit-bourgeois "left" is one which presents the same arid and theoretically stultifying counterposing to one another of two mutually exclusive metaphysical opposites as those to which we have become so wearisomely accustomed in other, some of them wholly unrelated, areas of theoretical investigation, and which, indeed, has become something of a hallmark certifying the authenticity of a particular piece as belonging indisputably to the school of contemporary petit-bourgeois "Marxism". A primary characteristic of this school is the method of metaphysically sundering a given entity or process - in this case, the transition to Communism - into the two mutually exclusive and antagonistic poles represented respectively by mechanically determined and idealistically predetermined concepts. Thus we have the vision of a mechanical and contradictionless transition to the Montsalvat of full uncompensated and moneyless Communism purely as a consequence of objectively based increases in the productivity of labour and the abundance that this will bring, without any commensurate changes in the class-determined characteristics in the decisive sphere of the social consciousness of the individual producers

having taken place - clearly a view of the transition to Communism as *idealist* in its view of the subjective human motivations underlying such a gigantic step in social development as it is *mechanical-determinist* in its understanding of the basic *method* through which the world of men in society achieves that transition through the alembic of their social - in this case *revolutionary* - practice.

Here it is of interest to note the equivalent view taken of an earlier stage of the revolutionary process by this utopian petit-bourgeois school of "Marxism", a primary hallmark of which is this selfsame mutually exclusive counterposing to one another of idealist predeterminism in world view and mechanical determinism in method. This relates to the view taken of the stage which is concerned with the creation of the *political* conditions for the supersession of capitalism, a stage which is not, as the pragmatic petit-bourgeois reformist socialist sees it, achieved through the proletarian revolution as the fulfilment of the class struggle, but purely as the result of *socio-economic reforms* obtained whilst the production relations remain those of capitalism and in which, also, increases in the productivity of labour must inevitably be assumed to have formed the material foundation! Without in any way seeking to propose the idea that the transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage of Communism will be effected by means of an elementally violent revolution, as all indications suggest will have been the case with the revolutionary transition from Capitalism to Communism as a whole, and which *ipso facto* will mean such a transition to the Lower Stage, what we have to do with here is as clear an example of the bifurcation of idea from its material base in social practice, which in a class-divided society means primarily the practice of the class struggle, and of that sundering of world view from method which is its reflection in the realm of social theory, as that provided by the view of a direct and contradictionless transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage of Communism here under

discussion. Yet ask any one of these hard-headed, practical-minded - *and also avowedly Marxist* ! - protagonists of a direct and seamless transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage of Communism if they also subscribe to the likewise mechanical and deterministic view of the earlier political stage of the transition referred to above - and an unconditional guarantee could be given that they all, to a man, would declare their revolutionary and anti-reformist pedigree in the most stridently emphatic terms possible !

A further source of confusion and disorientation in that sector of the battle of ideas which is concerned with achieving a scientific view of the transition to Communism is that which sees Communism as a wholly unregulated, systemless idyll of cooperation between small groups or communities of free producers between whom no objective norm of economic regulation whatever exists, and who apply either purely subjective standards of evaluation in respect of the *quantitative* size of each contribution to be made to the common weal by each group or individual, or else no standard at all. Here we find as clear an example of an idealist view of the development of Communism which stands in a metaphysical unity of opposites with its opposite partner, the above-described empirical-determinist view of that development, an opposite which posits its counterposed partner and which, in fact, cannot exist without it, as any we could hope to find as a text-book example. Thus we see that these two Siamese twins, the idealist *philosophical* view of Communism and the empirical-determinist conception of the *method* underlying its development, each depend upon and posit each other as fundamentally as do the Godhead and Satan!

However much it may be at variance with the ideal schemes projected out of the tops of their heads by our contemporary "communist" utopians, those well-intentioned would-be manipulators of social development whose understanding of

revolutionary change is so closely akin to the naive idea that history is a pliable piece of clay simply waiting to be moulded to conform with whatever ideal shape or structure their free-ranging imaginations might dictate; and however fervent may be the wish to proceed straight to the social Nirvana of uncompensated consumption and simply to excise in one fell stroke even those last vestiges of social antagonism which will still lie concealed within the new law of bourgeois right reflecting and based upon distribution amongst unequals according to an equal average social measure which the Lower Stage of Communism will establish; and with whatever idealistic enthusiasm these latter-day utopian schemes may today, with rash prematureness, be put forward, *the scientifically established truth remains that the qualitatively new can only grow out of the contradictions objectively given by and inherent to the old.* As Marx himself, in another well-known passage, expresses it:

"But one man is superior to another physically or mentally, and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or its intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal* right is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognises no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognises unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* Right by its very nature can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one *definite* side only, for

instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers*, and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid these defects, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of Communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. *Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.*" (Last emphasis mine - M.B.) (K.Marx: "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p.17)

As we have seen, contrary to the cherished beliefs of our latter-day utopians, it is *not* in the first place, *and as the first inceptive task to be fulfilled in the construction of Communism*, a matter of abolishing bourgeois right and of installing free unregulated consumption from which all traces of alienated social relations have been directly and mechanically expunged, as if by decree. On the contrary, under the Lower Stage of Communism those still *individually*, though no longer *socially*, alienative relations form the unavoidable characteristics of a labour process in which labour is realised as *labour-time* pure and simple, but without the qualitatively accentuated alienative features adhering to a *coercively extracted labour-power*, since the realisation of labour-power as a value-based commodity which

itself produces further value-bearing commodities has been abolished along with wage-labour itself. Because, under the Lower Stage of Communism, the individual producer-consumers *consume* in accordance with an *equal scale*, the measurement of the individual labour-hours contributed by individual producer-consumers *in the act of production* becomes a *measure of quantity pure and simple*, of the *quantitatively differing labour-times* contributed by the individual producers to society's common store, labour-hours which measure labour exerted at an intensity and tempo which the producer himself is free to adopt as his own, and in which the element of coercive compulsion characteristic of alienated labour is wholly absent. Labour under the conditions of the Lower Stage of Communism thus differs fundamentally from the quantitative measurement of the labour-time performed by likewise qualitatively differing labour-powers under capitalism which, on account of the conditions of compulsion imposed by the wage-labour relationship and the divorce of the producers from all control over the objective means of production, *produce qualitatively differing amounts of value and surplus value during their period of labour* - a feature which is so fundamental a feature of wage-labour under capitalism.

Thus, under the Lower Stage of Communism, the individual labouring subject is compelled by social custom and usage to submit his individual and unique labour-power to evaluation against a scale which, in as much as it measures only the quantitative duration of his labour-time and *rewards this according to an equal scale*, accordingly leaves him free - as, indeed, he is under the Higher Stage also - to exercise his labour-power in whatever qualitative form corresponds to his natural skills or talents, and to whatever quantitative degree of duration he sees fit or reflects his natural capacities, in accordance with that which is organically unique to his labour and to that of no other individual. Now, because the coercive element in labour has been

eliminated, and because labour, in that *qualitative* respect if not in respect of the mode of its reward, has become free; and precisely because *social alienation*, which is rooted in a class-divided society, has been eliminated and only *individual alienation* residually remains, labour-power as such, as distinct from its purely quantitative aspect, labour-time - a category which, as a quality in itself, is in any case *infinite and therefore unmeasurable* - does not feature in the scale of evaluation, which then becomes based purely on the quantitative element which all labour-powers have in common: expended labour-time.

We can see, then, that the conception underlying the view held by our utopian "labour freedom fighters" of an immediately realisable total labour freedom is an *exact inversion of the reality*. Although it is measured in terms of labour-time - there being no other method of measuring *unequal* individual labour-powers except by that quantitative element they all have in common - it is precisely the qualitative factor in labour-time, i.e., labour-power - which, individually or collectively, *cannot* in any case be measured - or, more precisely expressed, the transformation of that labour-power into *realised labour* - which, under capitalism, forms the generative source of the vital difference between the wages the worker receives as the price-equivalent of the value of his labour-time and the value of the commodities his labour has produced during the total labour-time during which he has laboured. Under capitalism, the divorce of the producer from all control over both the labour process and the product of labour causes those qualitatively varying and unmeasurable *dynamic* elements in labour to be realised in the form of *value*, and the significance attaching to labour-time becomes that of a *quantitatively fixed period of qualitatively varying value-generation* - qualitatively varying, that is, according to changes brought about in the productivity and intensity of labour. Capitalist relations and the conditions of wage-labour then dichotomise the total labour-time expended into

necessary and surplus labour-time as a result of the commodity character of labour-power. In these two forms they are then respectively realised as wages for the worker and profits for the capitalist when those commodities in which the *total* value is embodied are sold on the market, and the latter of which the capitalist appropriates and accumulates as *Capital*. Thus capitalism measures labour-time not only or even primarily in order to arrive at a purely external and superficial measure of the *price* of labour-power, the wage, but also to obtain the measure of its value - and hence also its *surplus value* - producing potentialities, a measure of the vital difference between necessary and surplus labour-time within which the dynamically value-generative potentialities of labour-power are temporally encapsulated, and which generate the all-important difference between necessary and surplus value. The gross error committed by the utopian Communist is to transfer this inherent feature of the value-generation process inherent to capitalism mechanically to his - erroneous - concept of the Lower Stage of Communism.

Since, under the Lower Stage of Communism, value-generation has ceased and qualitative factors such as labour intensity, skill, etc. are no longer expressed in terms of value, and because labour now creates only use-values, as far as the individual worker-producers are concerned only labour-time is significant as the object of measurement. All individual labour-powers now express their variable qualities or powers - powers which are no longer *coercively* extracted but *freely contributed* - in the form, not of value, but of a *rising labour productivity alone, for which the scale of evaluation is social only*, from the level of the separate industrial establishment or other social unit of production or distribution upwards until it embraces the entire economy. This therefore expresses itself initially as a progressive fall in the labour-time "values" represented respectively by p, c and L, and ultimately in those of P, C, and L. Now, indeed, productivity rises all the more rapidly on account of the fact that *the entire potentiality inherent to a given labour-power is*

released and transmuted singly and solely into the production of use-values. In so far as those use-values take the form of objective means of production, they contribute to raising the *productivity* of labour whilst simultaneously reducing its *intensity*, and insofar as they take the form of means of consumption for individual distribution, they have the effect, under the Lower Stage of Communism, of progressively reducing the Labour-hour Units reflected in those means of consumption which are distributed through the medium of individually varying Labour Certificates. This then contributes towards the relatively rapid transformation of use values for individual consumption distributed by means of the scale represented by the Average Social Hour of Labour applicable to each individual contribution in labour-time into use values available for free social distribution, and in this way contributes to the relatively rapid transition from the Lower to the Higher Stage of Communism.

The immediate end-effect of this relatively rapidly rising productivity is thus to bring about a progressive reduction in the amount of labour-time required to produce each use-value - a function which, under capitalism, falls to a rising *labour intensity*. The result of the rapid progress made by this, the most voracious of all destroyers of alienation and inequality ever known, is to bring about *the greatest and most rapid acceleration of labour productivity ever seen in mankind's history*. Under Communism, therefore, *the Accumulation of Capital* - that peculiar abstract social force which arises from the divorce of the worker-producers from all control over the labour process and the product of their labour and the vesting of that control in a separate class of proprietors of the labour process and owners of the capital which flows from it, and whose fundamental motivating contradiction resides in the dichotomisation of labour-time into necessary and surplus labour-time and their subsequent reification into *wages* and *profits* - this oppressive social force gives place to its use-value opposite, *the Accumulation of*

creatively-based Labour Productivity, which then becomes the source of the Accumulation of Social Wealth held in Common which forms the basic motivation of Communist production.

Thus, because the Average Social Hour of Labour is a consciously determined, i.e., a man-made abstraction which is then applied as the average against which the individual labour-powers expended are purely quantitatively measured, there is no role to be played in the economy of the Lower Stage of Communism for the abstraction of those *qualitatively differing individual intensities of labour* which play the crucial role in value-generation under capitalism. According to the critics of Marx's principle for the Lower Stage of Communism based upon "From Each According to His Ability, to Each According to His Work", however, this means that the system of distribution for individual consumption on the basis of the Average Social Hour of Labour subordinates the living worker-producer to a *social abstraction*, and is therefore equivalent to the reimposition of *conditions of social alienation* - conditions which, so they fear, could ossify in the fullness of time and lead to the formation of a new class-determined mode of exploitative production relations.

These critics, however well-intentioned their objections, are nevertheless missing the essence of the dialectic inherent to Marx's characterisation of the distinction to be made between the Lower and the Higher Stages of Communism, as well as between remunerative consumption according to an agreed compulsory social norm based upon the duration of labour performed as against free, unregulated and non-remunerative consumption. For the contradiction which lies at the heart of remuneratively-based consumption according to an average social scale, the Average Social Hour of Labour, is *not* a contradiction between *social groups* in which incipient social classes, exploited and exploiting, lie in embryo waiting to be born; on the contrary, it is a contradiction at work solely within the sphere of relations between the *individual worker-producers*. The same worker-producers who, at

one level, that of the *social individual*, consciously subject themselves to a compulsory social norm, at another level, that of their *social class*, of their *class status as proletarians*, a status which, under the Lower Stage of Communism, has not yet withered away, since the residue of the former exploiting and oppressing class, Social Capital, still exists, take a conscious decision - *in fact a revolutionary decision, a decision which is a vital component in the entire process of the proletarian revolution* - to implement a measure of *social compulsion* in the interests of their class - a measure of social compulsion which is directed solely against their class enemy, the remnants of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois intelligentsia. In so doing, they have freely and voluntarily reached a collective agreement to subject themselves to an equal scale of remuneration for purposes of individual consumption, partly for purposes, already referred to, of training and remoulding themselves in preparation for the introduction of fully free Communist relations in both production and distribution; and partly as a coercive measure to compel individual members of the bourgeois class to join in the system of Communist social production and distribution.

In implementing this decision, the victorious worker-producers ignore for so long as it may prove necessary, both subjectively between themselves and objectively in the interests of the revolution, the inherent *qualitative* inequalities existing between them as human beings, the result of which takes the form of their respective *qualitatively differing labour-powers*, and base the scale of their individual remuneration purely upon the *quantitatively differing labour-times* contributed. In so doing, they are fully aware that the application of that equal scale must result, and can for so long as it remains in force *only* result, in actual inequalities in the conditions of consumption. Since, however, they and they alone control the systems of both production and distribution, they themselves dispose of all the objective and subjective instruments for ensuring that the contradiction which indisputably exists at

the level of the cooperating *individual* worker-producers does not polarise into and ossify as a contradiction active at the level of the *social class* of the worker-producers as a whole, a contradiction in which, supposedly, advantaged workers - presumably conceived by our latter-day utopian critics as being composed of those possessed of higher-than-average human qualities or skills in either manual or intellectual labour - would then coalesce into a social group or class which would gradually come into possession of the means enabling them to exploit in some mysterious and wholly unexplained way the labour of those less fortunate workers possessed of lesser manual or intellectual skills.

Such a view, however, is as superficially idealistic as it is undialectical. *For never once in the entire course of human history, of the history of classes and class struggle, has an exploitative social group or class arisen on the basis simply of the superior human qualities of its individual members* - and to suggest that this has ever been the basis for the division of society into antagonistic classes is contrary to every facet of the Marxist dialectic of social development. On the contrary, each and every such exploitative social group or class has only ever arisen on the basis of *the alienative control it has acquired over the objective instruments of production*, as a result of which control over the relations of production and distribution between themselves and the exploited and oppressed class and over the labour of the latter has passed into their hands.

The Average Social Hour of Labour as Weapon of Revolutionary Coercion

A structurally many-sided and dialectically conceptualised view of the problem of the transition to Communism is one which sees the Lower Stage as being not merely fundamentally essential to the final developmental outcome of a Communist

society; insofar as it is a transitional society embodying elements of inequality reflecting the continuance of "bourgeois right", it sees that right, which still prevails in the sphere of *individual reward for labour performed*, being simultaneously transformed by the victory of the proletariat in its revolution into "proletarian right", a *collective or class-derived right of coercion* made effective in the sphere of distribution for individual consumption and in this way making itself the butt of the entire development from the Lower to the Higher Stage in the course of which the Lower, having achieved the elimination of the bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie as the negative aspect of its having fulfilled its primary task of establishing the Communist mode of production and distribution based on the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of both production and distribution, moves on to *abolish itself* as a consequence of creating the very founts of social abundance which render both the full exchangeless Communist society both necessary and inevitable and the Lower Stage, with its basis in distribution for individual consumption according to a norm of bourgeois right, increasingly unnecessary and finally anachronistic.

Since, however, the entire period of transition is precisely the period during which the proletarian revolution will inevitably be locked in the strategically most crucial - and hence in all likelihood the most violent, pitiless and ferocious - phase of its development, when the most vital and urgent need of the hour will be for the establishment and consolidation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the implementation of the social structure and relations of production and distribution characteristic of the Lower Stage of Communism then becomes as great a *strategic* necessity for the successful consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship, and hence for the entire transition to Communism, as, at a later and more developed stage, it becomes transformed by that very development itself into an anachronistic hindrance and barrier to the unfettered completion

of Communism's final, fully harmonious edifice. The Higher Stage then acquires that same compelling historical necessity as that held, at the stage of Communism's birth, by the Lower Stage. In short, it is the historical purpose and function of the Lower Stage of Communism both to act as the economic foundation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and to prepare the social and economic conditions for its own supersession into the stage of completely free, unfettered relations in distribution for individual consumption, the stage during which, as Marx expresses it, "the narrow horizon of bourgeois right" will have been fully transcended and full and untrammelled freedom in the enjoyment of the fruits of labour will have been achieved.

As the work of Jan Appel and his collective of German and Dutch theoreticians of the proletarian revolution demonstrates with such irrefutable logic and clarity, the entire experience of the proletarian revolution gained up to the present historical juncture proves to the hilt that the economic foundation of Communism lies in the conscious adoption of the Average Social Hour of Labour as the fundamental unit of economic regulation and control. The only alternative to a mode of transition to Communism based upon the Average Social Hour of Labour is one which sees the primary instrument of that transition as lying in the growth of a privileged administrative bureaucracy in combination with the implementation of a *prices policy* - a course which, of necessity, would require the retention of both money as the universal means of exchange and the class inequalities and antagonisms which are the necessary and inevitable accompaniment of a prices policy.

In fact, the entire experience of the construction of State Socialism in the "Soviet" Union shows that the empirical method of transition to either Socialism or Communism based upon "planned production" without the introduction of any objective unit of economic regulation and control, with the retention of money and employing

methods based upon the manipulation of economic categories and their movement by means of a "prices policy", is inseparable from, and cannot be implemented apart from, a programme of widespread *state nationalisation*. But state nationalisation is, in its turn, inseparable from, and incapable of implementation without, *the concentration of all economic power and all control over the economic resources of society in the hands of a specialised stratum of managers and administrators*. Thus all the elements making for the retention, not only of money, but of all the antagonistic relations peculiar to a class-divided society based upon the divorce of the producers from all control over the labour process and the product of their labour, are here re-assembled in a new form: the alienation of the producers from the creative content in the labour process and the act of production; the domination of the producers by the objective system of production their labour has created; the debasement of planned production for social use to the level of "planned" economic chaos as a consequence of the absence of any objective unit measure of economic regulation and control such as that provided by the Average Social Hour of Labour; and finally, the crystallisation of a *party dictatorship* as the political embodiment of the rule of a privileged administrative-bureaucratic stratum as a new ruling caste within the social and economic system - all these features, which may be summed up under the general heading of State Socialism, would be the absolutely inevitable consequence of such a course of development. This much at least has been proved beyond the slightest shadow of doubt as the outcome of the Russian Revolution by the entire experience of State Socialism, which was established in the "Soviet" Union in strict conformity with the empirical-determinist prescriptions laid down by Leninist Bolshevism.

Should the proletariat fail to establish the Average Social Hour of Labour as the basic regulator of the economy, it will not only have failed in its historic mission to found the

Communist society; in losing its one indispensable instrument of collective class control over the economy, one of two retrograde courses of social development will set in with all the inevitability of a natural law: *either* society will slide back spontaneously into capitalism, with the remnants of the bourgeoisie employing what remains of their money holdings or other residual property which the persistence of money-based relations still permits them to convert at any time into money - hence the crucial necessity to abolish money and money-based relations as one of the first acts in establishing the Communist economy and to replace them with the non-circulating Labour Certificate; *or else* a form of revolution takes place and is finally victorious in which capitalist relations, and ultimately the capitalist state, are indeed overthrown as the result of the victorious revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, but in the course of carrying through the *positive* revolutionary tasks of laying the socio-economic foundations of the new society, the culminative stage of the revolution, the proletariat is persuaded - perhaps by the political representatives of the old ruling class, Social Capital, perhaps by the leadership of a "vanguard party" claiming to act "in the interests of the revolutionary proletariat" - to relinquish its newly-won control over the forces of production as exercised through the Workers' Councils - as did, for instance, a majority of the German proletariat in the German Revolution of 1918-20 as a result of the deceptive assurances of Social Democracy. This then provides an opening for that other exploitation-hungry non-proletarian class contender for power, the professional intelligentsia, which has been waiting patiently in the wings of history's stage for just such an opportunity to fill the revolutionary vacuum created in society by the failure of the proletariat to assert its revolutionary hegemony, by stepping in with its revolutionary - but not *proletarian-revolutionary*! - proposals to "Save the Revolution!", for which purpose the "vanguard party of the working class" is presented as the supercharged engine of revolutionary war and infallible guide through the

jungle of revolutionary tactics, without which, allegedly, the revolution cannot triumph. Indeed, should it prove to be the case that only by such means can the revolution be assured of its triumph, this in itself would constitute evidence of the continuing *prematureness* of the conditions for achieving the victory of the proletariat in the Communist Revolution, as well as for laying the foundations of a genuine Communist society based upon the Average Social Hour of Labour. This, indeed, was what occurred in Tsarist Russia 72 years ago.

By thus seizing the vital revolutionary initiative in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary offensives of Social Capital, the professional intelligentsia smuggles itself into the camp of the forces of the revolution, and so establishes the political and organisational bases and social sanction for the imposition, after the overthrow of the rule of Social Capital, of a new antagonistic form of class-motivated control over the system of production and distribution and over the labour process. This new antagonistic mode of production represents a pragmatically administered form of society based on state forms of property in means of production and distribution in which wage-labour, the state, money and other forms and instruments of alienated social relations are retained, *but on a non-capitalistic, use-value producing basis*. In the first case, the revolution would have failed completely, in the other it would indeed have moved society forward - not however to Communism, but to a higher and yet more antagonistic form of class-divided society: State Socialism. Seen from the class viewpoint of the revolutionary interests of the proletariat, which lie in the establishment of Communism, *both are equally counter-revolutionary*.

In this context, that of a stark revolutionary confrontation between two opposed class formations representing two possible modes of production, the one representing the last and highest form of antagonistic, class-motivated social relations based upon state control of every conceivable

parameter of social life, in both production and distribution: State Socialism; the other the birth-pangs of the first form of classless society known to man, the dawn of social man's fully conscious control over his own social destiny and hence the commencement of his real history: Communism - in this revolutionary confrontation only the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the spheres of both production and distribution, including distribution for individual consumption, can, in the early period of Communism's establishment and consolidation, prevent either of the above two counter-revolutionary developments from occurring.

Just as the bourgeoisie, at the birth of its system, secured the economic foundations of its class dictatorship and its hegemony over economic life through asserting its control over the labour process and the means of production and distribution, realising these as *relations based on private property, including especially private property in the objective means of production, through which it also gains a position of domination over labour and the labour process*; just as, in the historical example provided by State Socialism as experienced in the "Soviet" Union, the professional intelligentsia realises its control over the economic means of life, over means of production and labour-power realised in the labour process, in the form of *state property*, by means of an equal or perhaps an even greater degree of class coercion does the revolutionary proletariat realise its control over the social means of life through its *autonomous and self-regulating control over its own labour*, the source of all social wealth, into which it absorbs the labour of the former exploiting and oppressing class and its auxiliary strata, and which it thereby realises as *free labour*, labour freed from all forms of objectivised social enslavement.

Since the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for personal consumption in the period of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat has as its

necessary outcome a social situation in which *only those in possession of Labour Certificates are entitled to draw means of consumption from the social stock*, this then comes to form the most effective means of ensuring that the remnants of the bourgeoisie and the professional intelligentsia are unable to use their residual social power in order to obtain the means of life, since the prime requirement for such a provision is precisely participation in the new Communist relations of production. In this way the former exploitative class of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, together with its dependent privileged classes or strata, is *compelled to liquidate itself*, and that by measures which constitute at one and the same time the *most forcibly persuasive and the most peaceful and gentle*: by joining hands as active producers with the rest of the workers by hand and brain in the new unalienated and exploitation-free labour process. This, indeed, represents the surest and most rapid method of bringing about the liquidation of the bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie, including the more insidiously dangerous professional intelligentsia, as non-proletarian classes which otherwise, so long as they remain outside the socially harmonious and deeply creative system of Communist relations based upon the Average Social Hour of Labour - a course they would be able to adopt, at least for a while, were the retention of money as a means of exchange and the adoption of a prices policy to become the method of economic transformation adopted - can only remain potential threats to Communism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Furthermore, where Capitalism and State Socialism, as antagonistic modes of social production, establish their control through, respectively, private or state monopolies in the product of social labour, as a consequence of having first established forms of alienated control over objectivised labour-power - i.e., in the case of capitalist relations, over labour-power as *commodity* or, in the case of state-socialist relations, over labour-power as *administrative object* - in contradistinction to both these

alienative forms the revolutionary proletariat establishes the classless society of Communism through winning control over *its own labour and the social conditions for its realisation and deployment*, through which revolutionary act that labour is *set free*.

Thus the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for personal consumption in the initial period of the Lower Stage of Communism, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, forms an absolutely crucial strategic weapon of class coercion in the hands of the proletariat. The revolutionary proletariat needs this weapon, not only to circumvent any move by Social Capital to restore its old rule, but more particularly to prevent the professional intelligentsia, which is more likely than not to have been active in the revolutionary process on the *revolutionary* side of the class divide and whose ultimate counter-revolutionary role will as likely as not be tactically well disguised under cover of some form of "vanguard revolutionary party of the working class", from usurping control over the newly-established economic relations of Communism. As we have seen, should this arise, it would be as a consequence of the revolutionary proletariat's inability to deploy this weapon, the economic foundation of its class dictatorship, effectively.

Thus we see that the establishment of free and unregulated conditions of distribution for individual consumption represents, not the point of commencement, but *the final keystone in the complete and fully developed edifice of Communism*. Before that condition can pertain, not only must the social and economic power of Social Capital, the bourgeoisie, have been broken; if we do not wish to see the remnants of the bourgeoisie gorging themselves unrestrictedly at the storehouses of Communism, a collective class framework of economic coercion must be introduced by the newly victorious proletariat to ensure that the old bourgeoisie is not able to use its residual and possibly still considerable resources in both residual wealth and

the remnants of their former dominant social power in order to gain access once again to control over economic resources, including possibly control over means of production and distribution.

In discussing the mode of transition to Communism, it should be recognised that, in any consideration of the primary factors to be taken into account in the establishment and consolidation of the Communist system of production and distribution, what must first be borne in mind is the simple but so easily forgotten truth that *production precedes consumption and that which is consumed or otherwise distributed must first be produced*. This elementary statement may appear to the more sophisticated reader as being obvious to the point of banality and too simple a proposition as to require any especial emphasis. However, the fact remains that those who advocate a direct, mechanical transition from the antagonistic mode of distribution of the social product characteristic of capitalism, including distribution for purposes of individual consumption, straight to the verdant acres, resplendent garden cities and free, unalienated social relations of full Communism are leaving out of account the fact that the precondition for full, unalienated freedom for all consumers in the sphere of *distribution* is the attainment of full control by those same consumers over the sphere of *production*, in which, as *producers*, they themselves make their first appearance on the economic stage of Communism, before they appear as *consumers*. Unless control over the labour process is first clearly established, there can be no question of control over the product either.

Hence it should be an elementary proposition, even to the simplest of minds, that unless control over the *labour process* is first clearly established, the question of control over the *product of social labour* must also remain irresolvable. And it is precisely in respect of the securing of that full and untrammelled control over the economic system of Communism by the revolutionary proletariat that the application of

the Average Social Hour of Labour acquires its greatest significance. For, as we have seen, it is only through its application that the representatives of the non-proletarian classes can be effectively prevented from usurping such control by filching it, under one pretext or another, from the worker-producers. Under the system of distribution for individual consumption as first sketchily set forth by Marx in the "Critique of the Gotha Programme" and subsequently elaborated into an entire economic system of Communism in the work of Jan Appel and his team, this vital requirement of the proletarian dictatorship is met, for unless each individual join his labour in the exercise of social production with that of the rest of society, in conformity with the principle "From Each according to his Ability, to Each according to his Work", *that individual is debarred from consumption of the socially produced product.*

What is more, as the work "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution" makes amply clear, just as the first principle of *production* must be the establishment of a clear and open relationship of the producer towards both the labour process and the product of labour, in the same way must the cardinal principle applicable to the sphere of *distribution for personal consumption*, one valid for so long as the *Lower Stage of Communism shall remain in force*, be the establishment of an equal scale of reward for all producers. In this way, for the first time in history the measurement according to an equal scale of the contribution made to social production by each individual producer-consumer not only prepares the ground for the abolition of all alienative methods of distribution for personal consumption, together with the attitudes in consciousness towards labour and the reward for labour which those methods both reflect and inculcate; it also, and perhaps even more significantly, prepares the ground and trains the worker-producers in the use and application of the Average Social Hour of Labour in the primary and more fundamental sphere of *production*.

Since Communism cannot by its very nature be the result of spontaneous social development, its construction represents the first instance in history of *consciously concerted social action*, in short, *revolutionary action*, on the part of proletarians united in a common revolutionary aim to establish the Communist system - *proletarians whose individual levels of consciousness and practical mastery of objective social processes nevertheless remain at any given moment unequal in relation to one another.* In its significance towards this revolutionary act, the Average Social Hour of Labour as applied to the spheres of both production and distribution, including particularly its use as a measure of distribution for purposes of individual consumption, represents *the most basic social tool assisting the revolutionary class in the successful completion of that conscious act*, the continuous exercise of which it is compelled to learn and master against all the accumulated inertia of centuries of uncreative labour and cultural and intellectual deprivation.

The fact that Communism is a classless, socially fully harmonious form of society which nevertheless has to emerge out of the long-established and entrenched conditions of oppression and alienation embedded deep in social consciousness through the long centuries of capitalist relations based on oppression and exploitation; the fact that it has to grow strong against, and by overcoming, the conscious attitudes of acquisitiveness and solipsistic self-assertion which capitalist alienation has implanted deep into every individual personality - all these potent social forces lend to the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for individual consumption during the period of the Lower Stage of Communism the character and historical role of a *great training school* paving the way towards the day when its application will be *in the sphere of production alone*, when distribution for the purpose of individual consumption according to an objectively imposed norm will have broken loose from its

original historical moorings in bourgeois - now, temporarily, become proletarian ! - right and will have become purely social in character.

The application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for individual consumption will then be revealed for what it really is: a *crucial weapon of combined economic coercion and social remoulding*, but one which takes the - from the point of view of exploitation and its product, alienation - wholly harmless form of a system of social book-keeping, the purpose of which, apart from its above-mentioned role as remoulder and educator, lies solely in establishing the quanta of labour-hours needed to replace the economic resources consumed by society in the course of production and distribution. These material social values can be measured only in terms of the one quantitative element they all possess in common: *the labour-time required for their production*, computed in the unitary form of Labour-hour Units. In this way the total of labour-hours expended in the provision of society's needs up to a given moment in time, broken down into those representing use-values distributed in replacement of used-up means of production p, those representing circulating or auxiliary means of production c and finally the labour-time expended by the producers and expressed in terms of means of individual consumption already consumed l can all be readily calculated. To these must then be added whatever increment is decided by the Supreme Congress of Worker's Councils as being the percentage proportion of the total destined for individual consumption, represented by L, which is to be deducted from L and added to P and C in order to provide the means for *extended accumulation*, i.e., to obtain the desired *expansion* of the productive apparatus.

Although the allocation of those Labour-hour Units which relate only to the measurement of the entitlement of individual producer-consumers to means of consumption distributed in the form of individually varying Labour Certificates represents a role which will find application only in the

Lower Stage of Communism, it must be recognised at this point that the computations of Labour-hour Units relating to *the replacement of economic resources used up in sphere of production alone*, for the purpose of either simple or extended accumulation, will form a necessary function of economic regulation *in the Higher as well as the Lower Stages of Communism*. That this must be so will be readily understood when it is considered that the absence of any organic measure of the labour-time quantities needed to produce the total of new use-values required, broken down as these will be into the various branches of social production, which society will need at any given moment in its development, itself represents *one of the essential general hallmarks of an irrational and socially anarchic mode of production*, one which denotes a wasteful and inefficient absence of co-ordination between new use-values produced and those actually needed by society. The absence of such an organic, yet consciously applied, measure of social labour-time is for instance typical of the capitalist mode of production, in which its function is performed inefficiently, inexactly, anarchically and hence wastefully by the market mechanism. Expressed in the simplest possible terms, whatever may be the manner of their *distribution*, society will always need to know, for instance, how much *pig-iron* it will need to produce in order to satisfy the many and varied demands for iron and steel in the spheres of both industrial production and production for personal consumption, and hence will need to ascertain how many Labour-hour Units will need to be deployed in order to achieve that production result at the prevailing level of the social productivity of labour. Similarly, it will need to know how many pairs of *shoes* it will need to produce in order to satisfy the requirements of its members or to avoid a wasteful over-production, with a similar assessment of Labour-hour Units at the level of productivity prevailing in that industrial sector to be applied to this purpose also.

More fundamental even than this, however, is

the fact that the failure to measure directly the various labour-times required to produce the many and varied categories and types of use-values needed by society, as distinct from measuring them merely indirectly through the distorting-glass of value-based relations, as under capitalism, would lead relatively rapidly to the re-imposition of socio-economic conditions the end-result of which would be the divorce of the total labour-time expended in the labour process by the worker-producers, both collectively and individually, from both the separate labour-times embodied in the material quantities of use-values their labour has produced and the total of those separate labour-times - a divorce which would arise from the fact that, with the abolition of the Average Social Hour of Labour as the collective norm of distribution for individual consumption, a step which becomes socially wholly apposite and rational with the attainment, in one sector of production after another, of the objective and subjective conditions making possible the transition to the Higher Stage of Communism, its still essential application as a unit measure of economic regulation and control in the sphere of production would also, mistakenly, have been discontinued. This would then have as its inevitable and unavoidable consequence the infringement and ultimate abolition of that first principle of Communist relations of production and distribution: *the establishment of a clear and open relationship of the producers towards both the labour process and the product of their labour.* This, in its turn, would lead equally inevitably to the loss by the worker-producers of their hard-won control over the labour process and the product of their labour, and so open the way to the usurpation of that control by a separate class of bureaucratic administrators. This would then form the essential foundation for the re-emergence of those alienative social relations of production in which an expansion of the rate of transformation of labour-power into realised productive labour, being divorced from any measurement of the average social labour-time embodied in the use-values produced,

would lead to conditions of distribution for individual consumption in which any increase in the productivity of labour achieved would not *objectively and automatically* lead to a fall in the quantity of Labour-hour Units (average social labour-time) embodied in those use-values produced, and hence to a corresponding increase in the quantities of such use-values available for distribution as means of consumption, either socially or collectively, as would be the case under the Lower Stage of Communism and the application of the Average Social Hour of Labour to the sphere of distribution for individual consumption as an *objective and automatic* unit of economic regulation and control.

In this way, exploitative relations in production and distribution would once again assert themselves in society and class divisions reflecting the alienative control over economic resources once again gathered in the hands of a dominant class of bureaucratic controllers holding power over all parameters of social life would again appear, along with the entire gamut of social inequalities which are the essential reflection and outcome of those class divisions. The counter-revolution would have triumphed - but not as a result of the successful deployment of counter-revolutionary violence. On the contrary, its victory would have been purely as the spontaneous result of the neglect of the economic laws of Communism and the failure of the revolutionary proletariat to maintain its class dictatorship right up to the point at which the Higher Stage of Communism has been achieved and the objective basis for the reimposition of class divisions and alienative economic relations has completely withered away.

What we have here analytically depicted is the road which could lead to the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Communist system of production and distribution and its replacement by State Socialism. It is unlikely, however, that the latter would constitute anything more than a staging-house

on a road the end-destination of which would be the final and complete restoration of capitalist relations and the rule of Social Capital. For what we have analysed above as "the divorce of the total labour-time expended in the labour process by the worker-producers ... from the labour times embodied in the material quantities of use-values produced" in fact constitutes one of the prime preconditions for the production of value and surplus value as an organic by-product of the production of use-values - in short, the economic foundation of capitalism, in which use-values produced as exchange-values exchange with one another on the basis of the average socially necessary labour-time embodied in them. Termed commodity production, it is this simultaneous production of exchange-value with use-value which, in its turn, is objectively associated with exploitative forms of ownership and/or control over the means of production and distribution.

Alienation and Freedom of Labour under Capitalism and the Lower Stage of Communism respectively

Up to a certain stage in the development of the productive forces and the level of productivity associated with them, it is precisely the dynamic element represented by the uncontrolled and unmeasured expansive power of human labour, an expansive dynamic which is associated with the alienation of labour-power as a commodity, included in which is the further dynamic represented by the productive potential embodied in the objective tools and techniques of production which are the product of past labour, a factor which must increase its powers of expansion in an exponential ratio with the transition from one lower productive technique to another higher one, which generates the - for Social Capital and its all-compelling social imperative, accumulation, absolutely vital - difference between the total of new wealth produced and that needed for the maintenance and upkeep of the producers - the value of labour-power. Under capitalism, as the productivity of labour rises,

the mode of its realisation as an acceleration of the rate of transformation of labour-power into realised labour - a rising labour intensity - comes into ever sharper and more irreconcilable contradiction with that opposite mode of its realisation as a rising productivity of labour which manifests itself as a lightening or amelioration of the intensity of labour. With the growth of the socio-economic conditions making for the onset of the proletarian revolution, this becomes the major factor underlying every surface issue of class struggle, until the infrastructure of capitalist economy can contain it no longer. In combination with other objective revolutionary factors, this then reaches its culmination in a bursting asunder of the entire framework of capitalist society.

Under Communism, this difference, which under capitalism is the whole origin of the social force which constrains the power of creative human labour, the capacity to change nature into new forms which correspond with social man's ever-developing physical, intellectual and cultural needs, within the narrow straitjacket of value-based relations dominated by the division of labour, is abolished as a consequence of the elimination of wage-labour and private or state control over the means of production and distribution and the consequent destruction of the power of Social Capital. With that destruction, the uncontrolled exertion over fixed and measured periods of time of potentially creative human labour, but human labour which is forced into its narrow and constrained form as a generator of value, of necessary and surplus value, the value-generative powers inherent to which are, however, immeasurable and unmeasurable and which for that reason create a value greater than their own value, a power which is organically associated with a forcibly imposed wage-labour, with alienated forms of class control over the means of production and distribution and with social conditions of production based upon the divorce of the producers from all control over the means of production - in

short, with production on the basis of the alienation of the creative potential in labour-power which arises as a consequence of the divorce of the producers from all control over the means of production - must give place to relations based upon conscious control over the expenditure of social labour-time in the various branches of production, forms of social control which are the organic concomitant of the change from the production of exchange-values in the form of use-values - i.e., from commodity production - to the production of use-values pure and simple. Of those forms of social control inherent to Communism, the essential economic instrument is the Average Social Hour of Labour.

With the revolutionary attainment of the Lower Stage of Communism, therefore, the imposition of a given rate of transformation of labour-power into realised productive labour as a forcible compulsion is overcome - which is merely to express in somewhat greater depth the fact that the conditions of wage-labour and value-generation, and the associated divorce of the producers from all control over the labour process and the product of labour, have been overcome.

It is therefore a labour-power which is already free in the degree of its exertion, and in respect of which the qualitative degree and form of its exertion is already the free choice of each individual producer, whose expenditure over time the conditions of the Lower Stage of Communism and the principle "From Each according to his Ability, to Each according to his Work" require to be measured. For this freedom to have been won by the worker-producers, the revolutionary proletariat, as the most basic fruit of their overthrow of the power of Social Capital, the level of objective productivity already achieved under capitalism through the labour of the producers themselves is indeed, in dialectical interaction with the superstructural elements already analysed, the basic determinant factor. If this had been the onus of their position, the theory of the transition to Communism as a consequence of increases in the objective level of labour productivity put forward

by our latter-day utopians might have possessed some objective justification. As it is, once attained as a result of the overthrow of the power of Social Capital and the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the unprecedentedly rapid growth of the productivity of labour which will form so marked a feature of the Lower Stage of Communism, and through which it will prepare the objective conditions for the Higher Stage, will be the direct consequence of the transformation of the act of labour from a normative and compulsorily imposed means of survival to a joyful and free exercise of collective mankind's creative powers over nature. With the radical changes wrought in the social values, habits and modes of social practice of the freely associating producers which will inevitably accompany the consolidation of the Communist system of use-value production and its growing productivity, the quantities of labour-hours embodied in each use-value must fall, until a point is reached at which, other more profound and significant considerations apart, it is simply no longer worth the trouble of recording them. That *bête noir* of our latter-day utopians, the Labour Certificate, then becomes either altogether redundant, or else is restricted in its application purely to the categories of specialised use-values mentioned in the following Section of this Postscript.

From this we can now comprehend that which should have been obvious from the very start: the Lower Stage of Communism, together with its political form, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and resting upon the economic foundation of the Average Social Hour of Labour as the universal unit of economic regulation and control in both production and distribution, is in its essential content no more than the continuation of the process of the revolutionary transition to Communism in the period following upon the destruction of the capitalist mode of production and its state, the period of the construction and consolidation of the main edifice of Communist society in its necessary prescribed form as an Association of Free and Equal Producers, a process

which reaches its completion only with the attainment of its Higher Stage, characterised by the universal application of the principle "From Each according to his Ability, to Each according to his Need". It is no more than an elementary and quite basic proposition that this period of transition will of necessity be characterised by the most intense, persistent and varied forms of struggle on the part of the worker-producers to establish their still essentially class-derived control over the means of production and distribution - a class control the twin purposes of which will be in part to prevent the re-assertion of alienative, class-based relations of production and distribution in the future, and in part to train and remould the worker-producers themselves in the mode of utilisation of their new instrument of economic regulation and control, the Average Social Hour of Labour. That class control and the organs through which it will be made effective, the organs of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat with the Workers' Councils at their centre, will progressively *abolish themselves as revolutionary* - and therefore in essence *dictatorial* - forms of control exercised by the former exploited and oppressed class in order to protect and promote the new classless relations of production and distribution characteristic of Communism as "...all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly...". The proletarian dictatorship then becomes increasingly redundant objectively and subjectively as the economic system of Communism consolidates itself and becomes ever more firmly anchored, and as all the founts of social production accordingly grow in abundance and cultural diversity.

The Mode of Application of the Average Social Hour of Labour and the Labour Certificate in Conditions of Advanced Technology

The view generally taken by both the Social Democratic and the Syndicalist wings of the Labour

Movement towards the Average Social Hour of Labour as the universal unit of regulation and control in a Communist society, in the spheres of both production and distribution, including distribution for individual consumption, in which latter role it assumes, during the period of the Lower Stage of Communism, the form of the much-maligned Labour Certificate, is that it represents a utopian concept which might look all very well on paper, but which bears little or no relation to the real-life needs of Communist distribution in an infant social mode of production and distribution which is engaged in a pitiless battle for its very life against all the entrenched powers of the old world, and which, allegedly, would have little chance of survival were it not protected by a strong "proletarian state".

Leaving aside for the moment the metaphysical connotations inherent to this perspective, based as it is upon that most contradictory of all anachronisms, the "proletarian state", the attitude adopted both by our idealist petit-bourgeois utopians and their more hard-headed empirical-reformist counterparts towards an instrument of distribution which does not circulate, being no more than a record and confirmation of each individual producer's contribution to society's common store, measured in units or multiples of 1 labour-hour, is that it would constitute far too cumbersome a device as to be capable of serving as a medium of economic regulation and control in a highly developed economy, one in which millions upon millions of use-values would pass from the sphere of production into that of distribution, and yet further millions upon millions from the sphere of distribution into that of consumption, either industrial or personal, every minute of every hour of every day.

Apart from the rather obvious fact that this superficially impressionistic view commits the elementary error of confusing with one another and lumping together *distribution* and *exchange*, what has to be taken into account in any assessment of the Labour Certificate as a medium of distribution