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*Media Information Australia* (Sydney)

# COMMUNICATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE

## 2. Liberation, Socialism

London, Centaal  
'990. 3-2'



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# COMMUNICATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE

## 2. Liberation, Socialism

An  
Anthology  
In 2 Volumes  
Edited by  
Armand Mattelart  
And  
Seth Siegelau

INTERNATIONAL GENERAL  
new york,  
IMMRC international mass media research center  
bagnole, FRANCE.

COMMUNICATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE:

2. LIBERATION, SOCIALISM

Selection, Introduction and Preface

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Bibliography Copyright © International General 1983

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ISBN: 0-88477-018-4, Paperback

COMMUNICATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE:

1. CAPITALISM, IMPERIALISM

ISBN: 0-88477-011-7, Paperback

COMMUNICATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE,

Both Volumes 1 and 2, Paperback:

ISBN: 0-88477-019-2

LCCCN: 80-110213

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The editors would like to especially thank the translators for their work on this Volume 2: David Buxton for the French, Malcolm Coad and Phil Gunson for the Spanish and Portuguese, Diana Hosker for the Italian, and Stuart Hood for the German and the Gramsci texts. The page layout was done, in part, by Francis Verdrager.

Typeset by Anytime Artwork, London and  
Printed in Great Britain in April 1983.

10987654321

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## Seth Siegelaub

PREFACE:  
WORKING NOTES ON  
SOCIAL RELATIONS IN  
COMMUNICATION AND  
CULTURE

## THE POPULAR

One of the most "popular" misconceptions is the "popular" conception of the popular.

Its linguistic origins and definition in English evolves from a late Medieval meaning "of the people" to its current ruling definition "regarded with favour or affection by most persons";<sup>1</sup> a conceptual evolution corresponding rather closely to the evolution of civil society.

With the rise of bourgeois democracies, and their claim to a legitimacy based on popular sovereignty, today expressed politically in the electoral process (although even this is increasingly threatened, both actively and especially passively, in practice) has come a veritable mythology of a certain idea of the popular, as a stamp of approval for ruling actions and programs, including that of the TV. Needless to say, however, this certain idea of the popular does not rule alone, and is continually changing and is occasionally threatened by popular uprisings, both military as well as cultural.

From the political sphere the dominant use of the popular has spread out to the cultural sphere, reinforcing an idea of the popular by carrying it into new areas, giving it new forms of expression, and a new supporting role for the social system, as exemplified today by the "popular" TV program, "popular" film star, or more generally, "popular" or "pop" culture.

This certain idea of the popular is also the underlying justification hiding behind the concept of "public opinion". Not surprisingly, the latter's history, too, has moved from an active, productive process in support of the bourgeoisie's ascendancy to a passive "silent majority", negative, consumption-oriented support today. In its economic sense, it is the history of an open active marketplace of multiple small producers/citizens — at least for propertied white men — and its evolution to a closed monopolized marketplace, and the crisis engendered by this transition.

The confusion maintained around the idea of the popular, between "of the people" and that

1. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (College Edition)*, New York, Random House, 1968. See also their definition of "popular song", for example: "a song written for its immediate commercial potential, intended for widespread dissemination through recording, broadcasts, etc." Note the not-so-subtle connection made between the "popular song" and commercial potential.

which is "regard [ed] with favor or affection by most persons", is not just due to an innocent misunderstanding or the complex overlay of ideas connected to the movement of past history. It is especially useful today to connect the "people" to a certain idea of the cultural, social and political; to a certain idea of people's opinion and consciousness; and ultimately, to a certain idea of what people were, are, can or will be.

Nowhere is this ambiguity more profitable for the ruling forces than in its promotion of the notion of the "popular" TV program, "popular" bestseller, etc., a denomination which is often taken for granted by people who should be more critical. Behind this idea is lurking a veritable network of related sub-ideas, sub-confusions, sub-myths, of more or less importance.

For example. If we are told that statistically, 30% of a public is said to watch a certain TV program, does this necessarily mean that it is "popular", either in the sense "of the people" or even that 30% of the people approve of it? Nothing is less clear or more conditional or misleading, although this type of logic is reinforced by a very strong prevailing "common sense" functionalist strain, "popular(?)" even on the Left. If, for example, 60% of a population goes to work 40 hours a week, or 75% of the population lives in urban centers, or 90% of the population lives to 70 years of age, does this mean that their work, or the city, or their lifespan is "popular", that they all "approve" of their work, or the city, or — why not? — their death? In other words, does "many", "most" persons, even "majority" equal "popular"? Or expressed more politically, does the advance of a society necessarily (or still), express itself only through the consensus of a majority?

Why is it that in the second series of examples concerning work, the city, or the human lifespan, the notion of the "popular" hardly appears, and a necessity appears to reign in which people are given little or no latitude to express themselves? Why on the other hand, with a TV program, TV watching in general or simply, entertainment and leisure — in short, consumption — are people today supposed to have a freedom permitting them to express some "profound" "popular" social-cultural essence, desire or sensibility? Why is it that the "cultural" sphere, especially as conceived as an industrialized sphere of non-work, leisure-time consumption, is today put forth as a — the — prime model for social liberty, or at least, a certain idea of liberty? Does not this one-sided emphasis tend to hide the present lack of choice and creativity to be found in the other spheres of economic and social life, thus preventing the possibility of examining and then pushing forward new freedoms in these other areas? Is the supermarket really to be the model for social life? This capitalist image is very very strong, and is often symbolically used to pit the colorful "plurality" of capitalism against the grey uniformity or lack thereof in the so-called "socialist" and "third" worlds. Are there not very real social parameters also conditioning cultural life, even as consumption, TV watching in general, and even to a lesser

degree, a given TV program?

Here we are thinking of general, but nevertheless, real determinants such as education level; available physical, intellectual or creative energy after a hard, or especially today, a boring or alienated day's work; the non-availability or high cost of other possible activities (including the increasing cost of public and private transport, etc.); the apparent low-cost and ease of TV-watching or browsing; plus, subjective parameters, especially, the insecurity maintained in the public spaces and the security of the closed home, further accentuated by much of today's "technological advances", and the current crisis and its related ideas.

And in addition, concerning the viewing of a specific program, especially the series,<sup>2</sup> does not habit, routine, often unconscious, play a very important role? (This would appear to be an important pre-condition for the successful reception of capitalist cultural merchandise.) What about the interlocking promotion of certain shows and personalities by other media, and *vice-versa*; the press, books, radio, organized gossip, tee-shirts and other "spin-offs", etc. Are not all of these factors ways to virtually pressure — force — people to watch or do certain things and not other things? Is not this type of "freedom" of choice getting very very close to a form of necessity we are given to believe exists only in the other domains, among others, mentioned earlier? Especially since today these forces are no longer left to "chance", as in earlier times, and are increasingly organized. All these factors, before we even approach the question of audience reception; the different ways in which TV is received and perceived by different classes, sectors, strata, groups and individuals.

What does the popular mean today in the context of these increasingly organized, controlled, manipulated, and especially, generalized, realities?

In light of these "mass"-produced authoritarian pressures, is it still possible to distinguish an autonomous popular character of the subaltern classes from that of the ruling classes; a character which at one time appeared directly linked to the substance level of subaltern material life? If not, why not?, and what does this perhaps tell us about present relations between rulers and ruled in the domains of ideology, culture and communications?

How have these relations evolved and how are they presently evolving, at least here in the so-called "advanced" capitalist countries? How are these relations today linked to economic exploitation?

2. The industrialization and generalization of the series form is perhaps one of the prime(-time) characteristics of mass culture today. Being based on the mass production, multiplication, and manipulation of a (hopefully) successful formula, gimmick, or personality-trademark, it is increasingly taking over all industrial cultural production (as in the Second, Third, etc. editions of a film, like Superman II, Rocky III, etc.), but also books, etc. This includes so-called "remakes" of often old successful films, books, and especially mass music, the effect of which is to limit "original" new production, even other junky, mass-market stuff. This series production, a mass-cultural form of aesthetic long-term planning, is intended to be economically less risky, being dependent on "already-known" ele-

Are there any parallels in the spheres of ideology, culture or communication concerning the classic, growing contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production? And lastly, if it is possible to specify the popular in cultural as well as in political and economic life, and its expression in different social formations and periods, is it then possible to draw any theoretical conclusion from this information, to say nothing of formulating a strategy for future action?

In considering very briefly some of these problems it is not a matter of preparing a catalogue of eternally-fixed, specific progressive, socially-advanced, etc. properties inherent in popular life. It would be a very false confrontation to oppose ruling conservative functionalist myths and images with subaltern, Left, even dialectic ones. Rather our purpose is to try to outline some experiences and tendencies in the history of the oppressed classes, stratum, groups, and — why not? — even individuals, and how in their resistance to exploitation and search for liberation, their creativity has manifested, and is manifesting, itself in the areas of culture and communication. It is this search which is the principle underlying the production of this second volume of *Communication and Class Struggle*.

## CULTURE

Before trying to outline the problems posed by today's specific network of interlocking and conflicting interests of the rulers and ruled in the domains of culture and communication, and to try to distinguish today's "mass" culture as a specific form of ruling, general and generalisable, prefabricated, ready-to-wear culture made to adhere to the changing contours of monopoly capitalism, from a concrete, made-to-order popular culture, it is vital to first try to define, if only very broadly, what is meant by "culture".

Although its definition is often limited to the higher, special, ethereal realms of human experience, it should be, on the contrary, a basic, all-embracing concept permeating all aspects of life, as it is perhaps the most fundamental element unique to each different peoples, societies, classes, stratum, and groups. As such, perhaps culture can best be defined as the specific "way" a historically-determined group or class creates, reproduces and develops its material and social existence. A "way" to create which underlies not only a certain type and form of material production, but especially the

ments, but it absolutely depends on the social development of unconscious *habit* and especially the *security* of knowing what will happen next. (Like the "reason", usually completely irrational, for smoking one cigarette and not another.) This is in contrast with the nineteenth-century serial novels, for example, where excitement and unknown adventure around a successful personality were the order of the day. This series production strategy is also — coincidentally? — in very sharp contrast with contemporary reality, especially on the world scale, which is increasingly full of surprises, apparently sudden, unexpected developments, alliances, and conflicts and contradictions, etc. Perhaps the series are just another way to calm the spirits, the nerves, a form of "pain-killer" or tranquilizer.

production of a certain (evolving) set of conscious, but also unconscious, beliefs, values, ideas, feelings, corporal gestures, daily life habits, languages, communications, etc., which together compose a given culture: in short, a way of life, a way of doing things; in a sense, also an aesthetic or creative dimension; a way a given society "looks", "feels", its "sensitivity"; a sort of social personality.

Historically, this "way of doing things" was first closely conditioned by the external natural environment, but with the passage of time it has become more and more linked to the "internal" man-and-woman-made social environment, and thus subject, if only potentially, to their will and control.

Although culture is often spoken of as a "collective" phenomenon this can be misleading, as it hides its heterogenous character, the fact that it is neither uniformly nor equally created or shared by everyone, all groups, all classes. Rather it should perhaps be understood more like the *resultant* of the ways of life of all its constituent groups, classes and individuals, in their overall relations of force, internally, and externally, their contact with other societies, other resultant ways of life in their relations of force.

A culture is rarely conceived of as a resultant of forces, especially, here, of creative forces. Often it is either taken for granted, especially by the rulers, and claimed as being the only culture, or more recently, by the ruled, as being the dominant, or most recently, the hegemonic, culture. In the first case, it is the very existence, the very personality, of the subaltern classes' way of life which is repressed or hidden, while in the second or even the third, it is often the interrelationships between the ruling and subaltern cultures which is ignored or minimized: two cultures which are often conceived of as separate, and autonomous, turning around a common reality, whose relations are often reduced to the articulation and mediation of intellectuals. But perhaps isn't it precisely here that we should also look for the particular meeting between the communication and cultural processes?

Unlike today, in earlier, pre-capitalist social formations, the constituent components of a resultant culture, the ways of life of its ruling and ruled classes and sectors appear more obviously, directly and immediately linked to their respective material conditions of life, conditions which differed greatly between rulers and ruled. Whereas there appears to have been, on the one hand, a strong, less-contested, ruling predominance in the "production" of ideas, on the other hand, the actual production of material "ways of life" was sharply differentiated by both the quantity and quality (and often, rarity) of the materiality, and especially, the quality and quantity of the labor needed to work this materiality.

Thus, popular objects, except for the rare ceremonial, etc., can be characterized by their utility. Linked to daily existence, with a poverty of media,

3. For a detailed analysis of this head/hand relationship on a world capitalist scale, between the so-called "developed" and "under-developed" worlds, see Ariel Dorfman's and Armand Mattelart's *How To Read Donald Duck*, New York, International General, 1975.

base materials, they have a high level of use value, whereas objects destined for rulers tend in the other direction, towards occasional, sparing, ritualistic use, often made of rare, costly materials (and labor) expressly for their economic, and exchange value. Needless to say, it is this type of production which has been valued, saved, protected, preserved and inventoried, etc. and thus forms the dominant background to our appreciation of popular creation, although since the late nineteenth century and the disappearance of the conditions of production of popular objects, these too have begun to be the object of intellectual as well as economic speculation, and prized as collector's items.

This differentiation between the ruling and subaltern "way of doing things", or perhaps more precisely in the case of the former, a "way of not doing things", can also be expressed as the relation between the head/hand, the idea/execution, etc., still a very central element in the expropriation and exploitation process.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, there is a very important difference between the (class) production of ideology and that of a material culture. In ideology, each and every class or group, from dominant to subaltern, struggles to develop its own ideas, and system of ideas, to maintain, to define, to specify, to explain, to protect, to justify, to extend, etc. its real or imagined interests in relationship to a given level of material existence and its evolution. In material production, however, there is no struggle as such, as concrete material creation has always been in the hands — both figuratively and literally — of the exploited classes, who create both for "itself" and for "others". So while rulers expropriate, appropriate, direct, manipulate, control, influence, etc., this should not be confused with material production itself, especially its creative aspect.

Thus social development in its fullest sense takes place essentially through the development and liberation of the exploited working sectors, as it is only they who can possibly unite the creation of the material, which is their traditional "historic" role, with a possible development of the ideological, the social, the political. In brief, social advancement as being the (re-?) unification and mastery of theory and practice, of the mind and the hand.

This long contradictory history of the production of a material culture — sometimes called folklore, or more recently, cultural anthropology —, behind the collection of its artefacts, is essentially the history of the generalized development of the "personality", sensibilities and creativity of the worker, as his or her personality has lived and produced under successive modes of exploitation:

—from primitive domestic crafts destined for immediate family or tribal or clan use;

—through the rise of a surplus, barter and exchange, and the rise of craft production and the ancient anonymous, though very real, artisan-craftsman/woman present throughout society, a form of creativity whose individually is subsumed under collective values, wherein all the products of a culture are marked by a strong unifying collective style, in a ruling world where individual life, especially the

popular, itself, had little value;

—through the breakdown of agricultural, slave, nomad and peasant life and the rise of late feudalism and early capitalism, with the contradictory rise, on the one hand, of some, often-privileged individual artists, the rise of a specialized “Fine” art divorced from “practical” life, in which “collective” values gradually gives way to “signed”, ever-more personal styles, etc, while on the other hand, for the mass of workers, the studio, then the factory, slowly destroys the “unified” individual craftsman/woman, the guild, by re-organizing and imposing new forms of creative labor increasingly under the direct rule of capital;

—to the rise of nineteenth-century capitalism and the rise of a new, unique form of dominant culture, “mass” culture, characterized by its emergence as a specialized economic sector and its ever increasing industrial fabrication; and most important, the fact that it is the first culture expressly made for and directed towards the mobilized popular and working classes.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication = exchange. Its development, the multiplication of its forms are the foundation and signs, products and producers, of both collective and individual development. The increase in the quantity and especially, the quality, of these exchanges is at the heart of the advancement of society, one of the principal marks of social progress, the basis of true liberation, whether national, regional, local or individual. (Here, however, we are facing a fundamental problem as this multiplication takes place essentially in direct proportion to the division of labor, one of the main alienating obstacles to be overcome in any process of liberation.)

One of the most evident characteristics of this communication is its instrumentality, its location in the social process as a physical link between time and space; as a social relation between people. However, as an instrument, as a means, a thing — a road, a boat, a sheet of paper, a newspaper, a pipeline, an electric wire, a broadcast frequency, etc. — it is by definition incomplete by itself. In a certain sense, it is lacking a finality, an end, a product, a content, which can be called information, as used in the sense of knowledge, scientific, social or otherwise, or more generally, culture, a way of life. (Needless to say, there is an intimate connection between a given type or form of communication and a given type of information or culture, insofar as it itself is also a product of a certain culture, also partaking of a particular way of life, with its common “look”, “feel”, and sensibility.)

This material, instrumental aspect is clearly given much visibility and importance, as it appears to be the direct and immediate object of social-political struggles. In addition, it is given further weight by the ruling forces as its success and influence is important evidence reinforcing their power and supremacy. Needless to say, this material presence and its growth — quantitative if not qualitative — like other sectors, are among the motor forces acting behind the ruling classes’ idea of progress. These ideas of progress, however, are increasingly contested, both by their

own rules of functioning, and their crisis, as well as by subaltern forces.

Another, more “political” way to look at the history of communication is as a social practice, to treat it as the simultaneous history of (a) the exchanges between different classes, groups, peoples, etc, ie, inter-relations, and (b) the exchanges between the members of a given class or group, ie, intra-relations, during a given historical period. It may even be possible to better understand an epoch by appreciating the specific configurations made by the interaction of these different types of communication.

Before the rise of the capitalist epoch, there appears to be a relatively large separation between rulers and ruled, wide communication gaps, large spaces, physical, social, cultural and psychological, where the ruling way of life did not — or could not or did not need to — penetrate or communicate with subaltern life, and, *vice-versa*. On the one hand, political-military, authoritarian domination was absolute: the right to work, the right to speak, etc., often including the very control over life itself; on the other hand, it was separate and limited in time and space to certain areas. This was perhaps because, exploitation itself was “limited”, for the most part, to the expropriation of existing small-scale production, agricultural and artisan craft or guild production via levees, taxes, rents, tributes, etc., not to the organization and nature of this production. Each person, or more exactly, each type of person, had their place in the ruling order of things. Despite the diffused powerful ideological cement represented by religion and later the church, which itself eventually broke down into “high” and “low”, there was relatively little ruling interest in the “lower orders” beyond their direct utility in the production process. Politically, their vote was not needed; economically their so-called “purchasing power” was not needed; in short, there was no need to “convince” them of anything, force or the threat thereof was enough.

This has evolved considerably. Today, after long centuries of struggle, ruling domination has been eaten away and is no longer absolute — in fact, it is more and more contested — but via the State and without, has penetrated and diffused itself within and throughout practically all areas of social life, within production and elsewhere, as it now itself directly organizes exploitation and its (now) large-scale production (though taxes and rents still continue). This insinuation of a ruling “mass” culture, leaving smaller and smaller, fewer and fewer areas untouched or autonomous, however, has also brought with it a very contradictory process of resistance and liberation, a process which is increasingly opening up new, often unsuspected fronts of emancipation, both geographically and socially, and with it a profound questioning of all aspects of inter- and intra-class and group relations.

However, there is perhaps a third, more important profound sense to communication. If the means of communication-as-instrument corresponds to an “economic” view of the material, tangible, visible infrastructure of a social formation, that part of a

society which Marx said could be “calculated with the exactness of a science”, there is also an “intangible”, “temporal”, aspect which is specific to the communication process, and is not expressed in the inter- or intra-relations between classes, groups or societies. In this sense, it is a somewhat more “general”, “abstract” facet. For unlike the production of that aspect of culture which is manifest in the production of material objects, the essence of communication is not manifest materially in the production of things. This is especially the case historically for the dominated classes for whom oral expression and creation remain, even today with the audiovisual media, the basic communication media of popular life, even after a century or so since the beginning of the generalization of writing/reading in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Thus while it is certain that each subaltern generation struggled to produce its next generation, there is little or no recorded history of these actions, and it is for the most part, a sort of “internal”, implicit class history, in contrast to an often well-documented explicit ruling history.

In this sense, in time, in history, communication plays a very special role in the historical transmission of accumulated experiences, struggles and ideas, in the creation of a certain type of consciousness, a certain memory, in the formation of a certain type of human being, a certain type of creativity, and with it, a type of culture and society. Perhaps it is in this aspect that one should try to situate the role of communication and culture in the advancement of society, not a society whose finality — and measure — is only the production of things, but a society whose end is the “production” of a certain kind of human being. It is in this context that one should ask which classes and which groups have contributed, and are contributing, what values to the maintenance, and fullest development of creativity, the liberation of humankind.

## THE SOCIAL, THE POLITICAL

One of the characteristics of the present period of “late” capitalism is the unprecedented variety, complex interpenetration, exchange and contacts within and between not only classes, but also nations, regions, neighbourhoods, groups and individuals. This is true both in the sense of quantity and quality, and with them, new confrontations, and also new enrichments; new divisions, and also new solidarities; new forms of autonomy and also new forms of dependence; new ideas; new areas and forms of political life.

On the one hand, there is an ever-smaller, more compact centralized ruling class increasingly obliged to communicate and confront, often directly, the

4. Although even here the emphasis has always been on the development of reading skill (consumption) not writing (production). In this development the emphasis has been on reading existing, usually ruling-class values, laws, instructions, orders and literature, not on the production or creation of new popular values, ideas or literature. Today, this is still the dominant sense of the capitalist education. There is a large progressive literature on this in England, one of the first capitalist countries whose rulers were faced with the education problem, or need, on a large-scale.

subaltern classes, so as to first produce and consume its particular “way of life”, and then to convince the subaltern classes of its superiority and legitimacy. On the other hand, an ever-larger, more diversified, active popular classes, but not at all necessarily “proletarianized” as was predicted.

Unlike the ancient foreign conqueror and/or the more recent feudal lord, the use or even the threat of brutal military-police repression is less and less sufficient by itself. Today, even ruling-class military dictatorships, whether in the “third world” as in Argentina, in the “second world” as in Poland or in the “NATO world” as in Turkey, are obliged to “explain” themselves, to hold press conferences, to offer (manifestly dishonest) elections or promise them, to temporize their existence by promising a usually-quick return to civilian bourgeois rule. Why is this necessary today? What does it have to do with the changing nature of communication and political confrontation?

The role of the traditional mediators, the “intellectual”, is also not quite as clear-cut or stable as it used to be, as for the most part, their privileged status as interlocutors between classes, or as “master thinkers” within classes, is being diluted within a generalized heightening and diversification of popular critical consciousness and intelligence, and its consequently new forms and areas of political action, both within the traditional workplace as well as on other fronts.

With these changes, among others, with these new forms of confrontation and class contacts, have come some very contradictory and ambiguous movements, alliances, aspirations and demands, with very erratic tendencies, and uneven progression in time and space. Although some may sum-up the present period in the “advanced” capitalist countries negatively, as resulting in the “embourgeoisment”, “pacification,” or “de-politicization” of the popular sectors, especially as incarnated in the urban working class, a recuperation of a certain past revolutionary role, this is a very hasty and one-sided appreciation. A pessimistic appreciation based, on the one hand, on an over-evaluation of a certain restricted definition of what constitutes a working-class, and on the other hand, an under-evaluation of the space of the “political”. This is further conditioned by a certain concept and practice of political struggle which is slowly but surely ceasing to correspond to a social reality characterized by increasing numbers of conscious political actors. It is this rise of different political actors, this rise of different political fronts, which is at the center of the new problems posed by communication, especially its intra-class and intra-group aspect.

First of all, historical, social-political struggles clearly have always had a two-sided character, whose product is not only a changing subaltern class but also, a changing ruling class. A history in which the dominant sectors are constantly forced to adjust their sights, their dreams, their ideas, their media — and their limits — in function of the intensity or not of emancipatory struggles. This was the case, for example, in the qualitative overthrow of slavery and the elimination of the slaveholder, national liberation and the elimination of the colonialist; or the



recent quantitative struggle within the expanding limits of capitalist production and reproduction for the collective freedoms of assembly, universal suffrage, humane work conditions, a basic education, health care; or today, with the increased variety of struggles, the right to a difference, to a specificity, to a "personality", whether national, regional, local or individual, with all the possible political ambiguities and risks this implies: a complete rethinking of the relationship of the one to the many, the individual to the collectivity, the specific to the general.

The traditional progressive, even revolutionary political parties, which at the turn of the century were built on the urban working class, today appear incapable of understanding, or in many cases, even just expressing, these new aspirations, new political struggles, possible new forms of intra-class relations, either in their internal or external relations.

One of the reasons is that the working class has changed fundamentally, as capital and its exploitation process has penetrated and diffused itself throughout economic, social and cultural life, intensifying more and more areas of new or latent conflicts, and with it, provoking new protagonists. In the process, the classic industrial workplace has now become only one of many areas of struggle, through perhaps still more important than others, sometimes in the vanguard, sometimes rearguard, sometimes more intense, sometimes less intense. This shift of emphasis is also due to the growing awareness that, at the present moment at least, the "mass" production work process, with its parcellization, brutalization, alienation, hierarchies, etc. — and not just its form under capitalism — promises little possibility for individual creative development, or even collective creative experience. Thus today, it appears that much popular creative energy is now re-directed and expressed outside the factory, contributing thus to the further opening-up of new areas of personal expression, of possible liberation.

The generalization of this search for new forms of popular creativity, and new possibilities of individual and collective expression, enrichment and liberation, in many respects, is often at odds with certain prevailing Left political practices and ideas which arose during the formative period of industrial capitalism. This was a historical period with a certain level of economic development/poverty; a certain frequency, intensity and type of intra- and especially inter-class exchanges, often brutal; a certain level of critical consciousness and mobilization, etc. contributing to the formation of a particular type of political organization, practices and ideas, characterized, for example, by

— an enlightened vanguard "leading" the "backward" masses;

— a form of centralized, almost military, political organization in which discipline was a key element, in a strategy based in large part on the need for a rapid, unified response to the class enemy;

— an ideological struggle based on a concept of propaganda and agitation whose purpose was "mobilizing" people around a series of specific demands;

— a concept of culture as being almost synonymous with the uplifting, and the education, of the masses;

— a concentration of struggle centered economically, almost exclusively on the exploitation in the workplace, especially the large-scale factory; and politically, on the taking of a bourgeois State which would then be transformed to "do" things, liberate, etc., the popular classes;

— a system of political representation which tended in practice, perhaps by virtue of the prevailing type of class confrontation, to reduce the variety of the popular forces to the working class, which then became the urban proletariat, then the proletarian avant-garde, then the Party, then the Central Committee, then the Political Bureau, and ultimately, the General Secretary;

— an organization emphasizing more the distribution of ideas (often produced by a limited number of people), rather than its production by the many;

— a concept of social progress in which "good" collective interests and values would eventually overwhelm "selfish" individual interests and values; in short, a historically-defined project of liberation, which despite its often heroic character, in practice tended to be constructed from the "top" to "bottom", from center to periphery, from the one to the many.

If, in the so-called "advanced" capitalist countries we are now living another, higher reality, thanks in part to these former struggles but also to the development of the productive forces, a reality which is calling in many voices for another project of liberation, this new project is still far from being articulated. Articulated in its double sense: that of its theoretical expression, and particularly, in the sense of the development of new types of relationships, new forms of communication linking and corresponding to a variety of conscious actors, who, each in their way, will all be needed if we are ever to construct from the "bottom up" a truly liberation person, a society free from all forms of exploitation.

It is hoped that this book, in some small way, will contribute to a better understanding of the historical dimension of this striving for liberation, and some aspects and possibilities in its contemporary expression.

Armand Mattelart

## INTRODUCTION: FOR A CLASS AND GROUP ANALYSIS OF POPULAR COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

### THE ILLEGALITY OF THE POPULAR

Culture of the oppressed, culture of silence, culture of insubordination, culture of resistance, alternative culture, culture of subaltern groups, popular memory, popular culture, national popular culture, culture of liberation; all these terms express, in their own way, the central preoccupation running through the analyses, descriptions, manifestos, and reflections on strategies and tactics which are outlined and united in the second volume of this anthology. This listing is by no means exhaustive; much is lacking. Many other expressions could be listed, similar but never assimilable, each with its own particular history. In their very multiplicity we already have a plurality of responses to a creeping system of domination. What forms of communication and culture produce men and women who struggle against the power apparatus, who refuse the exploitation of "man by man", certain classes by other classes, certain races by other races, certain nations by other nations, certain peoples by other peoples? No less important, what forms of communication and culture produce men and women who resist the oppression of women by men, children by adults, groups by classes, outcasts by castes, minorities by majorities, certain languages by other languages, regions by nations, peripheries by the centre?

The texts selected aim at removing the question of communication and culture from the order of consumption in which they have been imprisoned. This order of consumption corresponds to the particular idea that the commodity society has of the democratic participation of its citizens — the "democratic market-place", to borrow the sophism of advertising theoreticians.<sup>1</sup> These texts break the wall of silence surrounding another universe, that of production, and question the place of consumers, a euphemism hiding their dominated condition, in the gestation of other communication networks. They also question the modalities of their unequal, but

1. See the special issue of *Advertising Age* (New York), 30 April 1980: "Twentieth Century Advertising and the Economy of Abundance: A Review of 50 Years of American Advertising, its Economic and Social Importance and its Contribution to the American Standard of Living". For a translucent outline of "market democracy" see Ronald Berman, "Advertising and Social Change" in the same issue.

2. Michèle Mattelart, "Creación popular y resistencia al sistema de los medios de comunicación", *Comunicación y Cultura* (Mexico City), 6, February 1979.

dialectical, exchange with the dominant cultural grid with its norms, values, models and signs connected to ruling power. How, from their historically defined situation, can classes, groups and individuals without the official "word", fight against the dispossession of being able to define their own identity, create and imagine another form of uniting among themselves, and relating to others? In short, how can they become the often contradictory bearers of another way of thinking and improving democracy?

To pose the question of the process of cultural resistance as the dynamic nucleus of a critical theory of the communication process, is in many respects a crime of *lèse-majesté* against what is customarily dubbed scientific knowledge. Established science is constructed in such a way that it scarcely accepts any dissidence in respect to its disciplinary codes. This is one of the conditions of its own reproduction and survival, as well as that of the whole of social relations. Even if it has been largely proved that there is nothing more hidden in ideology than the basic concepts of "mass", "mass communication" and "mass culture" (Brecht's text on the radio reminds us once again), the apparatus for the management of power alone fixes the legitimacy of the field of scientific observation. This is a pleonastic definition of bourgeois class hegemony: to impose the dynamic of its preoccupations and problems, its particular solutions and its vision of the world on all other sectors. This is to prescribe the conceptual and real universe according to its own law. Let this be clear from the outset. Among functionalist sociologists of all colours, whether they admit it or not, can be found a profound aversion, or even better, a real epistemological allergy to this question which risks destabilising the naturalised foundations of a science and a society because it calls into question the principle of the social division of labour, the rigorous division of status and roles between those who speak and those who listen, those who transmit and those reduced to being eternal receptacles, representatives and represented, and between educators and educated.

We have apparently come a long way from the time when the ruling classes assimilated the people and the popular to the "populace". The anti-popular sentiment of capitalism is now endemic. Each time that the relations of force endanger the sacrosanct notion of public opinion and the apparatuses which materialise it, each time that the legitimacy of this public opinion is contested by an opinion which could become popular, invariably the hegemonic classes criminalise the initiatives of their opponents and resort to the old anathemas against the "dangerous classes" and "troublemakers". When in October 1972, during the bourgeoisie's important corporatist strike against the Chilean Popular Unity Government, "the workers and peasants spoke out in their newspapers and on television, the right cried the violation of free speech, the illegality of the popular".<sup>2</sup> And yet, compare this to the prudence and profound sense of democracy in the way the insurgent journalists in the Paris Commune approached the question of free speech and press freedom. Whereas the partisans of Thiers, at Versailles, shackled all opposing views with an iron-fisted

ensorship, the Communards of Paris dared to pose the question of freedom by letting the newspapers of their opponents continue. Announcing the dilemmas and contradictions of future struggles for liberty, an editorial by Jules Valles, founder of the *Cri du Peuple*, the largest-circulation Commune newspaper later destroyed by Thiers, opposed with all his heart any repressive measure against the organs of their enemies:

I have written a long time ago, and I repeat today, that I am in favour of an absolute and unlimited freedom of the press. Thus, I am profoundly sorry that *Le Gaulois* and *Le Figaro* have been prevented from re-appearing, even if they had laughed at our canons and called us looters. *Liberty without limits.*<sup>3</sup>

This same risk of liberty without limits was taken by Salvador Allende in leaving the Chilean bourgeoisie all its newspapers and all its means of expression as illustrated by his speech given to the First Assembly of Left Journalists in April 1971. It took the slander campaign orchestrated by UPI for him to resolve to shut down the bureaus of this U.S. news agency; he reopened them 48 hours later, unable to bear accusations of "totalitarianism" from the country's leading paper.

The idea of people/popular goes back to the idea of men and women united, linked by objective situations and the consciousness of living together, capable of developing solutions for their survival and liberation. It is radically opposed to the fundamental idea of conservative thinking, the people/mass, an atomised people, a passive, lifeless world, incapable of organising and retaliating. People and mass are opposed with the same force which opposes theories of mass society (which pretend that the elements of differentiation of former societies have disappeared under a levelling massification) and theories of class society, and the same force which opposes mass culture and popular culture.<sup>4</sup> However, the idea of "people", claimed since the 19th century by all those, who in the name of the socialist ideal, took the side of the poor, the exploited, the defenceless, the "wretched of the earth", is an intoxicating one which can go to one's head. On the positive side, the idea of people/popular has arisen as a generous, some would

3. *Le Cri du Peuple*, 21, March 1871. Issues of this paper were reprinted in May 1968 by Editions Les Yeux ouverts, Paris. It was prefaced by a note on the Commune, Jules Valles, the editors of *Le Cri du Peuple* and the members of the Commune with a chronology of the four periods of the Commune, the red poster "Au peuple de Paris", and numerous other photographic documents, posters and proclamations. On the press during the Commune, see G. Del Bo, *La Commune di Parigi*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1957; A. Dupuy, *1870 - 1871, La guerre, la commune et la presse*, Paris, Colin, 1959.

4. On the evolution of the concept of mass in the history of conservative thought, see the remarkable study of the Catalan, Salvador Giner, *Sociedad Masa: Critica del Pensamiento Conservador*, Barcelona, Ediciones Peninsula, 1979. An early version in English, *Mass Society*, was published by Academic Press, New York and Martin Robertson, London in 1976.

5. Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst*, Volume II, Frankfurt on Main, Suhrkamp. [Translated from the French edition - Translator's note.]

say, romantic ideal, lyrical, libertarian, and democratic. The people have become the social category which is the agent for an immense hope of changing the world and changing peoples' lives, an idea carrying the indispensable glimmer of utopia common to all revolutionary thinking mixed with the realism and anguish which assesses the resistance of the real. On the negative side, the popular can be a distorting mirror and an alibi for all sorts of populism and demagoguery. The omnipresent invocation of the popular can hide, in fact, the absence of concrete people, or in the words of Polish philosopher Stanislaw Jerzy Lec: "Vox populi, vox dei ex machina".

Whether we like it or not, these interferences blur research on the popular as an anchor for a reflection on communication networks. This research shows that the popular space is a space not given a priori and that a constitutive definition of the popular is itself at stake in the struggle. No one better than Brecht saw the ambivalence of the notion of the popular:

The history of all the lies dissimulated under the term "popular" is a long and complex history of social struggles. We limit ourselves to remembering, when we affirm the need for a popular art, that our thought signifies an art destined to peoples in their broadest masses, oppressed by minorities, in short, "the people themselves", the mass who produce, who for so long were the object of politics and who must now become the subject. Let us remember that, dating back a long time, powerful institutions have undertaken to check the evolution of this people and have bound them by ruse and by force to precise conventions, using the term *popular* as a synonym for the lack of history, the static, without evolution. We cannot accept this meaning of the word and are totally resolved to fight it.

Through the term *popular*, we refer to the people who not only participate in evolution, but take possession of it, impose their will on it, condition it. We are thinking of a people who make history, who transform the world and transform themselves; a people in struggle who, for this very purpose, see the combative implications of the concept *popular*. The popular is that which is understood by the broad masses: that which grasps and enriches their form of expression, incorporating and asserting their point of view; that which is representative of the most progressive sector of the people, which can thus lead it while remaining comprehensible to other sectors of the people, and issued from tradition, pushes it forward; and that which transmits to the sector of the people aspiring to power, the conquests of its present supporters.<sup>5</sup>

The history of subaltern groups — and it is from this angle that we have tried to include the texts here — is a chaotic, fragmented one which is difficult to write because this slow, collective and spontaneous accumulation of everything a social group did and can live in common, is scattered with long public silences, blanks in the soundtrack. Periods of advance and periods of withdrawal. Working against this history is the difficulty of formalising experiences of struggle, to reflect together on what has happened to the group, sometimes because of the impossibility of doing so, other times because of a latent desire for amnesia as a defence mechanism against failures and errors. Working against this history also is the tendency to give priority to the history of the

organised structures of the working class rather than rank and file movements and oppositions, which means that sometimes one chooses the past that justifies a strategic choice of today. However, above all, working against this history is the difficulty for the dominated classes to overcome the alienation eroding their collective memory and accede to their own representation of themselves, to cease being a class-object, a class-for-others to become a class-for-itself.

The dominant is that which succeeds in imposing the norms of its own perception, to be perceived as it perceives itself, to appropriate its own objectification by reducing its objective truth to its subjective intention. On the contrary, one of the fundamental dimensions of alienation rests in the fact that the dominated have to confront an objective truth of their class that they have not made themselves, a *class-for-others* which imposes itself on them like an essence, a destiny, *fatum*, ie with the force of something said with authority. Unceasingly asked to accept the point of view of others about themselves, to bear in themselves the viewpoint and judgement of others, they are always exposed to becoming strangers to themselves, to cease being subjects of the judgement they bring to bear on themselves, the centre of the perspective of the view they have of themselves.<sup>6</sup>

## IN SEARCH OF A LOST PARADIGM

Once one admits that the operative definition of popular culture, is that of a culture produced from below, a system of responses of solidarity produced by subaltern classes and groups faced with the need for their emancipation, numerous grey areas still need to be clarified. To begin with, the notion of culture itself. In effect, culture is a conceptual terrain where marxist critiques have left a lot of questions unanswered. An Argentinian anthropologist recently remarked, as well as many others:

We are faced with an unresolved problem . . . Marxism lacks a sufficient theorisation and an adequate conceptualisation to grasp phenomena which have a concrete reality and which belong to the anthropological tradition of the concept of "culture". There are numerous and important works among the classics of marxism which deal with "cultural" phenomena; one only has to cite Lenin, Lunatcharski, Mao and Gramsci. However, as far as I know, there is no more or less accepted definition

6. Pierre Bourdieu, "Une classe-objet", *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* (Paris) 17-18, November 1977.

7. Mario Margulis, "La cultura popular", *Arte, Sociedad, Ideologia* (Mexico City), 2, August-September 1977. See also Stuart Hall on the marxist conception of culture, "Culture, the Media and the Ideological Effect", in J. Curran et al (eds.), *Mass Communication and Society*, London, Edward Arnold, (1977). For a discussion of Stuart Hall's interpretation, see Graham Murdoch and Peter Golding, "Ideology and the Mass Media: The Question of Determination" in M. Barrett et al (eds), *Ideology and Cultura Production*, London, Croom-Helm, 1979. The numerous reflections of Jurgen Habermas should also be added. Habermas envisages the notion of culture in three sociological dimensions or functions: *Language, Work and Power* (an expressive function of communication, an economic function of adaptation, which affects the form of appropriation and re-appropriation of nature; a rhetorical function of legitimation/de-legitimation).

of this concept in the marxist perspective, nor is there sufficient discussion on this subject.<sup>7</sup>

The question of the anthropological definition of culture is far from being an academic debate. The fallout from these shortcomings has greater consequences than it seems at first sight. The important thing is not so much to state the absence of sufficient theorisation than to ask ourselves why there has not been sufficient discussion on this subject. Such a definition would never be a premise, or a point of departure for a critical theory of culture and communication but should rather be the result, the outcome, of a concrete reflection on the articulation of the superstructure/infrastructure and the way in which popular movements have materialised it in their approach to daily life. To arrive at an acceptable general definition, we must bring to the surface questions that do not want to be posed, implications that refuse to be raised. We ought, for example, to begin to question ourselves on each of the elementary constituents of this vast anthropological concept. This is the only way to avoid the quest for a definition of culture falling into high abstraction and confining the analysis of "cultural phenomena" to a culturalism. One of these elementary constituents would be the relationship between humans and tools or machines, technology as a social and material form of production.

Too many so-called materialist studies accept, openly or subtly, an instrumental status for technology. They endorse the concept of neutral or even positive techniques brought under subjection by capitalist exploiters, and reduce all problems of the productive forces to the question of juridical ownership of the means of production. This leads to the conclusion that the productive apparatus only has to change hands (be nationalised) for it to change its character. The organisation of production is thus posed as an administrative and technical problem, of organising the same means in the service of a different historical finality. The social relations of production remain in place. This tendency leaves aside other essential points. Is not the development of production also essentially a social and political problem whose solution depends on the initiative and creativity of workers? But who establishes the norms? Who controls and sanctions the obligation to work? Is it organised collectivities of workers or rather a particular social category whose function is to manage the work of others? Recent history is full of examples where this concept is expressed, particularly in the domain of the handling of the means of ideological production. It has haunted discussions on what communication policy to adopt in the periods of rupture undergone by Chile and Portugal, as it haunts the debate on local radio stations in those European countries where the public monopoly is dying (see Section H).

Those who refuse to appreciate the development of computers in an experience of liberation as being a simple equation whereby the shortest road to socialism equals the Soviets plus the computer, takes us to the heart of a similar problematic. They point out how computer technology reproduces relations of power, materialising unequal relations of force,

and that it is not enough merely to make "good use" of the computer to turn it into a tool for democracy. So as not to fall into the glorified myth of scientific revolution, it would be a good idea to make a side trip around this postulate which universally assimilates technological progress to social progress.<sup>8</sup>

The notion of popular communication is no less problematic. The fact of having juxtaposed culture and communication in the heading for the first section already indicates that we felt the need to deal with this complex of questions. The term "communication" immediately seemed too short, insufficient. The communication forms arising as the responses of subaltern classes and groups to hegemonic apparatuses are not rigorously parallel to the communication forms of the dominant forces. They do not match each other blow for blow. On the one hand, it must be accepted that subaltern groups do not necessarily take the same roads or borrow the inventoried codes to accede to public discourse. One of the greatest contributions of today's women's movement is to have shown that another conception of speaking exists; as one of contributions of the workers' movement was to have shown us that strikes are also a means of class communication.<sup>9</sup> The liberation of speech cannot limit itself to the "democratisation" of established forms. To imagine that it can limit itself to this democratisation, is to have a poor idea of the contribution that subaltern groups can make to the creation of new forms of democratic life.

On the other hand, if popular communication

8. In this sense, see the report by Hector Schmucler, "Communications Research in Latin America During the Computer Era" presented at the XII Assembly and Scientific Conference of the International Association of Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) Caracas, 25-9 August 1980.

9. As we mentioned in passing in the Introduction to Volume 1 of this anthology, the notion of "communication" as re-defined by urban guerilla movements is equally significant of the explosion of the established notion. In the *Actas Tupamaras* (Schapiro Editor, Buenos Aires, 1971), published by the Uruguayan National Liberation Movement (Tupamaros), one can read in the first chapter devoted to "Tactics of the Urban Guerilla", under the heading "The Process of Armed Propaganda":

The guerilla expresses him (or her) self basically through armed activities, even if sometimes he or she uses other means of communication with people, like papers, pamphlets, radio messages, interference on radio and TV stations. One of the forms of armed propaganda is the occupation of radio and TV stations to transmit proclamations. Another form which has given good results is the occupation of a factory with the meeting of all its personnel, making a very clear distinction between the way in which the personnel linked with the bosses are treated and the workers, with whom we start up a dialogue . . . There are other types of propaganda activity like the distribution of food, expropriated from vehicles transporting them or supermarkets, to the most impoverished sectors of the population. But generally the best "armed propaganda" emanates from large-scale military activities. In the course of these, one must not miss any occasion to stamp the seal of the ideology of the guerilla on the tiniest detail: the way of treating workers, paying attention to those likely to have a nervous crisis etc, returning money belonging to employees if it has been taken with the capitalist's money by mistake, and

undoubtedly includes the tract, the cinema, the photograph, the book and other media, it also takes on other forms, like spontaneous forms of family and social organisation, forms of solidarity in daily life. We are even tempted to add that alternative communication networks are especially these forms which make possible the existence of other uses of writing, sounds and images. To associate the term "communication" to that of "culture" to make an indissociable whole to break the connotation inescapably accompanying established communication is to situate the place of enunciation, ie from where does one speak when one speaks of the practice of a different communication?

One of the principal difficulties arising in the preparation of an anthology on popular communication resides in the tension springing up between the obligation to meticulously break-up a field of study (such as it is generally understood in terms of a discipline or an inventory) and the polymorphism of the popular response, the wide range of sectors and realities from which they are developed. On many occasions, one feels the need to specify the world of references which serves as an organic framework for communication forms. Here more than ever is justified the reflection that to understand and analyse communication, one must go beyond it.

One should not expect to find an immutable concept of popular culture in this anthology, as the concept is an essentially open one where very diverse contributions intersect. These include the convergent contributions of critical researchers from various scientific fields including history, art, folklore,

repairing damage involuntarily caused to a man of modest means. These do more to define the ideology of the guerilla for the people than the most eloquent manifestos. It will also be more efficient for breaking down the mental schemas of the honest representatives of repression who still believe that they are fighting delinquents. If there is one thing requiring just political criteria, it is the administration of armed propaganda. A guerilla movement which abuses propaganda activity to the detriment of fundamental military activities is depreciated by the popular consciousness (ie it obtains the opposite result to the one it seeks, giving the false impression that it is more interested in publicity than defeating the enemy). Armed propaganda takes on a special importance . . . when it is a question of clarifying for the people, in periods when drastic measures must be adopted, positions whose goals are not sufficiently clear and which, thus are difficult for the working-class mind to understand.

See also in this volume, the texts of Ernesto Che Guevara, Jorge Rebelo and all of section F2. It would be interesting to compare the text and the practice of the Tupamaros with the practice of terrorist groups like the Red Brigades in Italy. The latter have become masters in the use of the mass media by entering into their sensationalist logic and using it to their profit. Unlike the Tupamaros, who carefully specified their class and group target (the people, man of modest means, police, office workers etc), the Red Brigades, caught up in the rationality of the media, address themselves to the "public" or the "mass-person". For an analysis of the use of the media by terrorist movements, see Marc Kravetz, "Mourez, nous filmerons le reste", *Magazine littéraire* (Paris), January 1981; Carlo Marletti, "El terrorismo moderno como estrategia de comunicacion" in *Alternativas populares a las comunicaciones de masa*, J. Vidal Beneyto, ed., Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas, 1979.

literature, anthropology and communication. No need to remark that unanimity is not widespread. The concept of popular culture also owes a lot to those who, through their critiques of hegemonic culture in their actions, have forged from a militant perspective other references for thinking of popular culture as an offensive resistance. In this perspective, a fundamental research would be to retrace the trajectory of all the expressions gravitating around popular culture, whose variety and richness we evoked at the beginning of this introduction.

For example, the genealogy of the expression, "popular memory". In France, since 1970, we have seen, undoubtedly, a political activation of the popular memory which has arisen as a response to a fundamental need to implement other means of approaching reality, and as a desire to mobilise collective knowledge of the past as a contribution to analysis, reflection and action.<sup>10</sup> This return to the base, already present in the demands of May 1968, illustrates in jumbled fashion the concern for "giving the right to speak to the people", confiscating the monopoly of experts, the emergence of struggles outside of apparatuses (the women's movement, regional movement, anti-nuclear and ecologist movement) and the refusal of a memory organised from above. It is accompanied by a discrediting of theoretical discourses (structuralism, Althusserianism etc). Although managed essentially outside the apparatuses, it also has its counterpart inside historical mass organisations questioning themselves on a new strategy for social struggles. However, the quest for a popular memory is also a need of the bourgeoisie. Here, come into play the crisis of classical literary expression, the search for a reservoir of new publishing materials, the change in the mode of production of knowledge increasingly linked to mass media forms, the introduction of the tape recorder to collect the "memory of ordinary people", and above all, last but not least, the compensatory need for the institutions of power to establish a different relation to the local past in the face of the transnationalisation of capital. Giscardian France discovered that, "it knows almost everything about the Bororos and the Pygmies, but almost nothing on the astonishing peasant of the Creuse, the remarkable artisan of the Faubourg Poissonnière and the very exotic population of the Garenne-Colombe". "Since the success of *Montaillou* and the *Cheval d'Orgueil*", we read in an in-depth investigation of the *Magazine Littéraire* in July-August 1979,

literary marketing has pounced on the popular memory. As peasants and workers who write their memories themselves are rather rare, the search is underway for popular stars to manufacture this memory. The most "perfect" example is surely *Mère Denis* whose "ecologic-

10. As an example, see "La mémoire populaire: gadget culturel ou ancrage des luttes", *Les cahiers du Forum-Histoire* (Maspero, Paris), 10, November 1978.

11. Michel Ragon, "La mémoire des petites gens", *Magazine littéraire*, (Paris), 150, July-August 1979.

[*Mère Denis*, was an elderly peasant washer-woman who promoted washing machines in advertisements and who became something of a mass hero - Translator's note.]

12. Jean Cuisenier, "Un immense domaine: la littérature orale", *Ibid.*

al" function and "retro" character were used to sell washing machines.

This is all the more paradoxical as, "except for rare historical periods (romanticism, the Popular Front), working class and peasant literature have always been despised by intellectual circles as a sub-literature and very quickly rejected and forgotten."<sup>11</sup> Others have tried to explain this turnaround and renewal of interest for the popular memory in all its forms (tales, narratives, oral literature, songs) by turning reality upside down.

The change is radical . . . How can one explain it? Such an inversion of values culturally attached to oral literature in France can only have multiple reasons. The least visible, but probably the most fundamental, is the extent and quantity of intellectual investments applied to this subject. The prestige attached to the study of myths, one of the major objects of the analyses of Claude Levi-Strauss and Georges Dumézil, now extends to the investigation of all oral literature.<sup>12</sup>

Without denying the importance of the mediation of university research, is this not confiding too much in the power of intellectuals to determine the movement of reality, especially when this return of the popular extends as much to commercial marketing as the progressive forces? The popular demands for change illustrated by the electoral victory of the French Left in May 1981, reminds us once again of this movement.

In Latin America, the demand for a popular memory has a totally different genealogy. Even if there exists a conflict of memories whereby the projects of the dominant classes and the popular forces are mutually opposed (every hegemonic class being obliged to write its own history of the dominated classes), one cannot say that the popular memory is the object of an explicit demand of the dependent bourgeoisies. The incapacity of these bourgeoisies to establish their hegemony in the domain of artistic production (literature and the cinema in particular) shows the extent to which the majority of the intellectual class is organically linked to the interests of the popular classes. What can the dependent Colombian bourgeoisie propose in the face of the popular monument represented by the work of Gabriel Garcia Marquez? As Octavio Getino, author with Fernando Solanas of one of the most famous theoretical texts developed in Latin America, "Towards a Third Cinema" (reproduced in this volume), wrote in 1979:

Myths, legends, tales, oral history *etc* passed down from generation to generation, a memory of experiences, ideas and feelings, escape from the control of the dominant power and prove to be impregnable to their logic. Although described as being "irrational" or "manifestations of the pre-conscious", in reality, they correspond to the highest form of rationality and consciousness in that they do not dissolve themselves into the colonising project . . . The most valuable part of the cultural and artistic production of our country is intimately linked to "accounts", whether through documentation or the reconstruction of facts relating—sometimes negatively—to the project of national and social liberation. Liberation and cinema abound in

examples which speak for themselves.<sup>13</sup>

We could ask ourselves why, in certain countries, popular resistance does not constitute an important current in the critical analysis of communication networks, the exceptions confirming the rule.<sup>14</sup> US capitalism extracts surplus-value, on its national territory, from anti-establishment cultures, with such vivacity that it has succeeded in realising a conceptual symbiosis between mass culture and popular culture.<sup>15</sup> The offensive of the large cinema and television firms

13. Octavio Getino, "Mémoire populaire et cinéma", *La revue du cinéma* (Paris), 340, June 1979. Also see Jorge Sanjines y Grupo Ukamau, *Teoría y práctica de un cine junto al pueblo*, Mexico, Siglo XXI, 1979. For a presentation of this popular cinema, see the revue *Cineaste* (New York), and Julianne Burton, "The Camera As 'Gun': Two Decades of Culture and Resistance in Latin America", *Latin American Perspectives*, V, (16), 1, Winter 1978. One finds the same quest in the formulation of certain research on communication today in Latin America which approaches the popular as the memory of an alternative memory, the memory of an alternative cultural matrix, locked in, refused, as much political as symbolic:

Popular memory is what emerges, for example, from the practices unfolding in peasant, or even urban, market-places in Latin America, cemeteries, village or neighbourhood celebrations etc. . . . In all of these practices, one can detect certain signs of identity through which a discourse of resistance and reply to bourgeois discourses is expressed, becomes visible . . . What these popular practices show us, is that more than being a radical alternative in itself, it is the radical impoverishment of everyday communication or that emanating from the celebrations which leads to the commoditisation of social existence. We are used to this impoverishment, which is so interiorised, that only popular communication with its scandalous contrast can help us recognise it. On the other hand, these practices show us, in their own harsh way, the direction to be followed for proposals for communication which seek to be truly participative, ie, a communication which is not just content to bring communication to the masses, but seeks to liberate their speech". (J. Martin Barbero, "Retos a la investigación de comunicación en América Latina", *Revista ININCO*, (Caracas), 2, 1981.

See also Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Arte popular y sociedad en América Latina*, Barcelona, Grijalbo, 1977. For Brazil, see Michel Thiollent, *Crítica Metodológica Investigación Social e Enquete Operária*, Sao Paulo, Editora Polis, 1980.

14. Films like *Harlan County USA* by Barbara Kopple, which evokes a long and violent strike in the Appalachian coal mines, and those of Cinda Firestone and Lorraine Gray, notably on working women and multinational corporations, as well as showing a popular memory can exist in the United States, show there is another way of intervening through images and sound in fronts of struggle. These women filmmakers are not condemned to tightening up the clichés of a certain militant cinema which has made us used to a limited idea of political engagement and discourse.

15. For an analysis of the recuperation of the protest forces in the United States, see Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, University of California Press, 1980; Norman Fruchter, "Movement Propaganda and the Culture of the Spectacle", *Liberation* (New York), XVI, 3, May 1971 (with two related critical commentaries by Todd Gitlin and Lee Baxandall).

In counterpoint to our argument on popular culture, it is useful to recall the very particular conception of the

in the direction of a "popular memory" is in full swing in the US. Witness *Roots*, a series which retraces, through a family's hardships and misfortunes, the history of black slaves in America. Witness *Hanto Yo*, which evokes the saga of two North American Indian families between 1700 and 1830 and is produced by Warner Bros-TV in association with the producer of *Roots*. Witness *The Waltons*, which relates the history of a poor family in Virginia during the Depression, and many others.

sociologists and historians of the U.S. establishment. One of the most revealing texts – a veritable caricature – by Daniel J. Boorstin was published in the special bicentennial issue of *Advertising Age* (11 April 1976) with the title "The Rhetoric of Democracy". We reproduce the most significant parts of this article as follows:

Having mentioned two special characteristics – the self-liquidating tendency and the need for erasure – which arise from the dynamism of the American economy, I would like to try to place advertising in a larger perspective. The special role of advertising in our life gives a clue to a pervasive oddity in American civilization. A leading feature of past cultures, as anthropologists have explained, is the tendency to distinguish between "high" culture and "low" culture – between the culture of the literate and the learned on the one hand, and that of the populace on the other. In other words, between the language of literature and the language of the vernacular . . .

Some of the obvious features of advertising in modern America offer us an opportunity to note the significance or insignificance of that distinction for us. Elsewhere I have tried to point out some of the peculiarities of the American attitude toward the high culture. There is something distinctive about the place of thought in American life, which I think is not quite what it has been in certain Old World cultures.

But what about distinctive American attitudes to popular culture? What is our analog to the folk culture of other peoples? Advertising gives us some clues – to a characteristically American democratic folk culture. Folk culture is a name for the culture which ordinary people everywhere lean on. It is not the writings of Dante and Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton, the teachings of Machiavelli and Descartes, Locke or Marx. It is, rather, the pattern of slogans, local traditions, tales, songs, dancers and ditties. And of course, holiday observances.

Popular culture in other civilizations has been, for the most part, both an area of continuity with the past, a way in which people reach back into the past and out to their community, and at the same time an area of local variations. An area of individual and amateur expression in which a person has his own way of saying, or notes his mother's way of saying or singing, or his own way of dancing, his own view of folk wisdom and the cliché.

And here is an interesting point of contrast. In other societies outside the United States, it is the high culture that has generally been an area of centralized, organized control. In Western Europe, for example, universities and churches have tended to be closely allied to the government. The institutions of higher learning have had a relatively limited access to the people as a whole . . .

In our society, however, we seem to have turned all of this around. Our high culture is one of the least centralized areas of our culture. And our universities express the atomistic, diffused, chaotic, and individualistic aspect of our life . . .

But when we turn to our popular culture, what do

The expression *culture of liberation* offers another example of a road to follow. In Latin America, for example, it was born in the sixties from the confluence of several realities. Firstly, there was the evolution of Christian circles refusing the status quo theology and advocating the engagement of believers on behalf of the poor classes, in the search of a pedagogy of the oppressed, to use the term of Paulo Freire who was intimately linked to this discussion. This contribution is not exempt from idealism and some have rightly emphasised that Freire has not given enough attention either to the heterogeneity of power and the diversity of classes in Brazil, or the people's "muted consciousness of history" as a motivating force for revolt.<sup>16</sup> However, leaving aside his idealism, one cannot deny the significance of the rupture that this pedagogy of the oppressed represented compared to the practices of traditional communist parties. The Cuban revolution and the ideal of the "new person" dear to Che Guevara also brought about a profound revival in the ranks of a left marked by orthodoxy and the lack of having problematised the theme of a cultural offensive in the elaboration of its political strategy.<sup>17</sup> The formation of revolutionary movements in the spirit of the Cuban revolution outside of traditional apparatuses was to be the occasion for other forms of mobilisation and solidarity.

One last example for orienting a genealogical research. The expression *working class culture* or its offshoots, like the "proletarian public sphere", reveal once again the specific conditions of production for each concept. In European countries, some more than others, working class culture occupies an important place in the analysis of popular practices.

we find? We find that in our nation of Consumption Communities and emphasis on Gross National Product (GNP) and growth rates, advertising has become the heart of the folk culture and even its prototype. And as we have seen, American advertising shows many characteristics of the folk culture of other societies: Repetition, a plain style, hyperbole and tall talk, folk verse, and folk music. Folk culture, wherever it has flourished, has tended to thrive in limbo between fact and fantasy, and of course, depending on the spoken word and the oral tradition, it spreads easily and tends to be ubiquitous. These are all familiar characteristics of folk culture and they are ways of describing our folk culture, but how do the expressions of our peculiar folk culture come to us?

They no longer sprout from the earth, from the village, from the farm, or even from the neighborhood or the city. They come to us primarily from enormous centralized self-consciously *creative* (an overused word, for the overuse of which advertising agencies are in no small part responsible) organizations. They come from advertising agencies, from networks of newspapers, radio, and television, from outdoor-advertising agencies, from the copywriters for ads in the largest-circulation magazines, and so on. These "creators" of folk culture – or pseudo-folk culture – aim at the widest intelligibility and charm and appeal.

But in the United States, we must recall, the advertising folk culture (like all advertising) is also confronted with the problems of self-liquidation and erasure.

These are by-products of the expansive, energetic character of our economy. And they, too, distinguish

This is shown, for example, by the interventions of German researchers or militants, reproduced in this anthology (generally little-known as they rarely are translated into other languages), which shape out a definition of culture and popular communication and specify the formation of working class organisational networks. These texts express the richness of the workers' movement (in the historical period of its growth) in Germany which left aside neither music, photography, theatre nor cinema. They also show the character of the alliance between the class of cultural creators and the workers' movement. Every country which experiences or experienced strong popular movements does not or did not have among its organic intellectuals a Brecht, an Eisler, a Piscator, or a Rosa Luxemburg, to mention only a few. Likewise, not all have given birth to a Gramsci. Even today, it is in the Gramscian tradition that much research on workers' culture in Italy is situated. Witness notably the study by the *Federazione dei lavoratori metal-meccanici* (FLM) in the Turin and Piedmont region, fief of the firm Fiat, on working class consciousness and culture, in 1975 when the crisis was beginning to make itself felt. This research, which suggests principles that ought to be integrated into all approaches to popular struggles, is also a pedagogical action. The project was presented by the main union and the research team in the following terms:

The research will be carried out in constant relation with struggles in factories, the countryside, neighbourhoods, schools etc, giving preference to grass-roots structures where the autonomy of workers, factory councils, area committees, neighbourhood committees etc can best express themselves. However, workers are conscious of

American folk culture from folk cultures elsewhere . . .

The characteristic folk culture of our society is a creature of advertising, and in a sense it is advertising. But advertising, our own popular culture, is harder to make into a source of continuity than the received wisdom and common-sense slogans and catchy songs of the vivid vernacular . . .

We are perhaps the first people in history to have a centrally organized mass-produced folk culture. Our kind of popular culture is here today and gone tomorrow – or the day after tomorrow. Or whenever the next semi-annual model appears. And insofar as folk culture becomes advertising, and advertising becomes centralized, it becomes a way of depriving people of their opportunities for individual and small-community expression.

16. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Cultural Action for Freedom*, both Penguin, 1972. For a critical study, see the doctoral dissertation of Oscar Fernandez, *Paulo Freire ou les conditions d'une action culturelle libératrice*, Paris, Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1979. On Liberation Theology, see Gustavo Gutierrez, *Teología de la Liberación*, Lima, CEP, 1951; Hugo Assman, *Pueblo oprimido, señor de la historia*, Montevideo, Tierra Nueva, 1972; Joseph Comblin, *Théologie de la révolution*, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1970, and *Théologie de la pratique révolutionnaire*, Paris, 1974. In English, see Frans van der Hoff, *Bibliography: Latin American Theology of Liberation*, Ottawa, St. Paul University, 1972.

17. See Ernesto Che Guevara, *Le socialisme et l'homme à Cuba*, Paris, Maspero, 1970.

the limits imposed on their cultural initiative in our society with its division of labour and the hold of the dominant culture over their consciousness. They are also conscious of the need for their own cultural production not to be deprived of the theoretical instruments available to specialists . . . In an article published by the journal *Linkskurve*, in 1932, Lukacs reproached himself for not having sought enough contact with the working class at the time when he was writing *History and Class Consciousness*. This self-criticism raises a fundamental problem which this research, born of a joint initiative of workers and intellectuals, would like to contribute towards a resolution, not only by establishing contact with the working class, but by creating the conditions so that the research can be hegemonised by them. This means inventing a work method which permits simultaneously militants to control the research, and researchers to intervene with all the weight of their particular training, thus allowing the deepening of sectorial experiences to be articulated in an overall perspective; the direct and practical contact with reality, with the most rigorous and fertile scientific methods for analysing it. The new relationship between rank-and-file militants and specialists will thus allow the experience and reflection of today to be fitted into the history of the workers' movement, its struggles, theoretical debates, and thus define the new aspects of the perspective unfolding from the most recent experiences.<sup>18</sup>

Admitting that the space of popular concepts and practices is a space under construction and thus open to debate does not mean that it is an empty bottle into which everyone pours their own meaning. Lines of force cross and unite contributions from differentiated horizons without ever homogenising them. They all agree in specifying what is and what is not covered by popular culture and the terrains where it does and does not operate. What are these lines of force?

A popular culture can only be defined in a process of opposition to the hegemonic culture. It does not exist in itself. It is constituted at the same time in its dependence to and its reaction against, the dominant culture of yesterday and of today. Thus, mass cultural production can perfectly well appropriate the products and practices of popular culture, converting them into myths and forming its own dominant discourse based on the practice of other classes. Also, popular culture, in turn, can reappropriate, through a critical assimilation, mass

18. For more information on the unfolding of this project, see Giulio Girardi, "Fabbrica e cultura alternativa", *Ricerca sulla coscienza di classe dei lavoratori a Torino e in Piemonte*, Torino, Centro Stampa Unitario, February-March 1976. In the same issue, see also the article by Bruno Trentin (trade union leader in the FLM), "Lotte contrattuali ed obiettivi di una ricerca di classe". For the research on working class culture in Federal Republic of Germany today, see notably the numerous articles in the journals *Das Argument* (directed by W.F. Haug) and *Asthetik und Kommunikation*. See also Eberhard Knoedler-Bunte, "The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organization", *New German Critique* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), 4, Winter 1975. In France, several studies, also illustrate the presence of a research current on working class culture. See Daniel Mothé, *Journal d'un ouvrier 1956-58*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1959; Michel Ragon, *Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1974; Robert Linhart, *L'établi*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1977. Special attention

culture.<sup>19</sup> It is here that the specificity of "mass culture" is defined as the site of the passage from "popular" to "mass", not only as a *site of negation* of the popular as a form of resistance, but also as a *site of mediation*, ie as a site where class contradictions come into play in civil society. This allows us to nuance Marx's reflections on the fact that the dominant ideas in a society come from the dominant class. In effect, dominant ideas cannot be reduced to the ideas of the dominant class as the domination of these ideas never takes place without their transformation and reinterpretation — through resistance — by the dominated classes. This incessant dialectic and telescoping between "popular" and "mass" are subject to the variations in the relations of force between subaltern classes and groups and hegemonic classes.

Situating popular culture in a process of opposition to hegemonic culture leads one to question, at the same time, the nature of civil society or the apparatuses of hegemony as a focus for the organisation of class relations, and the nature of the market as a site for the process of fetishisation. This is how society, governed by capital, transforms all symbolic products into commodities and projects them into the network of commodity circulation and exchange. This is how the creation of a useful value, a use value for the reader, listener, viewer and consumer of cultural products, and an exchange value for the producer of culture industries, works.

The general process of the expropriation of the practices of the subaltern classes through the commodity network can only, in its turn, be understood if one takes into account another fundamental rupture introduced by the capitalist mode of production *vis-à-vis* other modes. In the capitalist mode of production, capital penetrates production tools and work methods and transforms them into social relations. The relation between people and nature is replaced by the relation between people and capital/nature, ie the relation between intellectual and manual work and machines and nature. The direct consequences of the so-called scientific management of work under the constraints of the growth of capital is to withdraw the worker's capacity to implement the production process. The possible unity of manual and intellectual work for artisans becomes a segregation between tasks of conception, technical innovation/

should be paid to the work of the ex-collaborator of Louis Althusser, Jacques Rancière, founder of the revue *Révoltes logiques*.

19. See the section "Stories as The Standardisation of History", in my Introduction to Volume 1 of this anthology.

The field of research on the dialectic and unequal exchange between the culture of subaltern groups and hegemonic bourgeois culture is without doubt one of the most important fields for an analysis of practices of resistance; it is also one of the most barren. How is the process of appropriation of popular themes, representations, values and products by the dominant patrimony effectuated? This question can be applied as much to the mass culture of today as the culture of elites of yesterday (and its monopoly of the Arts).

One of the most interesting historical approaches, which questions the ambiguity of the concept "popular culture" in literature, is Michel de Certeau's *La culture au pluriel*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1980. See also note 21.

organisation and those of execution. The social division of labour sanctions the dispossession of the technical know-how of the worker and his or her creativity in the everyday workplace.

Popular culture is developed in the organic framework of a national popular culture, not a national culture of centralising jacobinism or the "centralism of the consumer society",<sup>20</sup> but a culture defined as the articulation of historically unified differences and particularities which includes the vast number of local and regional cultures.

The recent struggles of minority peoples, particularly in Western Europe (Catalans, Basques, Bretons, Alsacians, Occitans, Welsh, Scots, Sardes, Walloons, Flemish, Corsicans) however, force one to nuance the assertion that the nation-state is an irreversible historical advance. Regional demands, long associated with the traditional right, became a progressive political struggle in the 1960s. In this movement the demand for their language, culture and identity, the search for their own forms of expression (publishing, songs, poetry, theatre) is articulated with a struggle against a model of society and uniform development (struggles against luxury tourism, highways, military bases, industrial pollution, the installation of nuclear power plants, state radio monopoly). As a French historian noted in an article on "Regional Dissidence and the Crisis of the Nation-state in Western Europe", published in *Le Monde Diplomatique* in April 1981:

Europe, from 1848-1920, saw the "movement of nationalities" lead to the unity and independence of Italy, Germany, Norway, Poland, Hungary and Bohemia, and the Balkans. This historical model was generalised in the 20th century as national liberation movements in the Third World forced the ex-colonial powers to accept the formation of new independent states in Africa, Asia and Oceania. However, the present thrust of regional dissidence in Western Europe aims at something completely different than the formation of a "third generation" of nation-states. Confusingly, gropingly, these movements formulate new demands; they constitute a qualitatively new phenomenon that political science has difficulty in understanding. The latter more willingly discusses the conformity of these movements to the — at the very least — partially inadequate conceptual categories (nationality, people, minority, region, ethnicity) to avoid going into their originality. Theoretical reflection is hardly even sketched out . . . [This regional dissidence] calls into question a mechanical and unilateral vision of universal history which irreversibly led to a single model of social organisation, the nation-state.

20. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Ecrits corsaires*, Paris, Flammarion, 1976. On the demands of minority peoples, see notably R. Petrella, *La Renaissance des cultures régionales en Europe*, Paris, Editions Entente, 1978; Jean Chesneaux, "Dissidences régionales et crise de l'Etat-nation en Europe occidentale", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1981.

21. Samora Machel, "E no processo da luta que forjamos a nossa ideologia", *Tempo* (Maputo), September 1978. For a study of ethnocentrism, see the studies of the Italian anthropologist, Vittorio Lanternari, "Ethnocentrismi dall'attitudine all'ideologia", *Comunità* (Rome), 180, October 1978, and "L'imperialismo culturale di ieri e di oggi", *Terzo Mondo* (Milano), XII, 37-8, January-June 1979.

A popular culture is instituted as a refusal of folklorism. It is a refusal of what Pasolini calls, "the normalising acculturation of particular and real cultures . . . these little homes of dialect worlds". Popular culture is not a museum culture cultivating the nostalgia of a past more radiant than the present which sparkles all the more that one is powerless in the present. If popular culture calls for a popular memory, it is based on increasing the capacity of subaltern classes and groups to rely on their past to produce a different future. Here, we cannot ignore the words of Samora Machel against the picturesque vision of popular culture:

Culture is one of the fundamental questions in the construction of socialism. It cannot be asphyxiated in restricted concepts, whether it be reduced to traditionalism or populism, or to a practice of elites. . . The people are the real producer of culture, just as they are the real producer of material wealth. However, in a society dominated by exploiting classes, the latter seek to concentrate the production of cultural models to the level of intellectual elites and force the people into the situation of being simple culture consumers . . . In the colonial period, foreign domination also resulted in the destruction of Mozambican culture and the imposition of the values and cultural models of the European bourgeoisie. The coloniser recognised the patriotic, liberating and revolutionary force of popular culture. Its objective was to make popular culture folkloric and exotic, without intellectual value, the symbol of an inferior culture. This is the origin of complexes, the shame in one's own personality and the contempt for all that is national, which have arisen. It is thus that the doors of assimilation of the cultural values of the imperialist bourgeoisie open up. The armies of aggression which occupied and militarily subjected our country emerged from this exported culture, ambassador of the economic interests and domination of the capitalist countries. In the recent history of Africa, the itinerary of the Francophone community shows us how, behind the seductive image of an apparently inoffensive and even generous cultural instrument, French troops and mercenaries disembark. Beneath each apparently well-intentioned argument of imperialism, like the universality of culture, hides, in reality, the idea that only Western culture is universal, a racist idea which, until very recently, was openly proclaimed . . . In places where national and popular culture, reflecting the concrete aspirations and the everyday life of the people, is not asserted, a vacuum is created to be filled by imported forms of culture.<sup>21</sup>

This popular culture is not as chemically pure as those who demand "more heart and soul" from the people and the popular try to make out. Developed against a dominant institutionality, it has gone through many contradictions. It is often a strange mixture of messages of liberation and rebellion but also resignation and even reaction. The revolutionaries in Mozambique themselves put their finger on the problem when they had to evaluate the apathy engendered by a form of oppression which explicitly was based on the marginalisation of the vast majority of the population. Certain forms of passive resistance to the colonial regime have negative consequences today, as they have created a certain inertia. This becomes crucial when it is a question of stimulating popular initiative and participation.

In his analysis of folklore, Gramsci also refused

to broach it as a picturesque element. He pointed out, "the need to study it as a conception of life and the world, to a large extent implicit in the determined strata of society (determined in time and space)". He also refused to confine the question of folklore to the past alone. He is thus opposed to the limited conception underlying the analyses of folk culture generalised by anthropologists like Robert Redfield who were little inclined to go outside peasant societies. The Gramscian concept of folklore can only itself be understood by associating it to that of "common sense" (*senso comune*) or "philosophic folklore". There exists, at the level of the masses a "spontaneous philosophy" shared by everyone:

This philosophy is contained in: (1) language itself, which is a totality of determined notions and concepts and not just of words grammatically devoid of content; (2) "common sense" and "good sense" (*senso comune* and *buon senso*); (3) popular religion and therefore, also in the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively grouped together under the name of "folklore".<sup>22</sup>

Common sense is the critical, and to a large extent unconscious, ways of perceiving and understanding the world, widespread and common to everyone at a given historical moment. "Good sense", which Gramsci opposes to "common sense" refers to the practical, empirical, but not necessarily rational or scientific, attitude that in English is usually called common sense.

Every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense' which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man. Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'common sense': this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. 'Common sense' is the folklore of philosophy and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and the philosophy, science

22. Antonio Gramsci, "The Study of Philosophy", in *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, eds., London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1971. The following quotations also come from this section. Folklore has provoked numerous critical studies within marxist research. As an example; the work of the Brazilian, Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *El folklore de las luchas sociales*, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1973 (with a long bibliography particularly on Latin America, and some precious indications on folklore research in socialist countries) and that of the Italians, Luigi Maria Lombardi Satriani, *Folklore e Profitto: Tecniche di distruzione di una cultura*, Rimini, Guaraldi Editore, 1973; and Alberto Cirese, *Cultura egemonica e cultura subalterne*, Palermo, Palumbo, 1976 (these studies take more account of the unequal exchange between mass culture and folklore as the expression of the culture of the subordinate cultures in advanced capitalism). See also the study of the Venezuelan, Alfredo Chacón, *Curiepe: Ensayo sobre la realización del sentido en la actividad magico-religiosa de un pueblo venezolano*, Caracas, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1979.

23. Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien, arts de faire*, Paris, 10/18, 1980.

24. Here, we borrow from the work of ourselves and Jean-Marie Piemme, *Télévision: enjeux sans frontières (industries culturelles et politique de la communication)*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1980.

and economics of specialists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is, as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time.

The relation of 'common sense' to the upper level of philosophy is assured by 'politics'. A philosophy of praxis:

First of all, therefore, it must be a criticism of "common sense", being itself initially, however, within 'common sense' in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making "critical" an already existing activity.

The development of the consciousness of the subaltern classes and their culture of resistance is thus a gradual process in which one passes from a non-elaborated, a systematic but multiple world view to a critical systematic conception. In the first phase, *political consciousness* takes the form of a *corporative consciousness*, or a class consciousness still dominated by ideological, or economic-corporate, defensive or negative secretarianism. It then evolves into a positive, national, hegemonic consciousness.

Popular is a culture of the present, created by resistance. It is eminently in the present, and in this way, can be defined as a culture of daily life. As such, it is opposed to the law of sensationalism which structures mass culture. It poses everyday life as a political problem. It covers the whole of the most trifling procedures of everyday creativity which short-circuit the techniques of ruling power surveillance and control. Situating his work on the "invention of the everyday" in relation to Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau situates the everyday aspect of popular culture:

These 'ways of doing things' constitute the thousand practices by which users re-appropriate the space organised by the techniques of socio-cultural production. They pose both analogous and contrary questions to the ones dealt with by Foucault's book. Analogous, because it is a question of distinguishing the quasi-microbial operations proliferating inside technocratic structures, diverting their functioning through a vast number of 'tactics' articulated on everyday details; contrary, because it is no longer a question of specifying how the violence of order is transformed into disciplinary technology, but to unearth the surreptitious forms taken by the dispersed, tactical and do-it-yourself creativity of groups or individuals henceforth caught in the nets of "surveillance". These procedures and ruses of consumers form, one is tempted to say, the network of an anti-discipline.<sup>23</sup>

Let us note, however, that if these micro-practices illustrate the adaptation of the human group to an outside environment which determines them without doing so completely, they only constitute a threshold of resistance. We will return to this point.

This need to also situate popular culture as a culture of productive consumption affects the way of envisaging the behaviour of listeners, readers and television viewers as well as the nature of different communication technologies which would be more or less favourable to interaction.<sup>24</sup> The new, reputedly active, technologies are often opposed to the so-called passive traditional television. The opposition is admissible to the extent that one remains at the

the entire present structure of the media.<sup>25</sup>

We find an echo of these formulations in a recent work by a French economist, Marc Guillaume, who also thinks of communication today as a rupture of exchange:

It is in this way that it participates in the logic of power which excludes response (at least, a truly significant response) and thus the responsibility of the receiver, ie a situation of reciprocity between receiver and emitter who is vowed to passivity. He can only exclude information, and even this is becoming less and less possible.<sup>26</sup>

This type of analysis should not be underestimated; by putting the accent on the non-reciprocity of communication, it has the merit of breaking down the idea of communication as being an exchange, always already given. It turns upside down the postulate of all mass mediology which does not stand up to too close an examination: there is communication, and there were where there is not, there is 'noise'. Baudrillard and Guillaume inverse things; as a result of their non-reciprocity and rupture of exchange, the media live in a time of non-communication and only produce communication as a mockery of itself. This hypothesis certainly appears more fruitful than that which believes in an already given communication, and at least makes its object profoundly ambiguous. However, its fault is to inscribe itself in an inescapable logic of reproduction (for Baudrillard, really it is much more than that; a petrification of the social) which laminates the interplay of contradictions a little too quickly. This is particularly clear in the way this type of thinking (whether it be expressed in the theoretical way we have just seen, or underlying the passive/active opposition) compresses the description of a communication structure (the rupture of exchange) and its effect on the viewer (passivity). To believe in the active/passive couplet involves, as a precondition, endorsing the stimulus/response model and accepting that there is a continuity between the structure and its effects, or in other words that something which is "plotted" beforehand can effectively produce the reason for which it was plotted. Can one automatically infer an effect of passivity on the part of the receiver from the fact that the television apparatus is a one-way process?

In an old and justly-titled article "Sociologists of Mythologies or Mythologies of Sociologists" Bourdieu and Passeron meet this type of problem but on another terrain. It was at the time when "mass culture", and even more so, discourses on mass culture, had really caught on. For some, from Edgar Morin to Gilbert Cohen-Seat, to limit ourselves to French examples without citing a thousand Anglo-Saxon studies, the idea that mass culture "massifies" because it is "massifying" took the place of a materialist approach to the media. There also, one identified the elements of the structure with the effects it was supposed to produce, from the fact that they were there. In the face of this telescoping which opened the door to an analysis more mythological than explanatory, Bourdieu and Passeron noted that they were other questions that could be posed about the media:

level of description. It is true that one can assert on an elementary descriptive level that television is a one-way process, that the viewer has no possibility of replying, or that in any case, these possibilities are limited (turn off the set, not even change channel for this is only to deplace the problem) or caricatural (letters or telephone), that the viewer is condemned to receive what the screen imposes. It is also true to characterise the new technologies as active from the point of view of possibilities of dialogue and reversal they offer to users. This being the case, in what way can this opposition be judged unsatisfactory?

We could reply that there are productive passivities and sterile activities, but this would be a little artificial, especially as it only inverts the value system governing the opposition. In effect, when we oppose the passive to the active, we do not pretend to put two equal values on the same footing. One is desirable, the other not. Passivity is a sickness and activity is its remedy: the passive is the past and the active the future. It is tempting to turn this unbalanced opposition upside down by recalling, for example, the qualities of listening and stigmatising the possible stupidity of the activity. However, in doing this, we are not contesting the opposition itself, but its modality, its balance and its polarisation of values. We may well wonder if it is not the opposition as such which is shaky, in other words, if opposing "active" and "passive" is really as evident as is sometimes pretended.

Television is discredited because, through its very structure, it makes communication passive, ie it places the viewer into a sterile dead space, from which reaction is impossible. Some have even spoken of a "totalitarian" television. Even if we must take this designation as a metaphor rather than a concept, it remains that television is supposed to have incomparable power. The paradoxical idea that television communication is fundamentally intransitive has been raised up to an explanatory system by Jean Baudrillard, for example. Here, it is no longer a question of metaphorically pointing out the power of television, but actually producing around the notion of impossible exchange a whole logic of non-communication. Baudrillard starts from the idea that power is that which cannot be returned, or more precisely,

power lies with the person who can give and to whom one cannot give back. To give, and see it to that one cannot give back . . . thus, the social process is unbalanced. To give back, on the contrary, is to break this relation of power, and institute (or re-institute), on the basis of an antagonistic reciprocity, the circuit of symbolic exchange. The same holds for the media sphere: what is spoken there is done in such a way that nowhere within it can one reply. This is why the only revolution in this domain — and anywhere else, the revolution, *tout court* — lies in the restitution of the possibility of response. This simple possibility presupposes the overthrowing of

25. Jean Baudrillard, "Requiem pour les media", in *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe*, Paris, Gallimard, 1972. An English translation of this chapter appears in *Language, Sexuality & Subversion*, Paul Foss and Meaghan Morris, eds., Feral Publications, Sydney, 1978.

26. Marc Guillaume, *Eloge du désordre*, Paris, Gallimard, 1978.

If mass mediology does not achieve the ambitions which it proclaims, it at least attains the unavowed goal that all its lines of reasoning betray, namely to avoid all the down-to-earth questions which question its existence. Does not each communication media cut out from within the "mass", groups which are so many momentary audiences? And is this not true, not only for each communication media but for each of the contents it conveys, from televised theatre, for example, to *Paris Club* or *Intervilles*? Do these fleeting, fluctuating audiences, whose infinite overlapping discourages analysis, coincide, in whole or in part, with real social groups? . . . Moreover, what is the difference between the reception of a television programme and going to a theatre performance, a concert or a meeting? If these different types of communication are opposed to one another in different ways and through different relations, are they not also opposed as a bloc, but through other relations, to the whole of individual relations by means of individual communication, like the gossiping in the street of a traditional village, the chatting on the terrace of a café, or the meal at a fashionable society evening? . . . Is not the difference linked, in effect, to the structure of the group in which reception takes place? One watches television at home with the family, one goes to the theatre, a concert or a reception, one participates in a meeting, one attends a ceremony, one goes to the cinema or a football match. On the other hand, what are the types of trust and acceptance which are created by different means of communication, from the quasi face-to-face relation at a conference, the theatre or a meeting, to the false communication, due to the technical suppression of space and time in the cinema, radio or television? Do attention and seriousness, belief and complicity, differ, and under what relations, for the audience at a meeting, or for the radio or the cinema, for the readers of a newspaper or *Racine*, a digest or a magazine? Why, for example, accord (prior to all experiment) the false face-to-face of television an unmatched power of persuasion, feigning to ignore the only too well-known efficiency of a flesh and blood presence? . . . There are a thousand ways to read, see and listen. Why want to determine the 'influence' of the mass media by measurement, strangely bureaucratic, of the quantity of information emitted, or the analysis of the 'structure' of the message . . . Must it be recalled that signification does not exist as such in the thing read, but that it has, here and elsewhere, the modality of the intentional consciousness that constitutes it? The superficial reading maybe carries in itself its own defence and inattentive listening transforms the discourse of the speaker into simple noise, which can then be measured in decibels. Why ignore the protections with which the masses arm themselves against the advancing mass-media tide?<sup>27</sup>

A very interesting quotation, even if we may feel that its authors, in the completely empirical description of the variables capable of affecting the structuring of the media's effects, gloss over a little quickly the problems of the existence of a structure in favour of a curious "intentional consciousness" which smells of subjectivism, the fact remains nonetheless that the essential points of the argument are valid. The social uses of the media do not necessarily follow from the destructive logic of its structural features. Any hypothesis which does not accept the principle of this discontinuity is involved

27. Pierre Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron, "Sociologues des mythologies et mythologies des sociologues", *Les Temps Modernes* (Paris), 211, December 1963.

more in futurology, or even science-fiction, than a serious analysis of the reality of the media today. Moreover, Richard Hoggart in his time, had already insisted on this; more recently, Michèle Mattelart has pointed out the subverted uses of television series by the popular classes in Chile. Beyond this, she shows us what tensions, in a revolutionary crisis, bring forth a new notion of information and culture when those traditionally defined as receivers of products become agents of production, conscious actors who demand freedom of determination in all areas of their lives. She also suggests how and why the field of information and mass culture consumption is one where it is necessary to organise a political strategy for the struggle against the dominant media. She shows how "destructive consumption" can be a first step towards an autonomous cultural production. Several workers' movements in advanced capitalist countries have attempted, for some time, to include the critical appropriation of messages by consumers in what they call a "cumulative strategy of investment" in the apparatuses of hegemony. One example. In 1974, the various tendencies of the Belgian left came together to discuss radio-television news and the workers' movement. Without wanting to come to definitive conclusions, they began by asking certain questions. After observing that, "if the whole of the workers' movement is concerned, it is not preoccupied by this struggle whose importance is ignored or underestimated", they raised several aspects which, according to them, must become part of this strategy: (1) develop within the RTB (Radio Télévision Belge, which has a public service status) a "mass" trade unionism, ie a unionism involving all the personnel in an action which passes through, but goes further than, immediate sectorial protests; (2) so that this mass unionism is active and unifying, it must attempt to modify the relations of RTB workers with other workers and the union movement as a whole. Currently, the latter, "tends to ignore both the ideological and political role of the RTB as well as the work conditions of those who produce information"; (3) establish various forms of relaying or control by users of the news presented by the RTB. They mentioned, first of all, the experiment in Italy undertaken by *viewing groups* of the Communist Party:

groups of Communist militants from the factory or neighbourhood, functioning in a dozen cities, simultaneously carried out a collective investigation on the content of television programs which was published in the press. Its objective was not to fill up a supplementary shelf in the sociology libraries, but to get workers to adopt a critical class attitude towards the ideological enterprise of the RAI and act on this.

They give as a concrete experience in the Belgian situation the initiative taken by the tendency in the Belgian workers' movement, the "Christian Workers' Movement" which created a *Council of Parallel Programming*. Composed of delegates from different tendencies of the movement,

this council aims at combatting and overcoming the ignorance or disinterest of workers in respect to the functioning of the RTB. Its first function is critical: it gives its opinion on the programming and analyses a certain number of programs. From criticism, the

Council hopes to be able to pass over into action. One can imagine, in effect, that if the movement press publishes the opinion of the workers on a television series, for example, this opinion would be heard and perhaps listened to.

(4) On a more individual level, they also left things up to the initiatives of viewers and listeners, addressing themselves either directly to the RTB or the press:

Take apart the mechanism of television series, analyse the ideological content of television news; this is within the scope of left newspapers and our journalists are willing to help. In fact, only the press of the critical right (in the polemical sense of the word) and the RTB have spread the idea that the public service is a ultra-left bastion.<sup>28</sup>

If a distinction is made between the structure of a medium (or its content; at this level of reflection they are the same) and the social uses which can be made from it, the descriptive couplet active/passive, when it describes the effects inferred from the character of the medium, is not very satisfactory. Suddenly, we see that active television is not opposed to passive television like a sad past to a promising future. Only a optical illusion could lead us to believe that the former is an advance on the latter. In addition to the myth of progress conveyed by this line of thought — the latest medium is always the best — it also maintains an illusion as to the site where a progressive reflection on the media should be focused. In effect, it is of little importance to oppose an active television to a passive television, but it is of the utmost importance to question the social uses that can be made of either. To play off the self-managed-media-tool-ideal against the concentric-image-of-power-centralising-television is to play the game of all those who want television to be their puppet, before reducing the self-media to an electronic gadget on the market. An alternative communication presupposes that this alternative pass as much through passive television as active television; one is not the solution of the other, but each must develop their own solution.

However, let us not be mistaken. In this development of "active" consumption we must be wary of supporting theses which minimise the strategic role of the medias in the reproduction of social relations at the level of each national reality, or at the international level. Clearly taking a position against certain types of denunciations of mass culture

28. "Information radiotélévisée et mouvement ouvrier", *Cahiers Marxistes* (Brussels), 9, November 1974. In the peripheral countries, an excellent popular guide for the critical consumption of the mass means of communication was realised by a Chilean team in 1980 and published by CELADEC, Lima, Peru under the title *Como leer los periodicos* in 1981. CELADEC is the Comisión Evangelica Latino-Americana de Educacion Cristiana.

One is forced to state, however, that in general, the field of "consumption" (particularly cultural consumption, but also in a wider sense, consumption patterns) is a field scarcely touched on by parties and trade unions. Two main reasons explain this disinterest in the "consumption" dimension and more generally in "living conditions" and the problems of everyday existence. On the one hand, the principal vocation of the party has been defined as the taking of state power. On the other, trade unions, it is the representation of workers in the production sector. To

and its effects on society, Lazarsfeld and Merton published an article in 1948 which was to remain the point of reference "The Mass Communication Media, Popular Taste and Organised Social Action"<sup>29</sup> Against so-called radical critics like Dwight MacDonald who saw mass culture as an all-powerful enterprise which by underhanded means forced citizens to submit to its wishes, Lazarsfeld and Merton argued that, when all was said and done and the sum of their effects had been drawn up, the media cancelled each other out except when they were totally monopolised. This debate still continues today, although the process of monopolisation has advanced considerably! The tranquilising effect of the approach and argument extolled by Lazarsfeld and Merton is evident: if the media do not have the effect that is generally believed, then they also do not have the importance generally attributed to them. In saying this, a whole series of questions on relations with power disappears. This argument loses its orthopaedic character in favour of the status quo only if one accepts not to be closed into an apocalyptic vision of the great media machine, and attempts to reconcile two generally separate approaches; one which questions the pole of emission and the other the pole of reception. This reconciliation is not meant to relativise *a priori* the effects, but to reveal, in the way in which measures are received, the germs of a resistance to this not-so-inexorable great machine.

## POPULAR HEGEMONY

Popular culture is indissociable from the collective forms of organisation used by subaltern groups to translate their resistance into a strategy overthrowing the system and changing established structures. Here a certain unanimity runs the risk of coming apart, as many of the authors cited who describe and analyse excellently the components of popular practices are put off by the political use others make of their reflections and works. This reserve is all the more understandable as their mistrust is often justified.

As for ourselves, we think that it is difficult to set up the basis for a critical theory of popular culture and communication without taking on the thorny question of the constitution of a popular hegemony. We have seen that the established system of communication, as an expression of the role of the intellectual and moral leadership that the dominant

make up for this deficiency, groups in some countries like France, have demanded the necessity of a "trade-unionism of everyday life" in a socialist project. To this end, they call for a new type of articulation between political parties and all the social forces which acknowledge the socialist project: "Socialism will have to take up the dialectic between the expression of needs which cannot be expressed only by political formations, but pre-suppose the autonomous expression of the social forces which represent them, and on the other hand, the workers' organisations which represent the forces of production" ("Pour une société socialiste" in *Vers la vie nouvelle*, special supplement to No. 76/8). We will come back to this problem at the end of the Introduction of this second volume.

29. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organised Social Action", in Lyman Brison, ed., *The Communication of Ideas*, New York, Harper, 1948.

classes arrogate to themselves, is a mode of organising the coexistence of different social classes and groups, a way of articulation between them — and here is the paradox — while disorganising them as classes. In other words, the function of the apparatuses of hegemony is to organise the cohesion of the dominant groups and the external support of the other classes while preventing the solidarity of emergent groups. This poses the question of how can an ideology and a dominated class assert their pretension to hegemony, the intellectual and moral leadership of society, its self-organisation and alliance with other classes? Here let us briefly outline the three essential elements of the Gramscian theory of hegemony: (a) the supremacy of a social group is manifested in two ways, as a “domination” or “coercion”, or an “intellectual and moral leadership” or “consensus” (b) a social group dominates an adversary group and directs allied groups; (c) a social group can and must be directive before taking power; this is even one of main conditions of taking power. To pose the question of hegemony is inevitably to pose the problem of intellectual organisation organically linked to a social class which allows this social class to become conscious of its place and function in society, to forge a homogenous and autonomous self-consciousness, to transform existing cultural relations and overthrow the hegemony of the dominant classes. This is the objective ideal of a revolutionary party conceived as a *collective intellectual*, a site for the development of a conception of the world, the analysis of the class relations within a social structure and more immediately relations of force in given situations, and the passage from criticism to practice.

In his concern about the absence of a popular national literature in Italy (a literature written by Italian authors and read by the Italian people), Gramsci was concerned about the distance separating party and people, party and mass, and intellectuals (individual and collective) and people. He saw in this close alliance the only guarantee for realising a “socio-cultural bloc” which would unify all subaltern groups under the guidance of the working class. Through its objective situation in the relations of production, the working class is the one which is the most apt to develop and progressively construct a class consciousness, a collective intelligence which would allow it to understand the underlying meaning of the social system and history, and develop an alternative social model. However, Gramsci goes even further. Defining the new culture as “new ways of feeling, thinking and living”, he argued that the

30. Antonio Gramsci, “Some Problems In the Study of the Philosophy of Praxis”, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith eds., London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.

31. Gramsci, *ibid.* Here, Gramsci comes close to the preoccupation expressed by Mao Ze Dong in his “Talks at the Yemen Forum on Art and Literature (May 1942)”, *Mao Tse-Tung on Art and Literature*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1960.

32. The text on the experience of community cable television in Quebec is, in this respect, very revealing on this link (see section H3).

33. On the situation of the means of communication in

separation party/mass, intellectual/people was also a discrepancy between *feeling* and *knowing*:

The popular element “feels” but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element “knows” but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel.<sup>30</sup>

He continued, trying to specify what was only another form of the link between theory and practice:

The intellectual’s error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned (not only for knowledge in itself but also for the object of knowledge): in other words that the intellectual can be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) if distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in the particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated — ie knowledge. One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation. In the absence of such a nexus the relations between the intellectual and the people-nation are, or are reduced to, relationships of a purely bureaucratic and formal order; the intellectuals become a caste, or a priesthood (so-called organic centralism).

If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, between the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled, is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then can there take place an exchange of individual elements between the rulers and ruled, leaders [*dirigenti*] and led, and can the shared life be realised which alone is a social force — with the creation of the “historical bloc”.<sup>31</sup>

In the light of these reflections by Gramsci, we will make three immediate remarks. First remark. *New forms of communication can only be created by new forms of collective organisation.*<sup>32</sup> In saying this, we are opposing a certain spontaneist mythology of popular resistance which would have it that the everyday procedures of diverting power could overcome the latter. “The muted consciousness of history” present in the people has always allowed the most oppressed individuals and groups to resist the absolute exercise of power. No society, dictatorial as it may be, has succeeded in annihilating completely civil society, and pockets of resistance and cracks through which rebel voices are heard have always existed. However, these individuals and groups have only overthrown the existing order when these forms of spontaneous subversions of power have been expressed in a project, measures of transition, and a political strategy. When the oppressor falls, it does not automatically follow that the experiences of cultural resistance are metamorphosed into a project of new social relations and a new hegemonic culture. The case of post-Franco Spain speaks for itself. The welter of popular response contrasts with the current incapacity of political organisations to take over this democratic accumulation.<sup>33</sup> It is in light of this dissonance that one must read the article of Lluís Bassats which describes the multiple richness of popular initiatives against Francoism. Thus we avoid

a mechanistic conception of the articulation between the resistance to power apparatus and the construction of forms of hegemonic life. The article by Ariel Dorfman on the manifestations of popular creativity in the Chile of today can be read in two ways. From the multifaceted blooming of communication forms one could deduce that the fall of the military regime is near; this is a wrong reading because it does not situate this information in the context of an identity crisis of the political organisations and a profound, paralysing division between the parties and movements which frame the opposition to the dictatorship today. The desirable reading is that which sees in the real effervescence of these new forms of cultural expression a demand for new forms of political organisation, with these vanguard communication forms representing a new concept of politics and social movements which takes into account the importance of everyday life and the harmfulness of sectarianism.

Second remark. Gramsci’s reflections on the role of the intellectual, individual or collective, and on the character of alliances, leads us to regard the problem of *mediation* as an essential element in a materialist understanding of culture and communication. This means, among other things, the need to overcome a conception which has only had malice for the petite bourgeoisie’s intervention in cultural production, by only denouncing the “petite bourgeois defect” in order to shrink from the analysis of the petite bourgeoisie as a stake in the conflict, but also to avoid the reputedly dangerous question of the place of individuality and subjectivity in relation to the collectivity. This way of understanding role of the intellectual also enables us to go beyond the general reflections on the evolution of culture inaugurated by Adorno and Horkheimer in what was the first materialist critique of the culture industry.<sup>34</sup> Concerned about the downfall of culture and its becoming a commodity, the two German thinkers questioned the degradation of the philosophico-existential role of culture and the decline of intellectuals in mass cultural production. Somewhat imprisoned within a sacred idea of art and high culture, implicitly believing in the emancipating virtue of art and artistic creation in themselves, the two Frankfurt School representatives seemed scarcely touched by the idea that other classes could also intervene in the cultural process. In the same way that the theory of the *foco*, which sanctioned the role of an enlightened

the post-Franco period, see Pedro Ronda, “La izquierda ante la comunicación”, *Transición*, (Barcelona), 13, October 1979, and his “Le prensa escrita en la transición”, *El Carabo* (Barcelona), 15, 1979 (dossier devoted to “culture and the state”); Enrique Bustamante and Antonio Mosquera, “La radio del pueblo se la quedan los poderosos”, *Transición* (Barcelona), 19, April 1980.

34. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry” (abridged) in J. Curran *et al.*, eds., *Mass Communication and Society*, London, Edward Arnold, 1977.

35. For an analysis of the behaviour of the peasantry under the Commune see the text of Marx in this volume. On the behaviour of French writers *vis à vis* the Commune, see Paul Lidsky, *Les écrivains contre la Commune*, Paris, Maspero, 1970.

vanguard in the armed struggle, was fought in its time, it is also necessary to fight another version of “focoism” which, applied to the intellectual field, is too inclined to take the intellectual class (Gramsci would have said “caste”) as the only guardian of the critical conscience of history. By overestimating the power of this critical conscience in the reality of power, intellectuals perhaps do not realise that history is often made behind their backs. Let us add that to go beyond the restricted idea of intellectual that Adorno and Horkheimer willingly confined to the literary, philosophical and artistic sphere, we must go back in the more ample definition given by Gramsci in his text on “The Formation of the Intellectuals” (see Volume 1 of this anthology). This would enable us to establish a bridge between the problematic of mediation and that of the mastery of techniques by the popular classes. This brings us back to a question already raised in connection with the need to go beyond an overly instrumentalist conception of technology and the need to question the social and technical division of labour as a form of power.

Third remark. A false conception of popular hegemony would be to envisage it as the working class’ colonisation of the other groups and classes making up the popular movement. In the little-known history of the worker’s movement and more generally of the popular movement, there are other groups and classes whose history is even less known, or even totally unknown. In a certain sense, this is reflected in the Section F of this volume, devoted to the formation of working class communication networks, by the absence of texts or accounts illustrating revolts by peasants, ethnic minorities and women, among others.

From the Commune onwards, the peasantry have posed problems for the revolutionary movement which were to long remain without response or with evasive responses. The symbolism which united the hammer and sickle in the Communist movement’s flag was often lacking. In 1871, during the first revolt announcing the rise of the proletariat as a revolutionary class, Emile Zola already reproached the communard workers for splitting France in two, between workers and peasants: one, “the mad, exasperated, spoilt part of the Empire, unbalanced from daydreams and pleasures”, and the other part, “the sane, the reasonable, the level-headed, the peasant”.<sup>35</sup>

Nor did the 1917 Revolution remove suspicions and misunderstandings in respect to the peasantry. Nevertheless, Lenin, conscious that the Russian Revolution had been too quickly dubbed the first revolution by the working class, already wrote in January 1921:

The worker’s State is a theoretical formulation. First of all, we have a worker’s State which is characterised by the fact that it is not the worker population, but the peasantry that predominate in this country; secondly, we have a worker’s State with a bureaucratic deformation.

The debates from 1923 on which violently opposed Trotsky (accused without much serious argument of despising the peasantry and not accepting them as a “revolutionary force”) to the



bureaucratic sector of the Bolshevik party, cannot wipe out the memory of the Stalinian ukases which reduced the kulak (rich peasants) question to fire and blood.<sup>36</sup> After the brief interlude of Emiliano Zapata's agrarian revolution in Mexico, one had to wait for the great revolutions of the mid-20th century to see the peasantry given a more active status in China and several peripheral countries.<sup>37</sup> The constitution of a collective identity always has had particular difficulties in the peasantry. In the words of Pierre Bourdieu:

We all know the exemplary history of the peasants of Bocage who, bearers of the most radical demands in 1789, supplied the most unrelenting partisans of the counter-revolution in the Vendée several years later. Forced to constitute themselves, firstly against the clergy and their property, then against the urban bourgeoisie, the great monopoliser of land and revolutions, the peasants... appeared doomed to rearguard fights against the revolutions they have sometimes served, because the particular form of domination they are subjected to means that they are also dispossessed of the means of appropriating the meaning and the benefits of their revolt. Without pretending to see in this the invariables of the peasant condition whose immense diversity only urban blindness is unaware of, it remains nonetheless true that the narrowness of the field of social relations which, by favouring false contextualisation often wrongly orients revolt: the closure of the cultural horizon; the ignorance of all forms of organisation and collective discipline; the requirements of individual struggle against nature and competition for land ownership; and so many features of their conditions of existence, predispose peasants to a sort of *anarchist individualism* which prevents them from thinking of themselves as the members of a class capable of mobilising itself with a view to imposing a systematic transformation of social relations. This is why, even when they play their role as a *force of revolution* as in so many recent revolutions, they have every chance of re-appearing sooner or later as reactionaries for want of having been able to impose themselves as a *revolutionary force*.<sup>38</sup>

To further this discussion, it will no doubt be necessary to criticise — as countries like Tanzania, with its *self-reliance*, and the various ecologist movements in the advance capitalist countries have already begun to do — the conception of industrialisation and urbanisation which has governed the majority of the development models of the last seventy years. As the French economist Pierre Judet noted, the consequences provoked by the "industrial imperative" and that of technical progress assim-

36. For the illuminating reply of Trotsky to what was later to become the Stalinian triumvirate, see Leon Trotsky, *Cours Nouveau: VI. La sous-estimation de la paysannerie*, in *De la révolution*, translated by A. Rosner; Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1963.

37. Numerous historians of the Chinese Revolution have remarked on this. In this respect, Lucien Bianco, on his return from China in 1975, wrote: "The Chinese Communist Party was infinitely better rooted in the villages than the Bolsheviks ever were. The tragedies of the campaign against the kulaks are explained by all sorts of crimes and errors, but, on top of these, the fact that the Bolsheviks were seen as people coming from the town did not help matters. This was not the case with the Chinese Communists; at the time of the agrarian collectivisation, the party included not only many villagers, but many peasants

lated to social progress have only been able to smoothen out popular diversity: "Peasants are second-class constituents of a system which can only assure their advancement if they cease being farmers". Peasant knowledge, forged from contact with the natural elements and experience of the environment, have scarcely any more place when it is believed that the only source of development must come from outside transplants (pesticides, various technologies etc).

It was only very rarely that Lenin dealt with the particular problem of the means of communication aimed at the peasantry. The majority of his texts on the press mainly concerned its relation to the vanguard of the popular classes. In some places, he explains the difficulties — notably because of the immense illiteracy and the individualist peasant mentality — met by newspapers and pamphlets destined for the peasant masses. In 1922, he pressed Stalin to accelerate the setting up of a radio network which appeared to him more apt for communicating with the peasantry. Faced with the resistance of small landowners, the most numerous sector, and seeing that their aspirations did not coincide with a process of land socialisation in the middle or long term, he wrote:

naturally, it is impossible to convince this middle peasantry with theoretical reasoning or propaganda speeches. We don't count on these. That which will convince them is the example and cohesion of that part of the peasantry made up of workers and the alliance of these worker-peasants with the proletariat.

Elsewhere, Lenin confessed his fear of automating the peasant problem which would set back the peasant-worker alliance. In November 1920, when it was a question of applying "production propaganda" and to this end the publication of a mass popular newspaper (*Bednota*, "poor peasants") with a print run of between 500,000 and a million copies, Lenin advised choosing a single organ:

It would be harmful to have a division into an industrial newspaper and an agricultural newspaper, since it is the aim of socialism to bring industry and agriculture closer together and unite them. In practice, the guiding role of the industrial proletariat both in the cities and in the rural areas, particularly in the urbanisation of agriculture and the electrification of the entire country, calls precisely for a single newspaper devoted to problems of production (and for single body in charge of production propaganda) both for the workers and the peasants.<sup>39</sup>

who continued to work with their hands, whereas the rare Bolsheviks who lived in the villages had administrative functions" (From a debate in *Politique Hebdo* (Paris), 176, 29 May-4 June 1975. On the relations between the Bolsheviks and the peasants, see Frano Rizzi, *Contadini e comunismo. La questione agraria nella Terza Internazionale 1919-1928*. Milan, F. Angeli, 1980.

38. Pierre Bourdieu, "Une classe objet", *art. cit.* See also Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, London, 1973.

39. "Theses on Production Propaganda", *Lenin about the Press*, Prague, International Organisation of Journalists, 1972. In his diary, written during his illness, dealing with the problems of transition, Lenin devoted long passages to the relations between the industrial proletariat and the rural semi-proletariat.

What we need to question is whether the classic Leninist conception, of the party born in particular historical conditions, which has presided over the norms of the foundation of the most workers' parties as being an advanced detachment of the class incarnating knowledge and truth, does not already contain the germs of scission between vanguard and mass. We need to know whether, in these conditions, Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach could be realised in the party-mass, party-people relation: "The educator, in turn, needs to be educated". Gramsci expressed this need very well when he defined the relation of hegemony as, "necessarily a pedagogic relation".

Nor were the specificity of the demands and struggles of national minorities hardly recorded in the history of the rapid development of the proletarian movement. The first steps of the Russian revolution clearly illustrates this difficulty of the revolutionary movement to open itself up to the legitimacy of the right to ethnic self-determination. This was one of Lenin's concerns at the end of his life. Faced with the power of the centre, Lenin accused Stalin and Dzerzhinski of being responsible for a nationalist campaign on the "authentic great Russian characteristics". On 31 December 1922, Lenin, who was to die just over a year later, launched an indictment of the painful national discrimination existing in Russia:

We others, nationals of a great nation have always been guilty throughout history for infinite coercions, and even commit infinite violences and insults ourselves without realising it. I only have to evoke my own memories of the contempt with which we treated the non-Russians in the Volga region and remember that the only way of calling the Polish is "paliachishka", that to poke fun at the barbarians we always called them "princes", that the Ukrainian is always called the "jojol", and that the Georgians and other inhabitants of the Caucases are always called "the Caucases people".

To those people content to demand formal equality, Lenin retorted that equality before the law is a juridical cover for a real inequality and that it was necessary to have maximum confidence in those proletarians belonging to oppressed nationalities (or minorities) in relation to the proletarians of the oppressor nation (or majorities). In order to do this

it is not only necessary to assure formal equality, but to make up for, in one way or another, through one's behaviour or by concession, the mistrust, suspicion, and resentment which have been cultivated by men of other nationalities throughout history by the government of the "imperialist" nation.<sup>40</sup>

40. "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *Complete Works*, Volume 36. On some of the problems posed by the existence of national minorities, see also the text by Khalatov (section G).

41. José Carlos Mariategui, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*, Mexico, Era, 1979 (1928); José Arico, (ed), *Mariategui y los orígenes del marxismo Latino-Americano*, Mexico, Cuadernos Pasado y Presente, 60, 1978.

On the beginnings of the Mozambican revolution, see Eduardo Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, London, Penguin, 1969. For a debate on ethnicity, see John Saul, "Dialectic of Class and Tribe", *The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa*, Toronto, York University Press, 1979.

Lenin was equally anxious to avert the supplementary risk of a linguistic policy which did not preserve differences and particularities. and warned against, "the infinite genuinely Russian abuses which will surely arise under the pretext of the unity of railway services, financial unity etc . . ."

Very early in the International Communist movement there was a certain prudence in respect to the specificity of the demands of national minorities and a tendency to see factors potentially divisive of class solidarity in this right to differences. The question of minorities was one of those double-edged questions as it was feared that these ethnic demands would be manipulated by the bourgeoisie and imperialism to divide the dominated and would quickly degenerate into indigenism, tribalism and even racism. On this point, it is interesting to recall the divergences between the important Latin-American marxist, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariategui and the Communist International at the end of the 1920s. Mariategui denounced the Eurocentric orientation of the Third International which, used to seeing the European working classes as the central axis of revolutionary change and little concerned with Latin America, could not or would not understand the centrality of the problem of the Indian as a revolutionary subject.<sup>41</sup> In Peru, as in most of the Andean countries, these "national minorities" were "national majorities" as they were up to 80% of the population. In prefacing the work of another Peruvian, Valcarcel, Mariategui stressed one of the author's sentences: "The indigenous proletariat is waiting for its Lenin". It was only very late (sometimes too late) that the revolutionary movement began to accord the ethnic and regional question within the Nation-state the place it merited in the search for a front of plural alliances where the working class is articulated with the group and vice-versa. Two important dynamics were to stimulate the debate. Firstly, the dynamic created by the revolutionary process in certain peripheral countries.

For a little less than 20 years, the ethnic multiplicity, and the diversity and languages and cultures has made certain African countries the places where this question becomes fundamental for the development of a strategy of transition to socialism. This is illustrated in the way in which the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) tried, from the beginning of the guerilla war, to realise unity between different groups, while at the same time preserving their differences. This task was all the more difficult in that the Portuguese colonisers used the same local and ethnic differences to prevent a national grouping of all the anti-colonial forces. This effort was continued after independence through a policy in respect to national languages and the numerous dialects. Another, less positive, indication of the timeliness of the debate is that of Guinea-Bissau where the *coup d'état* in November 1980 opposing half-castes and blacks (Cape Verdians and Guineans respectively) brought to the surface problems that had been thought to have been solved with the proclamation of class unity. The second dynamic comes from the regionalist movements in the advanced capitalist countries which sometimes, in spite of and because of their ambiguities, have opened up

new fields of struggle and shown that it was difficult to avoid questioning the particular conditions of exploitation and oppression of the different types of dominated people. Finally, we should mention the resurgence of racism in certain sectors of the working class in respect to immigrant workers at a time of crisis in these same advanced capitalist countries.

This indicates how much it is necessary to situate the workers' movement in its contradictions and refuse the idealist myth of its "original purity", or better, the dogma of its "immaculate conception".

Another obscure history: that of women, subalterns within subalterns, doubly penalised by ruling power because they rebel at the same time against the world of the employer and the oppression of women by men. Let us remember this phrase from Alexandre Dumas, the precursor of mass literature, the first tomb for popular stories: "We will say nothing about the Communard bitches out of respect for the women they resemble when they are dead".<sup>42</sup> Let us remember the words used by Captain Briot to describe the 1051 *Communeuses* [women Communards] that he had to judge:

Almost all the accused combine the lack of any moral sense with the most total ignorance . . . The causes which led women into the revolutionary movement of 18 March are: the state of concubinage, demoralisation and debauchery; the faulty regulation of prostitution . . . [the] admission to St. Lazare and the subsequent maintenance in the capital of creatures whose past and whose corruption are a permanent danger for morals and public tranquility. The subversive theories of socialism, meetings and clubs, immoral and obscene publications.<sup>43</sup>

However, women have not only been exiled from history by the power of employers. They have often been by the workers' movement which has not always been prompt to recognise the specific contribution of women to the theory and practice of revolutionary change. The critical sociologist from the Budapest School, Agnes Heller, has clearly pointed out that by minimising the contribution of women, one runs the risk of underestimating the

42. On this double penalisation of women, see Michèle Mattelart, "Les femmes et l'ordre de la crise", *Tel Quel* (Paris), 74, Winter 1977.

43. *Enquête parlementaire sur l'insurrection du 18 mars 1871*, Paris, Librairie Législative Wittersheim, 1872.

44. Agnes Heller, "La división emocional del trabajo", paper presented at the conference on "Women and Work", Autonomous University of Mexico, 1980, published in *Nexos* (Mexico City), July 1980.

On the farsightedness of Rosa Luxemburg, see her texts on the Russian Revolution. In 1918, she wrote:

We know more or less what we must suppress right from the first to open up the path to a socialist economy; however, on the other hand, the nature of the thousand concrete and practical, small and large, measures that must be taken to introduce socialist principles in the economy, law, and in all social relations, is not contained in any socialist party programme or social manual . . . The very nature of socialism means that, obviously, it cannot be granted or introduced by *ukases* . . . Only experience allows for corrections and the opening up of new paths . . . The popular masses must all participate; otherwise socialism is decreed, granted by a dozen intellectuals gathered around a card table." (*Oeuvres II, Ecrits politiques 1917-18*, Paris, Maspero).

relations of all forms of power. Analysing the specific contribution of Rosa Luxemburg to socialist theory, she notes:

Like the mythological Cassandra, Rosa Luxemburg predicted with precision the distortions and catastrophes which were to come from the power struggles . . . Rosa's ability to analyse the future problems *in statu nascendi* was in direct relation to her quasi-instinctive refusal of all forms of power . . . One of the modern sexist stereotypes pretends that men are rational and women irrational; this stereotype follows the destiny of all clichés. It is ridiculous to assert that, because Rosa Luxemburg analysed each situation from the perspective of feminine emotional models, she was more sensitive and less rational than the men of her time. Outside of the fact that she was a leading figure in the socialist movement, she was also an avant-garde woman intellectual for her time. The truth is that her emotional disposition — which was none other than her aversion for domination — prepared her for a particular perception which differed from the perceptions of her masculine contemporaries and which, however, was not irrational . . . To warn of the danger is not necessarily to fall into despair; it implies that the signal can be heard. The modern Cassandra does not lament, she only wants to convince.<sup>44</sup>

During the short period in the 1920s, the Soviet Revolution dared to embrace the revolutionary transformation of the family, the pillar of the social and moral order of the capitalist system. This was to be the only revolutionary process to take the lucid analyses of Engels to their practical consequences. Engels was one of the first theoreticians of women's liberation and the mechanisms of women's oppression. However, outside of this privileged historical period of the radical questioning of all domains of social life, women, admittedly present in all the demands of popular parties and organisations, were however only too often incorporated into revolutionary action as a secondary force for logistic support. In the 1960s, with the rise of Third World national liberation movements, men and women in the armed struggle were often recognised as equals (this equality in insurrection was not always necessarily extended after liberation). Also in the 1960s, the revolts against the so-called consumer society were to make the recognition of the consciousness and identity of women a necessary condition for all liberation. By fighting for the right to control their own bodies and against the pretended progressive moral order, the women's movement, organic and inorganic, brought the great, buried themes of revolutionary utopia to the surface: another way of living everyday life, the right to subjectivity, another way of conceiving of the development of societies. This process has only begun. Refusing the idea of women's emancipation as an access to masculine values, it seeks its own ways of feeling, thinking, acting and speaking. It is the gains of this process, both visible and underground, formal and informal, that the dominant order is trying to sweep away in order to resolve its crisis. In effect, it is in the family and family security that the system in crisis is trying to find new sources of legitimation for the existing society (see the Introduction to Volume 1 of this anthology).

The taking into account of the multiplicity of

social actors in the construction of a popular hegemony forces one to define this hegemony, not in terms of regulation and the normalisation of differences, but as an autorisation, and articulation of these differences and diversities.

One last marginal note. The texts in Section F, Part 1 all come from experiences linked to the history of the workers' movement in the central countries. Only the text by the Cuban writer, Ambrosio Fornet, scriptwriter of numerous films produced by the Cinema Institute (ICAIC), on the collective learning of reading in the tobacco industries, a pioneering nucleus of workers' consciousness in Cuba, throws some light on the formation of proletarian communication organs in a peripheral country. That it comes from Cuba is not by chance. It illustrates the rich current of history which, after the Cuban Revolution, set about rediscovering the national past and scrutinised the struggles which were the steps in the island's liberation process.<sup>45</sup> The same preoccupation has inspired numerous Cuban films, from *Lucia* by Humberto Solas which traced the history in three portraits of women's consciousness in three historical periods before and after January 1959, to *La Última Cena* by Tomas Gutierrez Alea which resuscitated the history of the black slave revolts in the sugar plantations.

Although there is a relative absence of historical work on the workers' press in other peripheral countries, it should not be too rapidly deduced that this history does not exist. One only has to glance through the writings and manifestos of the pioneers of the foundation of popular parties in the peripheral countries to rapidly lose this impression. For example the writings of Luis Emilio Recabarren, printing worker, writer and founder of what was to become the Chilean Communist Party in the 1920s. Well before Lenin's texts on the press as a collective organiser were known, he began scattered initiatives aimed at providing the nascent working class with

45. See for example the masterly work on the history of the political economy of sugar by Manuel Moreno Fraguas, *El ingenio. Complejo económico social cubano del azúcar*, La Habana, Ciencias sociales, 1978, translated into English as *The Sugar Mill*, New York, Monthly Review Press; for the history of people without history, see Pedro Deschamps and Juan Pérez de la Riva, *Contribución a la historia de la gente sin historia*, La Habana, Ciencias sociales, 1974.

46. See Alejandro Witker Velasquez, *Los trabajos y los días de Recabarren*, La Habana, Premio Casa de las Américas ensayo, 1977. On the history of the workers' press in Latin America, see Osvaldo Arias, *La prensa obrera en Chile (1900-30)*, Chillán, Universidad de Chile, 1970; Dardo Cuneo, *El primer periodismo obrero y socialista en Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1945; Jose A. Portuondo, "La Aurora" y los comienzos de la prensa y de la organización obrera en Cuba, La Habana, Imprenta Nacional, 1961; Emiliano León, *La prensa obrera y el movimiento sindical*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1975; Armando Bartra, *Regeneración 1900-18. La corriente mas radical de la revolución de 1910 a través de se periodico de combate*, Mexico, Hadise, 1972; Raul Trejo, *La prensa marginal*, Mexico, Ediciones "El Caballito", 1975; Victor Ramos, *El periodico como propagador, agitador y organizador colectivo: la prensa flores magonista 1900-11*, Mexico, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco, Taller de investigación en comunicación masiva, 1980.

means of information and organisation, throughout the copper and saltpetre mines, ports and industrial centres. In 1911. Recabarren settled in Iquique, in the north of Chile, the port for the rich mining regions. He founded a newspaper, *El Grito*, with a socialist-democracy tendency as he called it. The following year, he started another, *El Despertar de los Trabajadores*, the organ of the Printers Workers' Cooperative Society, transformed later by its associates into the Socialist Party, ancestor of what was to become the biggest Communist party in Latin America. In situations where compulsory primary education was only to be voted much later, these newspapers had a role of organisation, but also of "explaining" the working class. As Recabarren wrote, in addressing himself to the President of Chile:

As long as the printing plant was not in the hands of the workers we were nothing; we lived, forgotten in obscurity; we could not develop our thought. Since the creating of the cooperative, genius runs through the thinking of workers. When they said: "Let's have our printing house, we can improve our intelligence", things began to change . . . I find majestic and sublime the idea that these workers-labourers, dockers, porters and seamen — who dreamed of having a printing plant to develop their mental faculties, feeling like orphans in this society which did not help them to learn and become known. Thanks to their own effort, they have amassed the money to create their own printing house and publish a newspaper. Thus unfolded this chain of events in the Republic until the day when we, the workers of Chile, feel proud of the quantity of printing houses we have, from the North to the South of the Republic, to defend our principles and *make our intellectuality arise* so as to no longer warrant the rude remarks you throw at us when you say that we are incompetents, uneducated, ignorant and that when we have sufficiently progressed and are educated enough, you will be able to discuss with us. However, Mr. President, those who treat us as uneducated and ignorant are those same who have often blasted our printing plants into a thousand pieces. At Iquique, the soldiers of Carampangue, under the command of Major Parada, have reduced our printing plant to dust. These same then went to Punta Arenas to burn down the printing plant of the Workers' Federation of that town. This has happened many a time. And what have they gained from it? Little after, these printing plants have been reconstructed and recommenced to put out their publications and continue their cultural and civilising work.<sup>46</sup>

## ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALISM

What is revolution? "The revolution is not a thaumaturgic act, but a dialectical process of historical development", replied Gramsci. This is probably not the most analytical definition, but certainly the most honest. What is socialism? "The government of the people by the people", replied the Communards. Marx added, extrapolating from the Commune experience: The government of the working class, the form "finally found" by the proletarian revolution enabling it to realise the emancipation of work, and become conscious of the fact that the working class cannot limit itself to taking possession of the bourgeois state machine to make it serve its ends, but must, "smash the bureaucratic and military machine", and abolish class ownership of material



Peasant reading *El Machete*, the newspaper of the Mexican Communist Party, Mexico, 1927 (Photograph

by Tina Modotti, published in *Tina Modotti: fotografia e rivoluzionaria*, Milan, Idea Editions, 1979).

and immaterial goods in favour of the collective appropriation of the means of production. The remarks of Marx on socialist utopia are without doubt historically the least susceptible to being accused of being tainted with a mystifying will, the least connoted by the avatars of the construction of really existing socialism in the last fifty years.

Let us first fix some guidelines for reading the texts we have chosen to encompass the problematic of culture and communication in the realities of the transition to socialism or the realities established in the name of socialism. Let us begin with those which are chronologically the last. Five texts illustrate the way in which two African countries, liberated since 1975 after a long guerilla war against Portuguese colonialism, are tackling the creation of a popular communication network in the framework of a resolutely socialist option. The first text on Angola situates the difficulties met by these young African revolutions to "reconvert" a communication apparatus devised by the colonial power to divide the population which today must serve to unite them. The text on the literacy campaign in Angola goes back to the experiences of general mobilisation undergone in the last twenty years by several peripheral countries engaged in a revolutionary path, with a view to teach reading and writing to a population whose illiteracy rate often exceeds 60%. Acts of communication in themselves, these campaigns also constitute the first step towards a communication and exchange network between individuals and groups previously isolated, atomised. More recently, there is the literacy campaign in Nicaragua after the victory of the Sandinista Liberation Front, and further back in time, that of Cuba where brigades of young students taught the whole island to read and write in a year; the best experts and technical assistants asking for ten to twenty years to accomplish the same task under other conditions.

However, this text also relates to the particularity of Angola which, like the other former Portuguese colonies, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, made the struggle against illiteracy an element of participation of all sectors of the population in the war of liberation. As they reconquered the national territory from the Portuguese occupier, these liberation movements started in these liberated zones a process whereby the people took charge of education and information as well as the organisation of health, production, housing and the pursuit of the war.

The texts on Mozambique date from 1975. They come from the First National Conference of the Department of Information and Propaganda of FRELIMO. Firstly, we must point out the importance of the themes of information and communication in FRELIMO's preoccupations. Two national seminars on these themes followed in 1977 and 1980. The texts and discussions from these meetings had

47. See Armand Mattelart, "Communication and Transition to Socialism: Mozambique", postscript to *Mass Media, Ideologies and the Revolutionary Movement*, Brighton, Harvester; New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1980; Samora Machel, *Mozambique: Sowing the Seed of Revolution*, Nottingham, Russell Press, 1974.

48. *Noticias*, Maputo, 14 August 1977.

the merit of exposing the tensions running through the projects to establish popular information networks. These tensions come from the class character of accepted journalistic models and the difficulty of concretely realising an alliance of information professionals and the people, as well as the contradictions which can arise between the requirements of party organisation and those of the constitution of a press having a certain autonomy and spontaneity.<sup>47</sup> In his intervention at the national seminar on information held at Maputo in September 1977, the writer Luis Bernardo Honwana expressed this dilemma very sincerely and lucidly:

Up until now, the frontier between the popular press and the populist press has not been very well defined. Because of this, errors have been committed. Up until now, the critical function of the press has not been very clearly defined. Either criticisms are made as in the colonial period, or the fear of editors to criticise and upset FRELIMO leads them to lamentable excesses of zealotry which verge on paternalism. Up until now, the role of information in a revolutionary process has not been clearly assumed, which explains the confusion between a party organ and an information organ in a revolutionary process. The repression of individualism has eliminated the names of the editors and a false notion of competition between information organs. However, when it is badly interpreted, it also wipes out the editorial, the regular column, criticism, news research, investigative journalism and the vivacity of news which should be fresh, agile, dynamic and mobilising . . . The journalist is transformed into a news official. His work consists in taking an official photograph, retranscribing a speech in full and giving orders as headlines. Telexes are simply translated and reproduced without worrying about emphasis or context. The length of the headline corresponds to the length of the news and not its importance. The ignorance or lack of interest of journalists about international politics is incredible . . .<sup>48</sup>

After twenty years of revolutionary change, the question of criticism has also come to the forefront in Cuba. During 1980 there was a restrained criticism of the press. This criticism, stirred up as much by certain leaders as popular organisations, made public what numerous observers had long asserted; the disjunction between a rigid, dreary, obedient press and the effervescence characterising the everyday life of grass-roots organisations. In March 1980, Raul Castro set the tone in his closing speech to the 4th Congress of UPEC (Cuban Journalists' Union):

In the content of our press, we have not yet succeeded in systematising a convincing presentation of the undoubted superiority of socialism. Too often, we fall back on the harmful and counter-productive practice of apologies, repetition of clichés and hackneyed formulas without foundation or argument. It's no use in pondering over the blessings of socialism and communism in the abstract by comparing them to the malignancy of capitalism and imperialism . . . We have given a lot of thought to the reasons why our friends abroad, frank and competent people who rejoice in our successes, frequently express their discontent with the Cuban press, using every occasion to describe it as boring and repetitious. We cannot remain deaf to these critiques, nor reply with silence. We cannot dismiss them, because they surely harbour elements of truth . . . It is usually asserted that our press is not sufficiently critical, that it does not reflect the most timely problems and difficul-

ties, and that our journalists refuse to touch them, in other words, they exercise self-censorship. In this uncompromising affirmation, what are the objective elements and what position must be adopted to eradicate the negative elements?<sup>49</sup>

The texts which throw some light on the process of socialist construction in Cuba concern two domains where the revolution has contributed the most toward a reflection on new medias. In the area of the book, in its very first hours, it dared to pass into action and by denouncing copyright laws, even though for a brief period, carried out a collective appropriation of universal knowledge. In the area of the cinema, starting from zero, it succeeded in constructing a veritable industry and innovating, notably in the documentary form, as well as in forms of distribution with the mobile cinema. Besides this, its contribution to television, through several introductory programmes on cinema language, has inspired parallel initiatives in other situations of socialist transition. The avant-garde character of the Cuban cinema in a socialist system's conception of communication is undeniable and is even recognised today in the questions raised in the cinema industry by the dilemma between planning requirements and those of individual creativity. The fact that two of the officials of the Cuban Institute for Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC), Alfredo Guevara and Julio Garica Espinosa, were appointed Deputy-Ministers of Culture when the Ministry of Culture was created in 1977, demonstrates the recognition accorded to this institute which has not only promoted the cinema, but also musical creation, posters, dance and popular entertainment. The other audiovisual media, radio and television, unlike ICAIC, have had a chaotic evolution and it is difficult to discern any plan governing them. They have given the impression of being used according to different, even contradictory, logics. Radio and television have not completely left the schemas and habits inherited from the heavy apparatus bequeathed by the former period, nor its bureaucratic tendency.

In a world divided into blocs, one cannot ignore the importance of the pressure of the military menace of the US or its local allies on the expressions of authentic national liberation movements in countries

49. Raul Castro, "Discurso de clausura", 2nd Congreso, UPEC, La Habana, 27-9 March 1980. An overview of the evolution of the Cuban press is supplied by Ernesto Vera Mendez, *La lucha ideológica y la prensa en Cuba*, La Habana, UPEC, 1980. An excellent study was carried out by UPEC on the despatches transmitted by the large news agencies AP, UPI, AFP, EFE and SINJUA during the recent affair of the Cuban refugees (L. Arce *et al*, *Desafío a la desinformación*, La Habana, Editora política, 1980). On the work of ICAIC, see the revue *Cine Cubano*, especially the issue published during the 20th anniversary of ICAIC: "20 años de cine cubano", *Cine Cubano* (La Habana), 95. See also the documents presented to the 2nd Festival of Latin American Cinema, November 1980.

For an appraisal of Cuba's cultural policy, see Armando Hart Davalos, *Discurso de clausura del segundo congreso de la Union de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba*, La Habana, UNEAC, November 1977. See also the Bulletin of the Cuban National Commission of UNESCO (with a summary in English) published by Enrique Gonzalez Manet.

like Cuba, Angola and Mozambique. This pressure, together with difficult economic conditions, explains in part why these countries, forced to accept the discipline of the Soviet camp, have so many difficulties in realising a conception of socialism which does not reproduce the vices and impasses of the hegemonic model of this allied camp. The margin of historical initiative available to revolutionary processes today, between the transnational economic and technological system and the dominant political model of socialism, is limited. Revolutionary Nicaragua, trying to find its own road, is daily going through the same difficult experience.

The text from the Peoples' Republic of China comes from a round table discussion held in Shanghai on the development of production and the use of computers. It illustrates a preoccupation to integrate technology into a mass line and inscribe it in the principles of the Great Cultural Revolution. This remains one of the rare attempts, with its flashes of inspiration and excess, to create a rupture between the party/mass dualism and to challenge the foundation of social domination: the social and technical division of labour (mistrust of Western-trained experts, the role of the militia alongside the professional army, productive manual work for cadres, the recognition of the idea of the continuity of class struggle in the construction of socialism). The question of computers was a good occasion to underline the vigour of the principle of "autonomy and the need for self-reliance".<sup>50</sup> This principle challenges the Western path of industrialisation, progress and development which was to inspire, from the 1970s, the formulation of numerous development strategies, in which *self-reliance* was the key word, in peripheral countries seeking their own road of socialist transition.

The long text on the communication system in Yugoslavia clearly illustrates the way in which a self-management inspiration has repercussions on a model of the press, radio and television. Here, there is a willingness to break with centralism in all its form and to provide the means to realise this decentralisation not only geographically and administratively, but also politically. This self-management means

50. It was during the Cultural Revolution that fundamental debate, already launched by the workers' opposition in the first years of the Russian Revolution, was triggered off on the impossibility to change the social relations of production while confined to an instrumentalist conception of technology. In this respect, see Charles Bettelheim, *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976; *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organisation in China*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974; and *Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period 1917-1923 and Class Struggles in the USSR: Second Period 1923-1930*, Brighton, Harvester, 1975 and 1978, which complete the debate.

For a specific analysis of the means of mass communication, see Dallas Smythe, "Mass Communications and Cultural Revolution: The Experience of China" in *Communications Technology and Social Policy*, G. Gerbner, L. Gross, W. Melody, eds., New York, Wiley Interscience, 1973; Alain Peyraube, "Luttes politiques et mass media en Chine depuis la Révolution culturelle", *Communications* (Paris), 28, 1978.

that, in 1978, there were almost 200 local radio stations and over the next ten years 350 emitters are planned for 500 communes.<sup>51</sup>

The texts on the process of socialist transition in the Soviet Union concentrate for the most part on the period between 1917 and the early 1930s. They indicate the difficulties confronting the young revolution, but already enable us to sense the dilemmas and different options opened up by the revolutionary process. Although spread out over three sections of this second volume, the texts of Lenin, written over different periods, can be taken as a whole. Similarly for Trotsky, who figures in two sections. Unlike the texts of Lenin, those of Trotsky more or less date from the same period.

Lenin liked to recall the history of the workers' press in Russia and pointed out what this press had signified as rupture and continuity in the Russian tradition of opposition to absolutist power. On this subject, he wrote in 1914:

The history of the workers' press in Russia is indissolubly linked up with the history of the democratic and socialist movement. Hence, only by knowing the chief stages of the movement for emancipation is it possible to understand why the preparation and rise of the workers' press has proceeded in a certain way, and in no other . . .

The inception of a mass working-class movement, with the participation of Social-Democrats, dates from 1895-96, the time of the famous St. Petersburg strikes. It was then that a workers' press, in the real sense of the term, appeared in Russia . . .

The working-class press in Russia has almost a century of history behind it; first, the pre-history, i.e., the history, *not* of the labour, *not* of the proletariat, but of the "general democratic", i.e., bourgeois-democratic movement for emancipation, followed by its own twenty-year history of the proletarian movement, proletarian democracy or Social-Democracy.

Nowhere in the world has the proletarian movement come into being, nor could it have come into being, "all at once", in a pure class form, ready-made, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Only through long struggle and hard work on the part of the most advanced workers, of all class-conscious workers, was it possible to build up and strengthen the class movement of the proletariat, ridding it of all petty-bourgeois admixtures, restrictions, narrowness and distortions.<sup>52</sup>

What emerges, immediately, from a reading of Lenin's texts on the press, is their articulation with the demands imposed by each historico-political moment. The type of means of information proposed each time tries to respond to the necessity for a type of action. As the struggle's centre of gravity shifts, a new function for the press is defined and specified, without the former function which passes to a secondary level ever being renounced. Lenin's theory of the press is therefore multiple; it is, at the same time, a theory of the clandestine press, the legal oppositional press and the socialist press. However, it would be to go against the spirit of his work, not to

51. See also Zdravko Lebovic and Mihailo Bjelica (of the Yugoslav Institute of Journalism), *Communication policies in Yugoslavia*, Paris, UNESCO, 1977.

52. Lenin, "From the History of the Workers' Press in Russia", *Lenin about the Press*, op. cit.

53. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done (V. Can A Newspaper Be a Collective Organiser?)", op. cit.

add that in the last case it was not really a question of a socialist press in general, but a socialist press in the difficult moments of national reconstruction he lived through up till his death in 1924. Thus the role given the means of information was to be sometimes central, other times complementary to that given to other means of action. When Lenin wrote that the newspaper, "is not only a collective propagandist and agitator, it is also a collective organiser", comparing it to, "the scaffolding erected round a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour", he established the newspaper *Iskra* as a key element for the successful organisation of a party. This was between 1899 and 1902, a clandestine period in which the opposition forces could not count on legal means to organise themselves, nor parliamentary activity, nor electoral agitation, nor participation in local organisations or professional associations. The newspaper became an instrument *par excellence* for breaking atomisation and breaking with localism to realise class unity through a party of workers. His enemies of the time reproached him for putting the cart before the horse, "the superstructure before the infrastructure", and argued that he risked falling into a vicious circle. As L. Nadiéjdine sardonically reasoned:

The question of uniting local activity in central bodies runs in a vicious circle, unification requires homogeneity of the elements, and the homogeneity can be created only by something that unites; but the unifying element may be the product of strong local organisations which at the present time are by no means distinguished for their homogeneity.

Lenin retorted:

Every question "runs in a vicious circle" because political life as a whole is an endless chain consisting of an infinite number of links. The whole art of politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is least likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all guarantees its possessor the possession of the whole chain.<sup>53</sup>

The historical-political moment is equally defined by the groups with which the alliance must be strengthened. From his first writings, Lenin defined propaganda and agitation in terms of the various degrees of consciousness of groups. He did so in the following terms:

A propagandist must supply a great many ideas, a number so great that, at first, all the ideas taken together could only be assimilated by a relatively limited number of people. On the other hand, the agitator relies on the event best known to his audience and carries it out making the maximum effort to give the masses a single idea.

Elsewhere, he noted that it was necessary to distinguish between three degrees of consciousness corresponding to three types of press: a central organ for "advanced" workers; a popular newspaper for "average" workers, which "must connect socialism and the political struggle with every local and narrow question"; and pamphlets, tracts and oral agitation

for the local strata of the proletariat.<sup>54</sup>

The texts written by Lenin on the press after 1917 are marked by an obsession to set up a production apparatus and consolidate the party and the state. The press essentially becomes an instrument for agitation and propaganda in the service of economic education for better work organisation and greater productivity. The collective appropriation of the means of information by the working class is still on the agenda in his reflections, as shown by numerous references to worker and peasant correspondents. In 1919, at the First Congress of the Communist International, he affirmed:

Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any workingman (or groups of workingmen, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper.<sup>55</sup>

However, in reality, access to, and direct control of information by workers was pushed back not only to the extent that resources (paper, ink, machines) were lacking, but above all, to the extent that the demands of the moment seemed to impose political forms of vertical organisation. In 1921, to safeguard party unity, it was decided to temporarily restrict the right to tendencies and fractions were forbidden; for Lenin, this never meant prohibition of the right to criticise and the rights of minorities. The proof of this is that during the meeting which approved this resolution on party unity, Lenin openly backed the election to the new central committee of two eminent members of one of the fractions against which the resolution was directed, notably Alexandra Kollontai. With Lenin dead and Trotsky expelled, this resolution opened the way to the dominant fraction's entry into the Politburo, then to Stalin. The hesitations and rectifications in the texts written by Lenin in the last two years of the life — for example, on the role of trade unions — confirm that the question of forms of mass political organisation remained open and that, because of the serious moment the Soviet Revolution was passing through, the question of the masses' self-organisation receded to the background.

The text by Trotsky on the mode of everyday life clearly situates these difficulties against which the

54. See Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social Democracy" and "What Is To Be Done" in *Lenin about the Press*, op. cit. Numerous studies and anthologies, in addition to the compilations published by the International Organisation of Journalists, Prague, and Progress, Moscow, on the Leninist conception of the press exist. Among the most notable, see Madeleine Worontzoff, *Lénine Reporter*, Paris, Editions de la Taupe Rouge, 1975; Mario Caciagli, ed., *V. I. Lenin, L'Informazione di classe*, Florence, Guaraldi, 1972. Progress have also published a selection of texts by Lenin entitled *On Culture and On Cultural Revolution*.

55. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Lenin about the Press*, op. cit.

56. Quoted by Pierre Broué, *Le parti bolchevique*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1963.

57. Nicholas Bukharin, "Discours sur la révolution culturelle", *Bulletin communiste*, 2, 1924.

young revolution struggled. This text comes from a series of articles published in *Pravda* towards the end of 1923, which were afterwards published as a book entitled *Voprosy Byta* ("Questions on the way of life", whereas the partial English edition was entitled *Problems of Everyday Life*). "Way of life" means the whole of the habits, uses, customs, beliefs and opinions belonging to an individual or social group. With the coming of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921, marking the end of the period of "war communism", a period of heroic enthusiasm, certain illusions were buried. It was necessary to confront the after-effects of the civil war, the economic crisis, the growing international isolation of the regime, worsened by the failure of the German Revolution, the quasi-total paralysis of industry and the stagnation of agriculture at a subsistence level. On top of all this, as Khalatov remarked, was the cultural handicap of the majority of the population which the struggle for literacy tried to resolve. As Lenin himself said:

Carried by a wave of enthusiasm . . . we counted on being able, through the express orders of the proletarian State, to organise, in a country of poor peasants, the state production and distribution of products in a communist manner. Our error is now obvious . . . It is not by directly relying on the enthusiasm, but by means of the enthusiasm created by the great Revolution, by appealing to personal interest and advantage, by applying the principles of commercial output that we first need, in a country of poor peasants, to construct solid gangways leading to socialism by passing through State capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

The return to the incentives of the former society, the appearance of "Nepmans" (specialists whose assistance was indispensable to the realisation of the NEP) risked, to use Bukharin's words, "filling Soviet forms little by little with a bourgeois content, liquidating the revolution."<sup>57</sup> It was by keeping in mind the danger of this return to forms of capitalist economy that Trotsky, who approved these inevitable measures, looked at the trivial "little things" of everyday life where "it is peculiarly manifest to what an extent the individual is the product of environment rather than its creator", because "daily life, ie conditions and customs, are, more than economies, 'created behind men's backs', in the words of Marx." Broaching questions as diverse as family life, enlightened and unenlightened bureaucracy, politeness, alcohol, the church, cinema and the swearing of the Russians, Trotsky insisted on the impossibility of relegating these problems to an undetermined future. Addressing unconvinced workers on the objectives of the revolution in the text who have chosen, "Not by politics alone", he wrote:

To approach this type of worker on purely political lines is very difficult. He has heard all the speeches that were spoken and does not care for more. He is not inclined to join the party. His thoughts are centered on his work, and he is not particularly satisfied with the present conditions in the workshop, in the factory, in the trust. In order to reach a higher stage of culture, the working class — and above all its vanguard — must consciously study its life. To do this, it must know this life. . . . But new morals cannot be produced out of nothing; they must be arrived at with the aid of elements already existing, but

capable of development. It is therefore necessary to recognize what are these elements. This applies not only to the transformation of morals, but to every form of conscious human activity. It is therefore necessary first to know what already exists, and in what manner its change of form is proceeding, if we are to cooperate in the re-creation of morals.

We must first see what is really going on in the factory, among the workers, in the cooperative, the club, the school, the tavern, and the street. All this we

58. Article published in Trotsky, *Problems of Everyday Life*, New York, Monad Press, 1973.

59. For an analysis of this period, see the remarkable study of Francois Champarnaud, *Révolution et contre-révolution culturelles en URSS (De Lénine à Jdanov)*, Paris, Anthropos, 1975. The works of the filmmakers Lev Kulechov, S. M. Eisentein, Dziga Vertov and Yuri Tintanov should also be consulted. For a bibliography touching on this theme, see André Pâquet, ed., *An International Left Bibliography On the Film*, New York, International General, forthcoming 1983.

### 294 DAYS ON WHEELS: ALEXANDER MEDVEDKIN

In the 1920s and early 1930s, numerous agitprop trains travelled through the Soviet Union; their cargo was the revolutionary message, sometimes in the form of films. In this experiment, the work of Alexander Ivanovitch Medvedkin stands out. From his contact with the people, he created another cinema which provoked people to intervene. Here is how he describes one of his interventions:

"It was a voyage I have fond memories of; it was in Ukraine at harvest time. The times were difficult, very complicated. Our peasants were barely beginning to adopt a form of collective work, the kolkhoz.

The kolkozes were still very young. The peasants were not used to collective forms of work and production, and it was not unusual to see a lot of latecomers working badly who did not bring in their harvest in time. Thus we began to film the best, most advanced and interesting ways of working which could serve as an example to others. We came with these films to the laggards and filmed them as well. Then we screened the good and bad methods.

After the projection, we said: "Now then, comrades, what are you doing? Can you treat your daily bread, your own work time in this way? You won't get anything done like that...."

Then a debate started in which the peasants themselves took the floor with a lot of warmth and passion. They found reasons for their backwardness themselves, and immediately set about organising a work plan which would enable them to catch up with the most advanced kolkozes of their region.

It was the difficult time of the first five-year plan; the first steps towards the construction of socialism in the country. It was normal to bang one's head against the wall over great difficulties, primarily in domains like wheat, steel and coal. For this reason, once the harvest was finished, we left for the steelworks in the South.

We chose the most backward Martin furnace, where production has fallen to 50-60% of capacity. We looked for the causes of this backwardness, why it worked so badly — there were many, complex, reasons. It was not always so easy to get to the heart

have to understand; that is, we must recognize the remnants of the past and the needs of the future. We must call upon our authors and journalists to work in this direction.<sup>58</sup>

The text by Trotsky on proletarian culture illustrates the great freedom of debate on the artistic and cultural question marking the 1920s, which also is seen in the contributions by Tretiakov and Lissitsky.<sup>59</sup> This overture was reflected in the Party resolution on literature in June 1925:

The Party must show itself for the free competition of the various groups and currents in this domain. Any other solution to the problem would be a bureaucratic pseudo-solution. A monopoly legalised by decree or with the agreement of the party or any group or literary organisation is equally inadmissible in the domain of literary-editorial work. Supporting, materially and morally, proletarian and proletarian-peasant literature, helping "fellow travellers" and others, the party cannot give a monopoly to any one group, not even that which is

of the problem, but it was useful work. Once we spotted what was going wrong, we filmed it. Our criticism was direct. We made no effort to smooth off the rough edges. We spared no-one. We directly attacked all the problems in the factory.

This method of direct critical confrontation and intervention was very fruitful. It gave rise to passionate discussions. Discussion was long and furious, opinions were confronted, those paralysing the work process were discovered, and the reasons — often derisory — preventing the production of steel on schedule were pointed out, and once again, a program was established to straighten out the situation....

Then — this was at the beginning of our work — we understood something extremely important. We understood that the cinema could be not only a means of distraction, or a way of creating artistic emotions, but also a strong, powerful weapon, capable of reconstructing factories, and not only factories, but the world itself. Such a cinema in the hands of the people is a terrible weapon. Obviously, this gave us new strength and through this experience we knew what we were capable of.

There, we also touched the reality that the authors of a film are not only the director and cameraman, but also the heroes of the images. Being with the people, helping them to awaken their consciousness of their strengths and weaknesses, raising all possible questions with them, became the essential task of the cinema-train which thus became a truly useful reference point for our people.

Very often, we used satire in our work. We found a funny side to disorganisation and even incompetence and drunkenness. In the long run, laughter even became one of the principal weapons of our train....that's all."

(Reference: See the issue devoted to Medvedkin by *l'Avante-Scène* (Paris), 120, December 1971. Medvedkin's travel journal has been translated into Spanish: A. Medvedkin, *El Cine como propaganda política: 294 días sobre ruedas*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 1973.)

the most proletarian in its ideological content; this would mean, above all else, the ruin of proletarian literature.<sup>60</sup>

Already before the Revolution, Lenin had shown the same flexibility in respect to literary creation (see Section F). On the 23 April 1932, the Party Central Committee decided to restructure literary and artistic organisations, putting an end to the variety of tendencies and organisations, and proposed the creation of a single association, the Soviet Writers' Union; state intervention had triumphed. In August 1934, the First Congress of Soviet Writers, under the impetus of Jdanov, established socialist realism as an official method of creation in its statutes. This was far from the 1925 resolution which stated that,

In the same way that one cannot resolve problems of the form of the family with resolutions, one cannot resolve also the style corresponding to the epoch with resolutions... All efforts to link the party on this point, with any phase in the cultural development of the country must be rejected.

But what is happening today in the domain of communications systems in these countries which first attempted to construct socialism? This is a question which can be formulated in many ways with many different replies. Firstly it can be posed as a trap; as in the insidious question which is invariably thrown out, more or less aggressively, at the end of a so-called pluralist debate or course, to someone who has just tried to dismantle the repressive logic of the communication systems of capitalism and imperialism. Visibly seeking to embarrass the speaker, to trip him or her up, the question seeks to reduce the impact of the critical analysis of the capitalist system, or even to make it worse than useless, pernicious. It is generally put forward by people disinterested in the response because they are convinced of having already found it and drawn the practical conclusions: no other system than the current liberal system is realistically thinkable or morally desirable. In the absence of an alternative, they prefer the famous jest of Churchill: "Democracy is the worst system of government, except for all the others". A context nourished by all the investments of the Cold War.

However, the question can also be posed openly, reflecting the concern of those who suspect that really existing socialism is far from corresponding to the idea they have of socialist democracy, but who, nevertheless, continue to fight for it.

Finally, the question can be totally avoided, because one does not feel the need to challenge what is happening in these realities. If it is posed, it is only to reply tautologically: as the socialist State and popular democracy are the expression of popular

60. Reproduced in Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez, ed., *Estética y marxismo* (two volumes), Mexico City, Era, 1970. This large anthology is undoubtedly one of the most complete and pluralist ever published. It contains numerous texts unobtainable elsewhere and an exhaustive bibliography. In English, see the work of Lee Baxandall, especially *Marxism and Aesthetics: A Selective Annotated Bibliography*, New Jersey, Humanities Press; New York, AIMS, 1968.

61. Partially reprinted in *Le Monde* (Paris), 13-14 May 1979.

power, the communication systems of this State and this democracy are also the faithful expression of popular power. The debate, or rather the absence of debate, is thus torn between three poles. On the one hand, there are those who think nowadays or have always thought that all attempts at socialism lead *a priori* to goulag, that the very principle of the goulag can be found in *Capital* and that it is better to accommodate oneself to the benefits of liberal society, "really existing democracy". Rather than wanting to revolutionise the world and life, one should let it evolve. On the other hand, there are those who now refuse to subscribe to the slogan that all criticism helps to better arm the enemy. Finally, there are those for whom everything has never been less than a certitude, even if they admit that there could have been unfortunate mistakes. However, we could add a fourth category: those – and they are more numerous than one might think, even if they do not intervene in the debate – who let others ask the questions, for tactical reasons or to avoid endangering their alliances.

Between the sardonic, even triumphant scepticism, which proclaims that marxism and socialism are archaeological, and the dogmatic and anti-intellectualist irreducibility which is always prompt to label criticism as deviationist (trotskyist, maoist, guevarist etc), between these two sectarianisms, it is difficult to open up a path. Nevertheless, it seems to us that a minimum amount of intellectual, moral and political honesty forces one to search for the means of a lucid analysis to weed out from the unsaid and the innuendos of the debates, the possibilities for a theory of communication and culture in the spirit of historical materialism.

We would have liked to finish the series of texts on the process of socialist construction by a study bringing out some of the contradictions affecting the communications systems of the socialist societies in Europe. These problems, lacking a structural vision, can be suspected at least from official declarations, as in the resolutions of the plenary session of the central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of November 1979.<sup>61</sup> At this session, Leonid Brezhnev severely criticised the defects of ideological work, notably affirming that "often enough, newspapers, radio and television lack convincing arguments", and are, "overladen with generalities which contribute nothing to the heart or mind". He then announced the creation, within the political bureau of the Party of a special commission responsible for examining a series of measures proposed to improve ideological work. A little later, the Central Committee published a decree criticising in relatively severe terms, "formalism, verbiage, clichés, dull style, repetition of general truths". It also stated that the means of communication do not take enough account of the higher standard of living and the cultural level of the population. As Brezhnev said:

The Soviet man of today is better educated and more active than ever. Justifiably, he demands a lot from the means of information. Among the more specific reproaches, one can read: the acceleration of technical progress is not sufficiently popularised, nor is the

application of scientific realities to the economy, the increase in work productivity or the saving of resources. The experiments of the avant-garde are badly explained. There is a fear of discussing the important issues of public life and one tends to "trample on problems", "ignore defects and difficulties" and not struggle enough against, "the abnormal survivors foreign to socialism: greed, misappropriation of public funds, bad management, delapidation, alcoholism, hooliganism, bureaucratism, breaches of work discipline and public order.

The problem posed by the listening to foreign Russian-language radio broadcasts to which Soviet citizens flocked was brought up in the same context.

Despite the large bibliography existing on research on communication carried out in these countries, we have not come across any documents which differ from official ones which often have a critical assessment of propaganda work and exhort officials to remedy the defects. We have not come across work which is sufficiently rigorous to enable us to open up a debate at a more theoretical level and help us think of the construction of socialism in terms of a class analysis, ie in terms of conflicts and contradictions. Nevertheless, there is a long list of people who have contributed in the past and who contribute today in these countries to make us understand the difficulties of finding common ground between empirical science and their attempt to proceed from materialism.<sup>62</sup> There is also a long list of people who participate directly in the creation of media who refuse the logic of advertising and choose the path of cultural distinction. There is an even longer list of those who accompany the demystification of the means of communication of imperialist bourgeoisies, of those engaged in international assemblies to obtain a new international information

62. See, for example, among others, the work of Lothar Bisky, Klaus Vieweg, and Willy Walter in the German Democratic Republic, Pavel Campeanu in Romania, W. Pisarek in Poland and G. Arbatov in the USSR.

63. On these contributions, see the publications and activities of the International Organisation of Journalists, Prague, especially its revue, *The Democratic Journalist*.

64. On the state of research in the USSR, refer to N. S. Mansurov, member of the Institute of Sociological Research of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, "L'étude des mass media et des centres culturels en Union Soviétique", *Communication et Information* (Université Laval, Québec), II, 3, Autumn 1978. The author defines mass communications and cultural centres on the basis of eleven functions (informational, educative, ideological, integrative, training, mobilising, ambiance, hedonistic, arranging leisure time, cultural). See also *Public Opinion and Mass Communication (Working Conference, Budapest 1971)*, Budapest, Hungarian Radio and Television Mass Communication Research Centre, 1972.

65. Let us quote the following passage:

The ideological work of the party is a specific historically-formed system which serves to direct mental processes under socialism. The fundamental social function of this system is the formation of a conception of a marxist-leninist world among the working masses. Through its genesis, structure and laws of development, ideological work is a reflection of the particularities of its social object. The ideological work of the party is the image of the mental life of society, complex and multi-faceted. For the study of objects of such complexity, we use a *systems theory point of view*. It presents

order, and of those who, near and far, through their films, articles, and columns, support the liberation movements in peripheral countries.<sup>63</sup> All this, even when we take into account the important differences in the different situations which make up this ensemble called the "socialist bloc".

It seems, nevertheless, that the major part of the research is imprisoned within a type of functionalism whose allotted role is to detect disruptive elements of the system to adjust it so it adapts without ever questioning its organic framework. Undoubtedly, this functionalist tendency marks numerous audience studies carried out in the Soviet Union and other countries which are comparable to the polls and rating surveys of capitalist countries, except that, in our opinion, they are considerably behind from a technical point of view.<sup>64</sup> This functionalist tendency can also be seen in certain propaganda specialists who have scarcely renounced Pavlovian principles and who, hiding behind the intention to put persuasion techniques at the service of revolutionary ideology, resort to methods which would please the fathers of behaviourism and the American science of behaviour programming. One can imagine our surprise on discovering, by chance, during the reading of a study of agitation and propaganda written by a Bulgarian author, that a positive use of systems theory was possible.<sup>65</sup> Here we see the same tendency that we saw in respect to the handling of technology, namely an instrumentalist conception which evacuated the ideological signification of the form, and artificially dissociates form and content. Here we arrive at a rather curious situation. Celebrated in the Eastern European countries by certain propaganda and agitation specialists as a

many perspectives. One knows that this way of envisaging problems was born with the technico-scientific revolution, at the same time as information theory, direction theory, probability theory, etc. Generally, today it is impossible to talk about the leadership of complex systems without applying systems theory. In this sense, with the term, complex system, we understand a whole organised in a determined way from mutually inter-related elements which form an integral unity". (Vasil Tasev, "El trabajo ideológico del partido como sistema" (translated from Russian) in *Materiales sobre propaganda* (Departamento de orientación revolucionaria del comité central del Partido Comunista Cubano), VII, 21, March, 1979.)

The father of cybernetics himself, Norbert Wiener, was worried, in his time, by these extrapolations that he considered mechanist. In his basic work *Cybernetics*, he wrote:

The hopes that some of my friends have in the efficiency of the new forms of thought that this book might propose are enormous and I think are unwarranted. They are correct in affirming that our control over our material environment goes much further than our control, and our understanding, of our social environment. As such, they consider that the principal tasks in the immediate future is to extend the methods of the natural sciences to the fields of anthropology, sociology, economy, in the hope of obtaining an analogous success in the social domains. In believing this necessary, they believe it is possible. I think in doing so they show an excessive optimism, and reveal an incorrect understanding of all scientific successes.

scientific instrument for the analyse of party practice, this systems theory is denounced in the West by progressive circles. These latter criticise the systems approach as an ideology legitimating technocratic power, as the product of scientific objectivism which leads to a reified concept of social practice.

The systems approach, which tried to raise the notion of "relation" to the rank of concept by linking it to the scientific theory of information, pretends to be the instrument to approach overall social practice. Society is defined as an organised totality of interrelations between its elements (individuals, groups, classes) whose laws of production and reproduction are analogue, if not identical, to those governing the natural sciences (physics or biology).

It is not astonishing, that after 35 or 60 years of revolution, the themes of agitation and propaganda in the texts, research and references emanating from party central committees are still given an inordinate importance? This leaves serious doubts on the possibility that an everyday normality, interiorised in the behaviour, ways of thinking and way of feeling in a mature socialist way of life, can be reproduced metabolically, reducing propaganda's sphere of action to a minimum. Is not the massive presence of propaganda inversely proportional to the forms of self-expression of groups and individuals? The insistence on categorising the means of mass communication in capitalist societies as "means of bourgeois propaganda" denotes a profound misunderstanding which ignores marxist studies on the functioning of ideologies, and the way in which the communication apparatuses operate in class confrontations within liberal democracies. The initial confusion between the nature of propaganda and the nature of ideology falsifies the approach as much to these realities as elsewhere. One is tempted to agree with James Halloran's remark that "the most important challenges to Western social sciences are those developed in the West.... As far I am aware, a parallel state of affairs does not exist in the East." He quotes a researcher from a European socialist society which tends to prove that in these realities, "on the whole, assertion tends to prevail over evidence and demonstration". The socialist researcher argued as follows:

In both socialist and capitalist societies the mass media have to fulfill diametrically opposed missions (deformation of the masses of the people is vital to imperialism: but formation of all human capabilities is a precondition

66. James Halloran, *The Context of Mass Communication Research*, Paris, UNESCO (International Commission For the Study of Communication Problems, No. 78), 1980.

67. All of the strike information bulletins realised at the "Lenin" ship-building yard in Gdansk have been translated into French and published in a dossier on Poland in *L'Alternative* (Maspero, Paris), 7, November-December 1980. This dossier also includes a series of interventions by Polish journalists. The title of the bulletin, *Solidarnosc* (Solidarity), became the name of the independent union which arose from the strike. Below are extracts from the agreement concerning the demands for freedom of speech (demand number three) signed on 30 August 1980 by Lech Walesa on behalf of the MKS (inter-enterprise strike committee) and Mr Jagielski for the government commission:

Concerning point 3 which reads: "To respect the freedom of speech, printing and publication guaranteed

for socialism). This is illustrated especially by the objectives and methods of portraying man in the two social orders, as well as by references to advertising and influences on people's leisure time behaviour. It is demonstrated that the collaboration of the masses with their media is a permanent principle under socialism while under imperialism the inclusion of the audience merely serves, in the first place, to obtain 'feedback' information on the affectiveness of the media and, in the second place, to better carry out the manipulation intended. Criticism is permitted only if it does not endanger the system.<sup>66</sup>

Even if one agrees with some elements of this description, one cannot help thinking of the demands expressed by the union movement *Solidarity* in Poland in August 1980 which, fighting against the power of bureaucratic centralism, listed among their first demands, "the right to have its own daily and broadcast time on radio and television".<sup>67</sup> The military coup in Warsaw in December 1981 showed that the party-state cannot really admit any transgression of the system of bureaucratic centralism.

For want of finding critical research on communication, one is forced to look elsewhere for analyses which nourish the debate. Several authors, remaining faithful to the marxist approach and coming from these countries, particularly Poland, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, have already marked out a critical path. They raise sacrilegious, and yet elementary questions. The societies of "really existing socialism" remain class societies. The domination of the productive classes remains necessary for the production of surplus work, the State being the guarantee and central instrument of this domination. Mechanisms of redistribution have the same role in these societies as private ownership of the means of production in capitalist societies. All those with an interest in increasing the power of redistribution, could constitute a new dominant class, in the process of Formation, which is larger than the political élite, the bureaucracy or the techno-bureaucracy, which potentially integrates the whole of the intelligentsia. As the Hungarian sociologist Ivan Szelenyi, author with Gyorgy Konrad of a study of the historic specificity of the social position of the intelligentsia in the Eastern European countries, said: "The socialist societies"

and the rise of a new dominant class are not the

by the Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Poland and therefore, consequently, stop the repression of independent publications and open up the mass media to representatives of all persuasions", it has been agreed that:

(1) The government will introduce into the Diet — within three months — a legislative proposal on the control of the press, publications and theatrical shows which .... will be based on the following principles....

(3) Radio and television activity, as well as the press and publishing houses, must serve as a means of expression for diverse ideas, points of view and opinions. It should be subject to social control.

(4) The press, as well as citizens and their organisations, must have access to public documents, especially administrative proceedings and socio-economic plans etc, which are published by the government...

product of the marxist ideal; on the contrary, it all happened as if intellectuals had used this ideal for their own benefit to take over class power. It is not by chance if a new social organisation has appeared in societies where an intelligentsia existed (the Russian origin of this term is in itself significant), where intellectuals had not been transformed, as in Anglo-Saxon countries, into *professionals* relegated to the role of expert, and where the model of the intellectual as social critic dominated. The distinction between the intelligentsia as a class and the political elite enables us to understand, both the struggles which opposed, notably during the Stalinian period, the class in the wider sense and the restricted elite which claimed the monopolisation of political power, i.e. the power to act in the name of their class; and the major economic antagonism, the basis of the opposition between classes, which was not between the party "bureaucrats" and the "liberal intellectual" or "dissidents", but between the intelligentsia and the working class. If class consciousness is at a very low level in contemporary Eastern Europe and if the workers are not only dispossessed of the product of their work but of their class identity, it is undoubtedly because the intelligentsia as the dominant class tend to lose its capacity to furnish organic intellectuals of the dominated class, and instead produces ideologists who further their fundamental class interests, the most important of which is the ideology of the absence of classes.

He adds that in contemporary socialist Europe,

Social consciousness is less developed than in a bourgeois society at the very first stage of its development. At the level of political analysis, this can be shown by the vulnerability of State socialist societies [terms used by Szelenyi for the existing political regimes in East Europe - A.M.] when they are confronted with significant changes: 1956 was totally unexpected in Hungary; nobody could have predicted the rise and rapid fall of the "Prague spring", or more recently, the opposition movement of the working class in Poland [the text dates from February 1976 - A.M.]. Eastern European societies know less about themselves, despite well-developed sociological and public opinion research, than bourgeois societies did at the time when even the terms sociology and public opinion did not exist. I would like to show that the non-formulation of social consciousness is one of the principal social and political problems faced by East-European societies. It is the cause of political and economic instability. It is partially responsible for the repressive political infrastructure, as the dominant class overestimates the forces threatening its monopoly of power, and it appears necessary for it to eliminate, through administrative measures, critiques which would be peacefully recuperated in the bourgeois political system of mutual "repressive tolerance".<sup>68</sup>

68. Ivan Szelenyi, "La position de l'intelligentsia dans la structure de classe des sociétés socialistes d'Etat", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (Paris), 22, June 1978. See also George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals On the Road To Class Power: A Sociological Study of the Role of the Intelligentsia In Socialism*, Brighton, Harvester 1979. In the many works by the Hungarian, Agnes Heller, one finds rich material for reflection on "real socialism" and beyond the conjuncture, on socialism itself. Her most important works: *Sociologie de la vie quotidienne*, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value" in *Kinesis*, V, 1, 1972, and, *The Theory of Need in Marx*, 1976. These are indispensable reading for the constitution of a marxist sociology of culture (many of her articles can be found in the journal *Telos*).

69. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, London, New Left Books, 1978.

The German Democratic Republic economist, Rudolf Bahro, in his work *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* which earned him several years of imprisonment and expulsion from the Party of which he had been a member since 1956, helps to clarify other reproductive mechanisms of this new dominant class, to use Szelenyi's expression. First of all, the party:

The party apparatus, through its very position and current role, is at the heart of the power apparatus, the heart of the state-apparatus. The power of the state comes from there and returns there through all its emanations in the various functions of authority.

This quasi-theological definition of the leading party as, "the only competent representative of the totality of society's consciousness" leads to the annihilation of any organisation escaping its control. "The apparatus is contempt personified against the whole of the intelligence which society releases in all its groups or strata", and Bahro calls for the death of this type of relation between people and party in favour of self-managed communist leagues:

The party's hierarchic pyramid, a veritable church with pontiffs, and the priestly spirit which reigns there, must be totally liquidated. Communists must liberate themselves from all political influence coming from an apparatus and establish their collective sovereignty over it . . . The present party organisation is a structure which actively and massively produces false consciousness. At the top, this false consciousness pours out decisions and decrees which, as a whole, cannot in any way whatsoever represent a just interpretation of the needs, necessities and possibilities of society.<sup>69</sup>

There are scarcely any specific texts on the functioning of communication systems in these realities of the "centralised monopolisation of all power of decision", among these East European authors. At the very most, they speak of it as one of the mechanisms subjected to the rationality which marks the role of the party, the state and intellectuals. Nevertheless it appears that if the system of expansion, but also surveillance, of capitalist societies, particularly the United States, is based on the saturation of information, the same system in the really-existing socialist countries is based on its rarefaction.

The one and only theory capable of penetrating the jungle of bureaucratic centralism and its holy of holies, the political bureau, is revolutionary marxism which has been usurped by the party bureaucracy as a result of the absolute discretionary power of the apparatus and the means of mass communication and the educational system with such efficiency that it is now exposed to general contempt from the masses . . . In the vacuum thus created, the mass ideological production from the West sweeps in everywhere where these techniques of communication can reach. The contradictions of our system have developed to such a point that the apparatus of bourgeois propaganda [Bahro is here referring to Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America - A.M.] plays in part, the role of a very useful corrective. Where its influence is not felt, as currently in the distant regions of the Soviet Union, the political and intellectual situation of workers faced with the bureaucratic regime is much more uncomfortable than here, in the peripheral countries of the bloc. How, therefore, are communists from Eastern Europe informed of the real situation of progressive currents throughout the world? Where does their information on the socialist experiments in

Yugoslavia and China come from? How do they know the programme of action in 1968 of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party? Who quotes, even if tendentiously, *Rinascita* of the Italian Communists? One could extend the list indefinitely.<sup>70</sup>

Let us note however, to nuance Bahro's affirmations, that this situation of information retention varies greatly from one country to another, and that information, although selected, was greater in Poland before the military *coup d'Etat* than other Eastern countries. Even before the demands of Solidarity, there were press clubs where everyone could freely consult the newspapers of different countries. Furthermore, censorship was less severe than elsewhere, it let several critics of the regime express themselves, as in the work of the film director Wajda, particularly his *Man of Marble*.

Rudolf Bahro also questions the impact the development of new communication technologies is likely to have on these closed systems:

When the technique which enabled satellites finishes by totally suppressing the anachronistic isolation of the Soviet masses in relation to the "image of the present world", the leaders within the Moscow apparatus will find themselves enthroned on a volcano of unsatisfied material needs. This, and nothing else, is the origin of the panic which stands out, for example, in the convention project developed by Gromyko on "the principles of the use of the artificial earth satellite in direct television broadcasts", a document which is not without similarity to the style of Nicholas I. In the Soviet Union, it is no longer only a question at present of warding off "ideological diversion" in the traditional sense of the word. The propaganda machine is going to find itself totally powerless faced with the mere vision of the "consumer society".

Let us note however that the delegates of the United Nations, who during the 27th session of the Assembly in November 1972, approved by 102 votes to 1 (that of the U.S.) the writing of these principles regulating satellite transmissions, would have appreciated, in a less unilateral way, the Soviet proposition. This was met with approval by numerous Third World countries, which are opposed to the increased invasion of programs coming from the dominant countries made possible by the new technology of direct broadcast satellites.

This is clearly a problem. In the name of this "natural solidarity" between the Eastern bloc countries and the demands of Third World countries, many groups and individuals living in these societies are inclined to think that the debates on really existing socialism do not concern them. Some even feel that these debates are a luxury that only intellectuals in advanced capitalist countries can afford.

#### FOR A CRITIQUE OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MEDIA

70. Bahro, *op. cit.*, (the chapter on "Party and Bureaucracy").

71. Peter Dahlgren, "Marxian analysis", *Journal of Communication* (Philadelphia, Pa.), Vol. 30:3, Summer 1980.

72. For an important article on this question see Nicholas Garnham, "Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass Communication", *Media, Culture and Society* (London), I, 1979.

The second volume of the anthology has, of course, a particular subject, popular communication practices. But it is also an invitation to reread the texts of the first volume in a different light. As such, it represents a proposal for another understanding, another way of envisaging the study of the formation process of the apparatuses of power.

One should question the clear-cut, separation, even dichotomy, which seemingly exists between the themes of the first and second volumes. Capitalism, Imperialism/Liberation, Socialism, words which ring out loud and clear, apparently without ambiguity! Does not such a rigid demarcation line give rise to a manichean vision of communication systems, especially today where the logic of social confrontation makes finesse indispensable and brutality harmful, and where the return to Cold War forms demands twice as much intelligence as in times of peace? Does not this rigorous dividing line run the risk, at one moment or another, of completely distorting an approach to the complex relations characterising the communication process?

Let us hasten to add that this demarcation is not so much our doing as the stamp of the reality of research as it has developed for the most part up until now. For even if several studies included in the first volume dealt with the passage from the problematic of ruling power to that of the counter-attack, it is nonetheless certain that generally these two modes of understanding communication systems are only rarely combined in the same text, in the same investigation, or even in the trajectory of the same researcher; the exceptions confirming the rule. The two approaches too often develop in parallel. Sometimes they can't even co-exist with one another. Nevertheless this must not make us forget that analyses of the hegemonic apparatuses have at least an implicit vision of another reality, real or desired, a latent vision sometimes, to be honest, very difficult to extricate.

Even if we knew that the second volume was going to deal with the cultural resistance to the enormous machines described in the first, one can understand perfectly the reaction of one critic who, while praising the merits of the first volume, regretted this dichotomy:

It is somewhat unfortunate that the portrayal of corporate dominance over mass communication which emerges tends to undercut any thoughts of social change or popular resistance. It would have been useful to see some pieces which deal with how the media may in fact "mediate" some of the contradictions of the capitalist order. As it is, one gets little sense of historical possibilities.<sup>71</sup>

So as not to fall into voluntarism, let us take the occasion to reflect on the genealogy of critical research, without pretending to circumscribe the question in a few paragraphs. In this context, each critical researcher could perhaps question their own trajectory and that of their compatriots.

A brief overview enables us to extricate two main currents of interest within critical research. The first current consists of approaches that can be grouped under the generic expression political economy of the media.<sup>72</sup> Reflecting the particular realities of the various countries or regions in which

they are inscribed, this research undoubtedly contributes much to the construction of a materialist theory of communication. It marks a rupture as much with the theoreticist approach inspired by the work of Louis Althusser who, after having stimulated critical reflection and revived the study of ideologies, finally contributed to their detachment from the concrete conditions of group and class confrontation, as with approaches of the culturalist type, also silent on concrete struggles, which for a long time remained unrivalled. This research has also arisen as a violent reaction to the formalist and closed discourse of structuralist semiology prompt to declare itself, "the science of sciences". By failing to leave its corpus, it refused to consider the *historicity and sociality* of discourse, to tackle the problem of the conditions of its production and use. Methods of analysis of the production of discourse, which are an essential part of the constitution of a materialist theory of culture and communication, will only be able to overcome their inability to account for a non-fragmented real if they articulate their approach with non-linguistic disciplines which combines an analysis of discourse with the study of institutions and an analysis of practices. These three orientations have had their legitimacy seriously threatened despite the serious differences between various countries. The crisis, however, has not brought about havoc in these disciplines and Brazil, for example, has seen a recent renewal of interest in semiology at the very time that it is in crisis in France. In Great Britain, a stone's throw from Paris, the former promoting centre of semiological studies, one still has the impression that it is flourishing and the structuralism as such as in good shape.

Under the impetus of a political economy of the media, the laws of a theory are taking shape to enable us to begin to explain the material functioning of what some call "culture industries" and others, "apparatuses". However, few researchers in this current have succeeded in integrating into their heuristic formulation the concern for exposing the economic and political system of the power of the media and to detect the ways in which the logic of development of these new productive forces can be hampered. However, it is only to the extent that this problematic of resistance emerges from the dark that further advances will be made in studies on the hegemonic apparatus. It is only this which will enable one to avoid being reduced to studying, better than the bourgeoisie, the practices of the bourgeoisie. The same type of reflection can be applied to the studies on the imperialist process and the penetration by transnational corporations in the culture and communication field, which will only be able to push forward their frontiers when they venture onto the unsettled terrain of national culture, not only the national popular culture, but also "nationalist" culture incarnated by certain fractions of the local bourgeoisies. The debates on the New International Information Order, whose actors have been the non-aligned countries, have recently illustrated this necessity. Little by little, these countries have the strong conviction that if they want to avoid being recuperated by the central countries and evade policies too general to be applied, they will have to

turn their attention to the concrete conditions of a democratic opening in their own communication system, which obviously fundamentally repels some people. Returning from the UNESCO General Assembly in Belgrade, October 1980, the Mozambican Minister of Information, Jose-Luis Cabaço, expressed, in a striking phrase, the meaning that his country intended to give to this new Third World demand: "For us, the new international information order begins in the community villages" (community villages being the fundamental cell of the organised world of the peasants).

The second current concentrates its preoccupations and interests on alternative or popular communication.

The need to articulate the analysis of the hegemonic apparatuses and those of alternatives is all the more important as with those working on popular practices and who also participate in the development of a critical theory of communication, there is a certain mistrust in regard to the first current, the political economy of the media. Without always formulating it so abruptly, the second current feels that the political economy approach to the media is overly economic, or even economist, when it is not accused of reviving old determinist schemas. Researchers from the first current retort by suspecting the second approach of being politically, ideologically motivated. This schizophrenic attitude which creates such high barriers between the two approaches is amazing. Should not the very notion of political economy applied to the specific process of communication call for the reconciliation of the two sides of the coin?

This artificial scission is found in the way both types of studies are decoded and has repercussions on the unconscious grids through which the analyses are perceived. Studies which take apart the mechanisms of power provoke a reaction of terror and annihilation in the face of the advance of this cold-hearted technological monster. The logic of capital is personified, anthropomorphised, cloaked with invincibility. The distance is too great between the everyday experience that the individual has of the systems of power and this exposure of the structures of this power. These studies are deciphered from the viewpoint of a conspiracy victim. On the other hand, research on alternatives appear more gratifying, with an impression of security that increases to the extent that one progresses towards the most minute trifling details. It is a small world, warm and closed, snug and marginal, comforting because one recognises oneself within it and knows it well. This tendency is all the more strong in that in many militant groups, the notion of a popular or alternative culture is not always as problematic as it should be. "Alternative culture" thus appears as a transparent phenomenon, a deposit of products and practices from which one has only to draw. From this "religious" or populist conception of a popular culture as an independent territory, a "paradise lost refound", arise, moreover, numerous ambiguities over notions of participation, interaction and participative or interactive communication which are stripped of the social contradictions marking all practices of resistance (see above). Seen in this fashion, "participation" is defined outside



of the hard reality of the unequal distribution of the codes necessary for the appropriation of technology by a social group. It is thus necessary to analyse some of the reasons why both types of reading fail to evaluate the real relations of force, and give the impression of being reduced to either over- or under-estimating ruling power.

One of the first reasons is undoubtedly the lack of a transdisciplinary approach to critical research. This deficiency has its source as much in the division of knowledge operationalised by university structures as the ossifying compartmentalisation of the interests of critical researchers. It is significant that no great marxist economist, of whatever tendency, has yet analysed the inter-relation between the explosion of new communication technologies and the new international division of labour, whereas this same inter-relation obsesses, from another point of view, obviously, conservative economists. It obsesses them to such a point that they have created not only the concept information industry but also that of information society. The transdisciplinary spirit which gave birth to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* remains to be revived, but it is not enough to transplant the schemas of the great marxist economists into the communications field to solve the problem. The first materialist studies of communication systems already show the insufficiency of the models developed by these economists. On many points, they question the legitimacy of approaches overly marked by a mechanical conception, by showing that these analyses have not taken enough account of so-called superstructural factors.<sup>73</sup>

The same type of observation could be made in connection with the contribution of many other sectors of the social sciences. It is one thing to take into account the important contribution of each of these theories, quite another to cling to them like a port in a storm. Unfortunately, this is too often the case with much research which, by exhausting itself by defending the theoretical heritage of its master thinker, forgets to examine the movement of social forces in reality, and is transformed into an ivory

73. See for example the critique of Baran and Sweezy in Armel Huet et al, *Capitalisme et industries culturelles*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1978. Very few marxist economists have analysed communication systems in depth and one finds the same situation in political science. Apart from Ralph Milliband and Nicos Poulantzas (at the end of his life), very few political scientists or researchers on the question of the state have devoted part of their research to the means of communication. (Ralph Milliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969; Nicos Poulantzas, "Le déplacement des procédures de légitimation", in the collective work *Le Nouvel Ordre Intérieur*, Université de Paris VIII-Vincennes, ed., Paris, Alain Moreau, 1980. For the United States, see Alan Wolfe, *The Limits of Legitimacy*, New York, Free Press, 1977, and his "The Capitalistic Distemper: Democracy, Socialism and the Contradictions of Advanced Capitalism", *LARU Studies*, (Toronto), III, 1, January-April 1979.

74. As the appearance of the journal *Ikon* (Milan) illustrates. Also the various propositions of political parties and movements: Guiseppe Vacca, ed., *Comunicazioni di massa e democrazia*, Rome, Riuniti, 1980, or Pio Baldelli, *Informazione e Contro-informazione*, Milan, Mazzotta, 1972.

tower. We do not accept the idea that a critical theory of communication is like a mosaic where diverse, pre-existing critical theories (economic, political, cultural etc) are juxtaposed, and then applied to specific domains of "communication" like the economy, the state, ideology and culture. It cannot be said too often that as well as being rigidly compartmentalised, too much of our knowledge on the functioning of these various social instances have been developed by focusing on the dismantling of the apparatuses of dominant power and not nearly enough from the resistance of groups subjected to it. Because it is situated at the convergence of multiple infrastructure and superstructural networks (cultural, economic, political, journalistic, technological), it is very likely that research on communication systems, whose boundaries will become more and more difficult to establish, will pose questions to other disciplines that they had never dared to pose. However, if the science of communication is to succeed in questioning the research practices of other disciplines, it will no doubt need to cease being a minority within the hierarchy of the social sciences which is consecrated to noble disciplines and minor techniques! It will also have to break with a narrow, corporatist conception of information seen only as the raw material of journalism or mass media. This idea is still widespread in numerous progressive circles. A wider vision is necessary, which repositions information and the information industry (affecting as much cultural information like cable TV, TV, films, as well as basic information of a technical, scientific, military, commercial and financial character, stocked in data banks, without forgetting the whole of "know-how") as a new factor of production and fundamental resource. As such it is a stake in the restructuring of the political, economic, cultural and military apparatuses of the capitalist mode of production, as well as a stake in the reformulation of strategies of resistance.

A second reason for this compartmentalisation is without doubt the scission between theory and practice and the distance between the diagnosis and its political implementation. We should first note that the concrete stakes of the social struggles unfolding in the culture and communications field ought to push critical research more and more toward the question of alternatives. This evolution is particularly evident in countries like France and Italy<sup>74</sup> among others and in Latin America where it is older and where the pressure of the real makes it more and more inconceivable to separate the diagnosis from the development of strategies of change. Let us also note that despite their enormous limitations, the discussions which have accompanied the demand for a New International Information Order have projected critical communication research into political space. On this point, we are fully in agreement with the recent statement of James Halloran:

This is no doubt why in some quarters it is now suggested that Unesco research should be shifted away from such questions as "the right to communicate" to "more concrete problems". But what are these "concrete problems"? The same as, or similar to, the safe, "value free", micro-questions of the old-time positivists who served the system so well whether they realised it or not?

All this represents a definite and not very well disguised attempt to put the clock back to the days when the function of research was to serve the system as it was, and not to question, challenge or attempt to improve it. This then is the political arena in which mass communication research operates. It is not that research has suddenly become politicised; it is more a question of the emergence of a balance, as *latently politicised* research is challenged by the more *overtly politicised* development.<sup>75</sup>

This is the case, even if the establishment of the New International Information Order (NIIO), the right to information and communication as a fundamental question, is accompanied by a lot of confusion, not to say opportunism as the NIIO (so much debated that it has its own acronym) often offers an apparently overall and political problematic to those without any. It is just a combat which eclipses more important ones, because if the discussion on the NIIO has incorporated the very large sectors into the critique of communication systems, in certain regions, it is a regression in relation to the gains won from debates arising from former struggles, as witnessed by several Latin American countries. The need for access and the participation of the people in the elaboration of messages were discussed but they forgot about the long contradictory debates which, since the first attempts at the emancipation of the popular classes have taken place in the daily experiences of participation, in clandestinity or legality, through mass organisations and other movements of associative life. It was supposed that the establishment of new technological communication networks were going to enable one to make a *tabula rasa* of the past, and it was forgotten that this long accumulation of the practices of the popular classes left important lessons which had to be taken into account if one wanted to realistically construct democratic communication networks between people and groups. One forgot the reality and rich experience of "free radios", before the term existed, like those of the Bolivian miners who resisted all the waves of repression over many years before succumbing to the latest *coup d'état* in July 1980. The inventory of forms of possible participation left aside past and present experiences, notably those engaged

75. James Halloran, *op. cit.*

76. The most serious critiques of the vagueness of certain concepts in vogue in international hemispheres come from Latin America. In respect to the NIIO, see for example Osvaldo Capriles (Venezuela), *From National Communication Policies to the New International Information Order: Some Lessons For Research*, XII Assembly and Conference (AIERI-IAMCR), 25-9 August 1980; Luis Gonzaga Motta and Ubinagara Da Silva (Brazil), *Critica a las políticas de comunicación entre el Estado, la empresa y el pueblo*, Bogota, ODEI, November 1977. In connection with the notion of "access" and "participation", Margarita Graziano (Argentina), "Para una definición de la comunicación alternativa", *ININCO*, ([journal of the] Instituto de Investigaciones de la Comunicación, Caracas), 1, 1980 (see also the other studies on alternative communication in the same issue); Eduardo Gonzalez Manet, "Es posible un nuevo orden internacional de la información?", *Boletín comisión Cubana UNESCO*, May-August 1979.

77. Very few important marxist researchers have not, at one time or another, subscribed or been tempted to subscribe to a dualist vision of power, especially when they

in the cinema sector in the defence of popular memory.

This confusion is largely maintained by muddled conceptualisations not uncommon in international forums where the search for consensus is more important than a rigorous approach. One senses the need to decide between what one can demand of an international assembly and what one is in a position to obtain. But one thing is certain: even taking into account the necessary compromises established during the confrontation of different positions, these assemblies will only be fruitful if they can express themselves on the basis of specific analytic practices which do not renounce a rigorous conceptualisation and which dare to inverse the flow of the dynamic with their inspiration coming from below and not from above.<sup>76</sup>

However, even when the conditions are favourable for a reconciliation between theory and practice, there is no miraculous formula to dissolve the compartmentalisation of critical research. For in the last instance, practice is also determined by the conception one has of the confrontation with the dominant system. The tendency to pack into a single "critical school" (the new "critical school" in relation to the Frankfurt School in relation to the functionalist school, and so on) the multiplicity of critical research currents expressed throughout the world, obscures more than it clarifies. This tendency was displayed by Everett Rogers at a Bogota meeting, when, with the best of intentions, he proposed classifying the different currents underlying all types of communication research into "schools". This obscures understanding because it hides the specific conditions of production of each expression covered by the current. Thus, it is difficult to assimilate even if their areas of observation and their objectives are similar, research on transnational power carried out, for example, in Latin America and the United States. What gives, and has always given, the dynamic to Latin American research on this theme is the concrete confrontation of social forces in this part of the world. On the other hand, research of communication multinationals in the United States is more centrifugally oriented in that it is little concerned to study the action of these multinational corporations on different social sectors in the mother-country and prefers to study its penetration in the peripheral countries. As Ragnar Nurske said, "Capital is made at home". An important step forward in critical research in the U.S. will undoubtedly be the increasingly pressing return to the analysis of the mechanisms of domination *in domo*; American historians have already largely contributed to an opening of perspectives.

A third reason, as decisive as the first two for the scission between analyses of power and networks of responses, resides in a certain conception of the functioning of power and civil society in so-called liberal democracies. One forgets to think of them as places of social contradictions and mediation. The communication/hegemony apparatus is perceived as a tool directly manipulated by the ruling class for reproductive ends without realising that it is also a site for constituting power.<sup>77</sup> The signs are many; we will only take up two of them.

The first refers to the traditional and overly unilateral way to envisage the functioning of monopoly capitalism in the field of mass cultural production. Not enough attention is paid to the dialectic established between the dominant system and the initiatives whose target is this system. The transformation of the radio system in European countries is a good example of this. The advent of alternative radios (local radios, free radios) can certainly be read as the autonomous expression of new social movements and this view is perfectly legitimate. But they should also be considered as possible sources of renewal for the official oligopoly of radio-broadcasting in crisis. And this is the political challenge. If these radios do not succeed in being a truly alternative system – and this has been the case in numerous countries – they innovate formulas which nourish the dominant system. Not enough attention also is paid to the dialectic established between, on the one hand, monopolies and small and medium producers, and on the other, between monopolies and those on the “fringe”.<sup>78</sup> Monopoly capitalism can very well accommodate itself and take advantage of marginal production, which becomes, without wanting to, an original form of sub-contracting.

If the question of the relation between the cultural industry and the rest of society (institutions, associations, groups, individuals) as a source of creativity has always occupied an important place in the functioning of the various sectors of this industry,<sup>79</sup> it goes without saying that the growing penetration of capital in the most diverse spheres of everyday life of collectivities and individuals through computerised systems could make this relation between industry and society a stake of priority importance. Canvassing social uses for the new information technologies poses, in qualitatively different political and economic terms from those known up until now, new links between the “information industry” and places of social innovation (governments, trade unions, associations, universities, research centres, local bodies). New constellations of relations between industrial and non-industrial partners are emerging, reflecting the specific relations of force in each society.

In the United States, in the computer field, whether it be large or small computers, which is one of the most highly concentrated in the U.S., a sub-industry of small programme-developing firms is being born. The Americans call this a “cottage industry of free-lance programmers”. Profiting from

have been effected by one of the currents which have encouraged a renewal of investigations into ideology; Althusserian structuralism and the Maoism of the cultural revolution. The Gramscian theory of hegemony, whose importance was only really to be felt later, in another historical context (in Latin America and in France, for example, from 1973/4), came to temper these influences to a certain extent, even if there are both *uses* and *misuses* of Gramsci as Perry Anderson points out in “The Antinomies of Gramsci” in *New Left Review* (London), 100. This evolution, particular to each national reality, indicates once more not only how the production but the use of critical theory is linked to concrete political needs (and not only, as too often believed, fashions).

the opening created by microprocessors and foreseeing the advent of the domestic computer, hundreds of small firms are drawing up programmes for busy people wanting to improve the quality of their products or their services (inventory control, accounting, learning programming). Among them, some certainly contest the orientation this development is taking, but all contribute to enlarging the range of social uses of computers and resolve in part the software problems for the basic microprocessor systems of large firms. Thus the fringe participate in the creation of *raisons de vivre* for technological innovations.<sup>80</sup>

This does not only affect the fringe, but the whole of the social organism. When IBM promotes the creation of software (Latin, Economics, Physics and Chemistry) among secondary school teachers and pupils through its “corporate citizen program” in certain countries like Belgium, pretending to give speaking rights to those who have never had them, and when it advocates decentralisation in the search for social uses for computers, it simply shows that it is no longer a question “selling machines but of tools that are useful for something” and that this use can only emerge from new modes of tapping social creativity and from new relations with the various constituents of civil society which will use them.<sup>81</sup> Future consumers or users will not necessarily obey the determinism of technological and commercial offers but could put up serious resistance that indicates that certain sectors of society can formulate social demands different from the propositions of firms. A truly democratic debate on the new communications technologies must be associated with the choices to be made by the various social partners.

This brings us to a crucial question. Where do the culture industries or information industry (which continually colonise new domains by introducing into them their norms of industrial profitability) get their new ideas and programmes? In the United States, the new mass education models, the only ones currently existing, were born in the shadow of the educational foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, philanthropic appendices of financial and industrial power) which have encouraged the American government to create a non-commercial television channel (even though there is currently more and more pressure on this channel, Channel 13 in New York, where the famous *Sesame Street* was created, to allow advertising). In France, the authorities do not have these mechanisms specific to the state-industrial structure of the United States to nourish this sector.<sup>82</sup> When

78. Armand and Michèle Mattelart, *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise (les nouveaux profils des industries culturelles)*, Paris, Alain Moreau, 1979.

79. See Patrick Flichy, *Les industries de l'imaginaire*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1980; B. Miège, “The Cultural Commodity”, *Media, Culture and Society* (London), I, 3, July 1979.

80. See the dossier published in *Business Week* (1 September 1980), “Missing Computer Software: A Bottleneck Slows New Applications and Spawns A Booming New Industry”.

81. See *Videodoc* (Brussels), September 1981.

82. For a revisited evaluation of *Sesame Street* see Michèle Mattelart, *Téléducation, culture de masse et*

the publishing house Hachette, wanting to escape the weight of Disney products which marked its youth publishing line, brought together in 1979 for the first time a team and appealed to anyone who had dealt with the problems of books for young people and children outside a commercial context, it showed that the problem of new content remains entire. The vital need to renew its programmes and personnel places these French publishing houses in a dilemma: either accept the new models created in the United States (i.e. in the case of a children's publisher, to import or manufacture under licence the *Sesame Street* production line which offers an already-tested pedagogical alternative to the Disney line) or appeal to innovators who are not necessarily integrated into the system. Minority as they may appear, the experiences of numerous small children's publishers have shown by their success (even if relative) that this market could be occupied by a different discourse. The dialectic of unequal exchange thus imposes the so-called marginal pole as an interlocutor, who are sought after for formulas for survival. The important thing for cultural workers who still hope to use the flaws and incoherencies of a system which increasingly needs to plan everything without always having the means to do so, notably in recruiting agents for its bureaucracy, is to know how to calculate at any given time the relations of force.

For want of perspectives in programming, the very development of technological means can be paralysed. The French group, Thomson-CSF is today experiencing this impasse. The prototype of the videodisc has existed in its laboratories since 1973. Now that Philips, the Japanese, and the US firm RCA have launched their own videodiscs on the mass market, Thomson has admitted its inability to compete in this market. The problems posed by programmes (authors' rights for films, notably) have not been resolved. Thomson's videodisc could well be limited to the professional market only. In the bitter words of a high-ranking executive: “Philips did not wait until 1979 to concern itself with programmes for its videodisc. For over five years now, this group has been buying films”. Without absolving Thomson, in its defence it can be emphasised that the (temporary?) “solution” found by Philips, in its alliance with the US film company, MCA, is not particularly brilliant, to say the least.<sup>83</sup>

*innovation sociale*, Paris, Université de Paris VIII, 1981.

If cultural intervention by large enterprises' foundations is not usual in France, on the other hand, another form of patronage solidly established in the United States is beginning to sprout. The subsidies or patronage given by Phillip Morris or IBM to the cinema or Cézanne exhibitions already illustrates this new relation between art, culture and industry, born under the auspices of American monopoly capitalism. This patronage is both a means of attenuating an overly obtrusive commercial image and a way of stimulating new use values for certain products. In July 1979, the French secretary of state for culture and communication, “did not hide the fact that he intended to make the existing legislation better known [on tax relief] to encourage French enterprises to follow the American example” (*Le Monde*, 25 July 1979).

The results were not long in coming. In June 1980, the first conference on enterprise patronage was held in Paris. There was a lot of talk on the “public-spiritedness of

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to know in what conditions and what contradictory environment, the market of mass culture production and the search for an alternative, inside and outside of apparatuses, is unfolding. Could the situation exist without being contradictory? Is not the project of “democratisation” via the market, which underlies this multiplication of cultural commodities and services, the fruit of a mediation of class oppositions? The whole complexity of civil society in liberal democracy is at stake and must be analysed as such. But the specificity of mass culture must also be better defined. The conception which envisages civil society merely as the site for the production of power (*a priori* given) and not as a site for the reproduction of power, favours a certain type of critical study and necessarily marginalises others. Assisted by the scalpel of sociology and semiology, much research, applying the “theory of reflection”, have taken apart the mechanisms used by the ruling power to organise the dominant images and discourses in films, television series, comic strips etc. The field has been relatively well covered and the critical bibliography on this theme is relatively abundant. On the other hand, there exist relatively few studies on “popular taste”, the fascination of the dominant images, the pleasure of looking at them, and the desire incorporated in them. A fascination which led Jean Cocteau to say:

“Sun Buffalo Bill Barnum  
You go to our heads  
Like opium”

In effect, it is difficult to limit oneself to questioning the products of mass culture as simple reflections or symptoms of reality without taking account of the question of representation, the relation between reality and representation, and various modes of producing fiction. Once again, we are dealing with a field of studies demanding a transdisciplinary approach which is increasingly a necessary condition for the development of critical media theory.

A second sign which reveals a misunderstanding of the way power and civil society function in so-called liberal democracies, is the appraisal made of the very formation of the apparatuses of hegemony. Here, two conceptions, which are explained in part by the type of communication system governing

enterprises”. Enterprise sponsorship was presented as “one of the elements of the language of communication, one of the means by which it decided to dialogue with society, and define itself in relation to society.” Almost 70 corporations participated in the financing of this conference: Aérospatiale, Club Méditerranée, Elf, Total, *L'Express*, Hachette, Havas, IBM-Europe, Kodak, L'Oréal, Schlumberger etc. These first meetings have given birth to the Association pour le développement du mécénat industriel et commercial, ADMICAL.

83. In the face of the technological innovation illustrated by the appearance of video-recorders, electronic games, the videodisc and the home computer on the mass-market, one is forced to note an emptiness, a void, a gaping chasm, a creativity vacuum, a lack of contents, forms, values and new uses. See Michèle Mattelart, “Impertinent Questions About Mass Media Today” a paper presented at the EEC Conference On the Information Society, Dublin, 18-20 November 1981.

the social realities from where they originate, are liable to confront one another. The different origins of the communication systems in North America and the European countries (reproduced also in numerous peripheral countries) come up against one another. One should note that according to the 1977 UNESCO directory, only 15% of the radio and television systems in the Latin America were governed by the public sector (compared to 85.1% for radio and 92.8% for television in Africa; 78% for radio in Asia; and 77.4% for radio and over 80% for television in Europe). As a Venezuelan researcher pointed out in 1980:

of the 30 countries in the world which have private commercial television, 2 are in North America, 2 in Europe, 9 in Asia and Oceania, 1 in Africa and 16 in Latin America, the only part of the world which counts 8 countries exclusively with private and commercial services.<sup>84</sup>

All this is known only too well. The audiovisual communication system of the United States was immediately born as a commercial system and doubtless one may well wonder why. We will limit ourselves here to quoting the reflection of an establishment American sociologist on the genealogy of the American media. Although old, this reflection is all the more interesting in that soon afterwards the McLuhan hotchpotch with its universal calling quickly rubbed out the historical character of today's systems. Daniel Bell remarked on the slowness with which the United States was constituted as a "national society". Neither the church, the party system, the educational system, the intellectual class, nor the governing elites succeeded in constituting a cohesion that the media system was able to do:

the element which has contributed to the amalgamation from the interior of our national society, since its apparition, outside of a few rare political heroes like Roosevelt, Eisenhower or Kennedy, has been popular culture. The growth of cinema, radio and television, the possibility of simultaneous printing in various cities of several weeklies to achieve a uniform national distribution on the same day, enabled, for the first time in history, the same ideas and the same leisure programmes to be presented at the same time to a national public. The society lacking clearly defined national institutions and a governing class conscious of the fact was amalgamated thanks to the means of mass communication. To the extent that it is possible to establish a date for a social revolution, we can perhaps mark the 7th of March 1955 as a milestone. That night, one North-American in two was able to see Mary Martin playing the role of Peter Pan in front of the cameras. Never before, in all history, was one individual seen and heard at the same time by so many people. It was this that Adam Smith had called the *Great Society*, but great

84. Antonio Pasquali, *Comprender la comunicación*, Caracas, Monteavilla Editores, 1980.

85. Daniel Bell, "Modernity and Mass Society: Diversity of Cultural Experiences", translated in the anthology *Industria cultural y sociedad de masas*, Caracas, Monteavilla, 1974.

86. See Dallas Smythe, "Communication: Blindspot of Western Marxism", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, I, 3; Graham Murdock, "Blindspots About Western Marxism: A Reply to Dallas Smythe", *Same journal*, II, 2; Dallas Smythe, "Rejoinder to Graham Murdock", *ibid.*

to a point that he could never have imagined.<sup>85</sup>

This obsession with creating a national society already stands out in the genesis of the first mass culture products. One of the functions of comics was to respond to the growing need to cement the melting pot of this nation of immigrants by contributing a first visual rallying point to the American Tower of Babel. One wonders if it is not because they are so indebted to their media that American establishment sociologists, Daniel Bell and Daniel Boorstin at their head, confuse popular culture and mass culture without faltering an instant.

As a counterpoint to the role assigned to the media in American society, one could cite the analyses of Raymond Williams on the radio and television institution in Great Britain which show us, in the first volume of this anthology, how the existence of a "national society", and a hegemonic "national culture", which were the product of a compact dominant class, conditioned the form of its communication system. Many of his reflections could, after taking into account their specificity, be extrapolated to numerous European countries which also chose the path of state monopoly and public service. Unlike what happened in the United States, as Bell shows us, somewhat simplistically by ignoring the nature of the US bourgeoisie and its different fractions, the communication apparatus in Europe came to be superposed onto a group of other institutions which, for a long time, had assured the organisation of a consensus. In fact, we could say that the history, specific to each of these countries, of the implantation of large-scale audiovisual communication media, is also the history of the spaces occupied by other institutional networks which were progressively supplanted by these new agents of hegemony. Copying the mode of functioning of the political apparatuses which preceded it, the communication system was to be a site where the pluralist "game" was played and social confrontations mediated. The idea of public service supposed the correlative idea that to be profitable for everyone, public monopolies would not obey criteria of commercial profitability, that it was possible to allow a non-directly productive sector exist, an activity escaping from the logic of profit, a non-capitalist space within capitalism itself. This diametrically opposed genesis creates very different approaches to the audiovisual means of communication. The criticisms of certain North American researchers regarding the approach of European researchers (even though the latter's approach is changing) for not being sufficiently concerned with the weight of commercial criteria (television as essentially a producer of saleable audiences for the advertisers) can only be understood in terms of their misunderstanding of this genealogy.<sup>86</sup> The concept of "cultural industries" which arose in Europe in the 1970s must seem very banal in the United States used to consider radio and television since its initial rapid development as wholly commercial industries and commercial enterprises. However, the birth of the notion of "culture industries" in Europe shows the transformation the idea of public monopoly is undergoing under the pressure of the advent of TV satellites and the need to

restructure the nation-state, which require another sort of television institution more linked to the private sector and commercial norms.<sup>87</sup> Each country has the problematics it merits and transplants of problematics hardly promise success. Likewise, the particular aspects of the conflict between capital and labour which is treated by the texts brought together under the heading of "The Interior of the Capitalist Communication Apparatus", particularly Michael Chanan's by pointing out and evaluating the nature of union struggles within an apparatus like the BBC and the film industry, give us an idea of the importance of considering the areas of negotiation and transaction within a communication system.<sup>88</sup> In countries where the commercial system rules as lord and master, it is important to stimulate an analysis of the procedures of discussion and calculation that give an apparatus its own conception of "pluralism" *sui generis*.<sup>89</sup> We must ask ourselves how commercial rationality processes social contradictions in the search for audiences and what are the repercussions on the relations of force in society. In short, all these elements which mean that two national systems of

87. See in this anthology the texts of G. Richeri, and A. Mattelart and J.-M. Piemme. For more information see *Télévision: enjeux sans frontières*, *op. cit.* In this research, we have tried to show how the precarious balance between the *market function* and the *social function* characterising a good number of radio-television systems of the old continent is being inflected towards a commercial logic. We also analyse the genesis of the concept "culture industries". For another analysis of the conflict and the dialectic between public service/private system see Giuseppe Richeri, "Francia e Inghilterra: 'benefici' della concorrenza", *Ikon* (Milan), 4, April 1979.

88. This implies questioning, among other things, the type of petit bourgeoisie predominant in each social formation, and whether its intellectuals are organic or traditional. For example, in France, unlike the United States and to a lesser extent Great Britain, there are very few culture industries that combine software and hardware (although with the takeover of the publisher Hachette by the satellite manufacturers, Matra at the end of 1980, the situation is changing very quickly). The public service status of television in France and the particular conditions of French capitalism is undoubtedly insufficient to explain the lack of success of the permanent mergers between different sectors of the culture industries or between manufacturers of material and programmes. The nature of the relation between cultural creators and ruling power should undoubtedly be questioned. Thus the bulk of French cinema production has always been made against the dominant production system. Of the 500 titles selected by Seuil Audiovisual for its encyclopaedia of French cinema, only three belonged to the large cinema enterprise Gaumont and 40 to Pathé!

It is in the same perspective that one should re-position the analysis of the "cultural policies" adopted by different states to "democratise culture" (cultural action, animation etc). On this point, see "Entretien avec Pierre Gaudibert: Action culturelle et ordre moral", *Cahiers du cinéma* (Paris), 251-2, July-August 1974 and also the dossier published in *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 1981 on "cultural policies" with articles on very diverse national realities by Nicholas Garnham, B. Miège, among others. Similar problems are treated by the article on community television in Quebec included in this volume. For an example of a cultural policy elaborated by a government, see the Government of Quebec, *A Cultural Development*

commercial television are, simultaneously the same and profoundly different, as each has its own way of fitting into the overall apparatuses for the socialisation of consumers/citizens, its own way of articulating itself with the State apparatus, the classes and groups that make up each social formation and also, the international market.

On another level, but in the same perspective of grasping the hegemonic apparatus as the site of relations between classes and not just as a site for the mechanical reproduction of dominant power, it is important to probe more deeply the divergences arising in the information apparatus (in the widest sense of the word) of the liberal-democratic State between the different sectors of the State apparatus when it sets up the new communication technologies (particularly computer networks, and the by-products of the marriage between computer/television/telephone/satellite). The different ministries, departments and organisms which share the management or supervision of this information apparatus are often far from having the same consciousness of an overall information policy to confront the challenges of the "information society". Sometimes, their ideas

*Policy for Quebec*, Editeur officiel, 1978.

89. This type of study should be combined with an analysis, in countries where the commercial television system reigns, of efforts to install a public network. On this subject, see the dossier devoted to the theme, "Independent Producers in Public TV" in *Televisions* (Washington), Vol. 6:4, 1979, and the numerous articles in *Journal of Communication*, for example the dossier, "Searching for Alternatives: Public Broadcasting", Vol. 30:3, Summer 1980.

This analysis should take into account a situation which is becoming more and more generalised in advanced capitalist countries: the dialectical exchange between the private and public sectors. After having analysed the functioning of one of the only transnational commercial channels in Europe (Radio Television Luxembourg; RTL), we concluded:

The private sector attempts to legitimise its activity in the media domain by taking up, if not the logic, the primary goals of public service: being guided by a certain idea of social responsibility, of "public interest". At the same time, commercial rationality is being more and more introduced into public service television: the importation into the state apparatus of the management techniques of large private enterprises stows away criteria of profitability. This double paradox lucidly illustrates the double movement which crosses the couplet industry/state, where according to the formula of a management expert: "whilst the private sector must be inspired by the goals of the public sector, the public sector must utilise the methods of the private sector."

After all, is not cultural patronage in itself also the proof *par excellence* of private enterprise's new concern for its "social or public responsibility"? Does not the recent concern shown by large polluting firms for the social and ecological environment fall into the same category? After having decreed that the struggle against pollution and for the improvement of the environment was now a social obligation for each enterprise, could one then arrive at a new priority: the struggle against cultural pollution? Here, we could very well see a quick return to the ecologist myths launched by these enterprises that suddenly became sufficiently responsible to regulate themselves. (Mattelart and Piemme, *op. cit.*)

are even completely different. Between the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Ministry of Information (when it exists), the Ministry of Postal Services, or the Telecommunications authorities (PTTs), the Ministry of Industry, the security forces, there often exist profound differences which correspond to different interests and indicate that hegemonies are seeking an identity. What some interpret a little too quickly as the product of an institutional corporatism or "departmentalism" in which each of these sectors of the State apparatus protects its "game reserve", often hides projects of different fractions of the bourgeoisie. Thus, more or less elastic terrains of social negotiation; as different projects of the bourgeoisie necessarily mean different articulations with the other classes on national (and also international) territory. This is, without doubt, one of the important factors explaining why and how the computerisation process in particular can only be carried asynchronously in the various sectors of the State apparatus. From this point of view, it seems that the industrial field of information is unified around a quicker rhythm; in effect, through a process of horizontal and vertical integration, the large firms of the information industry are increasingly attempting to control as many links as possible in the information channels (cultural, pedagogic, scientific, technical, commercial etc). See, for example, IBM's videodisc strategy of undertaking a joint-venture with MCA, Discovision, to assure its presence in the domains of educational and entertainment productions, or the restructuring of CBS, one of whose executives declared in 1980: "The plan to make the Publishing group an Information group became the core of a long-range plan to integrate the new technologies into the entire corporation" (*Business Week*, 26 May 1980).

The dualist conception in the approach to the

90. See sections "Science/Politics" and "Cultural Imperialism" in my Introduction to Volume 1 of this anthology.

91. Herbet Souza, *An Overview of Theories of Multinational Corporations and the Quest For the State*, Toronto, Latin American Research Unit (LARU) Studies (Working Paper 19), February 1977.

However, this diagnostic should not be literally applied to Latin-American communication research whose evolution is much more complex. For proof, one only has to glance at the bibliography of many researchers at the beginning of the 1970s. "Cultural dependence" never constituted the exclusive axis of their research. Under the pressure of a pre-revolutionary process, these researchers often had to combine an analysis of the transnationalisation process, an analysis of the strategies developed by local bourgeoisies against the efforts of popular regimes with the search for concrete popular alternatives for communication on the basis of the upsurge of the popular movement. To ignore this plurality of lines of research and the proliferation of questions they created, amounts to truncating the genealogical approach of critical research in Latin America. Certain erroneous interpretations that too quickly put on the same footing research on "cultural dependence" carried out by Finnish, North American and Latin American researchers, erase completely the whole production of these Latin-American researchers from their bibliographical references on the study of local bourgeoisies, the reception given by the popular classes to the media and alternative forms of communication. It is as if it were possible to

genesis of communication systems has not spared the peripheral countries either. It takes particular forms there which can only be understood by taking account of the anti-imperialist struggles since the end of the 1960s and of their fallout in the field of theoretical production in the social sciences. Latin America is a good example of this. One can note there the effect of "dependency theory", the first attempt by Latin-American social scientists to shake off the yoke of functionalist sociology and the neo-classical economic school which erased the historical dimension of development and underdevelopment. Thus it was a first attempt to interpret globally the reality of the continent from a Latin American point of view. In the introduction to the first volume, we already touched on the conditions of the production of this theory as well as objective contributions and limitations, and we will only note here the tendency of this theory to set up transnational corporations as the sole actors in the transnationalisation process. The consequence of this was to relegate the study of national social formations in which these firms settle to the background, and thus lead one to believe that the culture and communication system of the host country was a simple copy of an imported model.<sup>90</sup> But despite their subordination – and within this subordination – to transnational capital and their subaltern position in the world economic system, local bourgeoisies have a far from passive role. Even if much communication research in Latin America very quickly moved away from a limited economist conception, conveyed by some representatives of dependency theory, it is useful to remember several fundamental coherent critiques of this theory. They help us to better understand certain gaps, or even incoherencies, in Latin American communications research in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a Brazilian researcher remarks:

One of the main characteristics of the literature on dependency is a taste for political economy and a lack of interest for political theory in what concerns the question of social classes, power systems and the state. Proponents of dependency theory in general seem to be more at ease in the area of economics than in the arena where political theories battle each other. It may not be too farfetched to state that the basic dualism of dependency theory and the "poverty" of its political approach largely derive from an "economist" view of the social process which consider economic development as an essentially quantitative type of phenomenon and, in a sense, as a "natural" one. In this sense, the concept of dependency appears to work in a way quite similar to the concept of modernisation as used in North American political science. Between the centre of modernisation as used in North American political science. Between the centre and the periphery, between dominant and dominated countries, there flows the stream of economic development: some will catch it, others will block its course; it will be available to some, but not to all. To go beyond dependency is seen as a synonym for "having another chance" at development, just as an overcoming of traditionalism is the indispensable condition for becoming "modern". One of the few "dependentist" authors who manage to escape from the poverty of its political theory are F.H. Cardoso in his work on social classes and the state, and the economist C. Furtado in his most recent elaborations.<sup>91</sup>

One last reflection which could serve as a preliminary to the examinations of the reasons explaining the segregation of studies on power and those on alternatives, but which can also be its conclusion. To develop a political economy of the media, it is not enough to treat the culture industries (which are generally transnational) by analysing the production process in its various phases (creation, conception, publishing, promotion, distribution, consumer sales), by analysing the structures of its industrial sectors (forms of concentration, degrees of concentration etc) or by analysing the strategies of these firms. One can only attempt to understand the functioning of these culture industries as a system both unified and diversified if one refers it to an essential question which ought to underly all critical research on the way in which capital is attempting today to re-evaluate the cultural field: what is the impact of these culture industries on the political system today? What risk does their irresistible ascension have for really existing democracy, liberal democracy (which has not been bestowed by the dominant classes but is the product of historical struggles) and the democracy that we want to implement? In this time of crisis, where the restructuring of the mode of production of material goods has to be accompanied by a restructuring of the mode of production of symbolic goods and cultural commodities no political economy worthy of the name can marginalise corollary questions from its preoccupations. What role do the culture industries and the new information system play in the restructuring of the State? How is the function of the State apparatus as producer of the collective will short-circuited by the ideological function of these industries? Does not a process of "commercialisation" of the State, or better yet, a "privatisation of certain public functions" arise with the installation of new communication technologies? What are the repercussions of the new delegations of power called for by the transfers of competence from the public to the private sector which are required by the crisis of the welfare-state and the transnationalisation of local economies, on the type of consensus which enables different classes and groups to coexist in the same society? From what will this new consensus be constructed? How is this privatisation of certain public functions, which seem to be a relative wearing away of the State, fit in perfectly with a strengthening of State power in its repressive function? How does

evaluate the contribution of critical research in Latin America by compartmentalising its results (see the text by Ingrid Sarti whose pertinent critique of Althusserian theory and its ramifications for dependence theory contrasts with an inexplicable ignorance of Latin-American research on the communication of subaltern classes: "Communication and Culture Dependency: A Misconception" in *Communication and Social Structure*, Emile MacAnany, Jorge Schnitman, Noreen Janus, eds. New York, Praeger, 1981). For a more genealogical point of view on the primary research in Latin America, see Hugo Assman, *Evaluación de algunos estudios latinoamericanos sobre comunicación masiva*, San Jose, Costa Rica, X Congreso Latinoamericano de Sociología, 1974.

92. Simon Nora and Alain Minc, *L'informatisation de la société*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1978.

the conception of the "strong State" supply the dynamic for the modernisation of technological systems (both communication and general) for the forces of law and order? Why does the State seem more interested in conserving its monopoly of brute force than exercising its hegemony directly on the apparatuses of symbolic violence? This is the case, even if in all the capitalist states, there is a modernisation of the government public relations apparatus, which increasingly uses the most sophisticated marketing techniques, or else, hires advertising agencies. In short, how both in ideology and in the practice of the liberal-democratic State in search of other forms of social domination and other types of relation with its citizens, does an idea of the *strong State* and the *weak State*, an idea of statist concentration and statist deconcentration, paradoxically coexist?

It is in this context that the question implied by all the above must be posed: what is the role of creators, receivers and collective organisations in the production of a new democratic alternative? More fundamentally, what do we mean by "democracy" and "freedom of expression", not as a space given *a priori*, but as a space of liberty to construct day by day?

#### NATIONAL CULTURE AND "INTERDEPENDANCE"

At this time when the culture industries and information systems are being transnationalised, the notion of national culture is the focus of a contradictory debate, all the more complex in that the two components of this notion have seen their content evolve considerably.

Certain expressions have recently invaded the language of international or regional organisations like UNESCO and the European Council to become slogans and political axes: cultural identity, national sovereignty, national culture. In the name of safeguarding their cultural identity, the non-aligned countries, for example, have demanded an end to the resolutely unequal exchange of information of mass culture production. Whereas barely five years ago, the grievances could appear exclusively reserved for peripheral countries, today they are in the forefront of the demands of certain central countries. The European countries, for example, whatever their ideology, are alarmed at the US's quasi-monopoly of scientific and technical information, notably in data banks. After the Third World countries, who have experienced this for several decades, the European community admits that inequality of information contributes to the restriction of the scope of liberty and decision of nations as well as individuals. This debate has become officially supported in France with the Nora-Minc report on the computerisation of society. It evokes the temptation to use American data banks rather than constitute them on national territory, in the following terms:

To leave to others, ie to American banks, the trouble of organising this "collective memory" and being content to draw from it, amounts to accepting a cultural alienation; the installation of data banks therefore constitutes an imperative for sovereignty.<sup>92</sup>

Let us note, in this respect, that little by little the

idea is progressing that to defend "national culture", one must have the instruments of the material production of this culture which increasingly are a tributary of the stakes of developments of communication technologies. The Americans themselves have been obliged to compromise with this renewal of reaction that they often interpret as "protectionist". These nationalist reactions are the product as much of the competition between central countries as the pressure to change the unequal relations between the centre and the periphery. Some former officials of the White House have gone so far as to qualify the measures proposed by France and the OECD countries to set-up national data banks; and the demands expressed in UNESCO by Third World countries for a control over the major international news agencies, as an "electronic counter-revolution".

In February 1978, the former director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, M.J. Eger, did not hesitate to write in *Computer World*:

For the U.S. — increasingly dependent on the export of information products and the import of news and other information from other parts of the world— these developments could cripple our economy and severely influence the kind of life we lead in our ever-shrinking interdependent world of community. ...Perhaps the resistance to the information age comes solely from the fact that, as history demonstrates over and over again, for every revolution, there is a counter-revolution. For the U.S., dependent as we now are in terms of jobs and the national economy on the production, use and transfer of information, that counter-revolution is producing what amounts to an information war... What many fear is cultural inundation or annihilation. They are afraid we will overwhelm their culture and their national identity with our own. They are resisting what they call "electronic colonisation" or "electronic imperialism". They do not want their minds, banks, governments, news, literature, music or any other aspect of their lives to be Americanised... For these reasons, we face an array of nations, to a greater or lesser degree, intent on blocking the flow of our information across their borders and possibly into the minds of their citizens. Add to this the normal competitive practices of the international market, and it is easy to see why we find ourselves opposed in this information war, not only by the Soviet Union and its allies, satellite nations and Third World countries, but also by our more traditional allies, such as England, Sweden, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

In one sentence, our telecommunications expert pronounced the keyword "interdependence". This term, officially inaugurated at the beginning of the current crisis to strengthen the bonds between a mistreated Trilateral economic community, can be found in the discourses and analyses which try to show that it is improper, currently, to speak of electronic colonisation, cultural colonisation etc. This notion of interdependence is a decoy for another discredited notion, which is ostracised as it seems to recall a former age, the notion of imperialism. One of the pioneers and most brilliant theoretician and practitioner of the notion of interdependence, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former security adviser under President Carter, eloquently shows how it can be substituted for the notion of imperialism:

The concept of "imperial" shields rather than reveals a relationship between America and the world that is both more complex and more intimate. The "imperial" aspect of the relationship was, in the first instance, a transitory and rather spontaneous response to the vacuum created by World War II and to the subsequent felt threat from communism. Moreover, it was neither formally structured nor explicitly legitimized. The "empire" was at most an informal system marked by the pretense of equality and noninterference. This made it easier for the "imperial" attributes to recede once conditions changed.

The development of the transnational communication systems and the advent of the technetronic society (the society whose form is determined on the cultural, psychological, social and economic levels by the influence of technology and electronics, particularly in the domain of computers and communications) change the facts of the analysis and the conception of the relations between the United States and the rest of the world:

It is the novelty of America's relationship with the world — complex, intimate, and porous — that the more orthodox, especially Marxist, analyses of imperialism fail to encompass. To see that relationship merely as the expression of an imperial drive is to ignore the part played in it by the crucial dimension of the technological-scientific revolution. That revolution not only captivates the imagination of mankind (who can fail to be moved by the spectacle of man reaching the moon?) but inescapably compels imitation of the more advanced by the less advanced and stimulates the export of new techniques, methods, and organizational skills from the former to the latter. There is no doubt that this results in an asymmetrical relationship but the content of that asymmetry must be examined before it is called imperialism... All of this has imperial overtones, and yet it is misleading to label it as such... The United States has emerged as the first global society in history. It is a society increasingly difficult to delineate in terms of its outer cultural and economic boundaries.

Such are the premises which lead, according to Brzezinski, to the development of a "new planetarian consciousness" which goes beyond "firmly rooted cultures, deeply entrenched traditional religions and distinctive national identities", and the assertion of a "new world unity" which is in the process of "finding its own structure, consensus and harmony to base itself on". This new world unity finds its advent troubled however by the persistence of relations of force whose sluggishness is naturalised by Brzezinski in favour of the nation in the vanguard of the technetronic revolution:

The United States is the principal global disseminator of the technetronic revolution. It is American society that is currently having the greatest impact on all other societies, prompting a far-reaching cumulative transformation in their outlook and mores...

This is all the more likely because American society, more than any other, "communicates" with the entire globe. Roughly sixty-five per cent of all world communications originate in this country. Moreover, the United States has been most active in the promotion of a global communications system by means of satellites, and it is pioneering the development of a world-wide information grid...

For the first time in history the cumulative knowledge of mankind will be made accessible on a global scale — and it will be almost instantaneously available in

response to demand...

Given developments in modern communications, it is only a matter of time before students at Columbia University and, say, the University of Teheran will be watching the same lecturer simultaneously. [*Sic.* Wishful thinking — A.M.]<sup>93</sup>

Now it is clear. This notion of interdependence, this belief in a revolution made possible by the autonomous communications revolution, could very well mask the appearance of new forms of social control, new sources of inequality, and new forms of confrontation based on the mastery of knowledge, information and know-how. The notion of interdependence obviously is at the heart of the problem, on the condition however of defining what it hides and what it admits. It is not a question of a chauvinist nationalism, but to clearly define what this new interdependence whose emergence coincides with the redeployment of national economies, this reality of dependence, means for a country, a people and a social group.

The question is to know the conditions in which exchanges take place. Interdependence, in effect, is not realised *in abstracto*. It is inscribed in a relation of force that determines whether there is mutual enrichment or inevitable impoverishment. A national culture can only live, ie remain living, by assimilating foreign contributions. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels shows that this problem is not a new one:

In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have inter-dependence in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrowmindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature. (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Moscow: Progress, 1975, pp 46-47.)

But what has become of the utopia of Marx, and Engels, founded on the explosion of the parochial mentality of the feudal order, in a world that has not acceded so easily to this solidarity that he believed inevitable?

The first volume of this anthology has sufficiently drawn the contours of "unequal exchange" (a euphemism, others prefer aggression, domination without sharing, or even, ethnocide), so we will not

93. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America's Role In the Technetronic Era*, New York, Viking Press, 1970.

94. Nothing could be more explicit than this declaration by a U.S. professor and NATO adviser:

In the sum, current values are swept away by a veritable tidal wave and the main obstacles to the conversion of the new values into policies and institutions are neither the limits of material resources nor the limits of intellectual resources, but the limits of government... Political leaders put on a bold front, but we are more and more conscious of their incapacity to make decisions. Centralised economic planning, spread throughout the whole world, in part by the industrial democracies that do not in the least apply it to themselves, is almost everywhere in disarray. The new migratory proletariat pours across frontiers in torrents, whether or not national immigration laws authorise it.

go into more detail here. Let us rather try to situate the various movements working in the field of "national culture" and put them at the centre of the definition of the stakes. In the present historical stage, what are the new challenges?

During the "Computer and Society" week held in Paris in Fall 1979, which dealt with the future of large-scale communication systems, the American sociologist, Daniel Bell, pointed out in a brilliant turn of phrase the site of the crisis of the "national":

What is happening today is that for many countries, the national state is becoming too big for the small problems of life and too small for the big problems of life.

At the hour of the internationalisation of capital, the redeployment of national industrial apparatuses goes hand in hand with the redeployment of the political apparatuses and transformations of the cultural apparatus. To adapt to the growing integration of national economies into a world framework, and to the new distribution of power and hegemony shown by the North/South and East/West tensions, nation states, heirs to the 19th century, are forced to seek other ways of assuring cohesion between the different classes and social groups. The new consensus, the new culture, the new behaviour, and the new consciousness that have to be formed, have to link the national to the world-wide. The idea that it is necessary to smash the nation-state, the last obstacle to the new phase of the world-wide expansion of transnational capital, and transform it into a simple management state in an "interdependent" world, is becoming naturalised.<sup>94</sup>

The old dream of the transnational firms and the bourgeois fractions corresponding to them in each country, each nation-state, to weaken the mediations of the apparatuses of the nation-state between their transnational microscope and the local microscope, is today becoming, because of the crisis, a condition to maintain their hegemony and their expansion. Read in the context of the logic of this transformation, the phrase of Daniel Bell cited above is as clear as day. It is also clear when it brings out the double contradictory movement, the localist tropism and the universalist tropism. On the one hand, the transnationalisation process creates an appeal for increasingly similar, ecumenical and universal values, or, to use the terms of Brzezinski, "a new planetary consciousness", a new "harmony", a "new world unity" and a new "consensus". Elsewhere, this

Ethnic and religious rivalries and separatist movements threaten the integrity of long established nations: South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Great Britain and Canada are the most recent examples. Power is escaping from national governments in three directions: towards local collectivities that seek to act more at their own discretion; towards non-governmental enterprises which can undertake more rapid and flexible action than the public authorities; and towards international bodies that attempt to manage, in any way whatsoever, the new technologies which transcend national jurisdiction. In short, government institutions are the vestiges of the era for which they were conceived — an era of blind growth in which the multiple, diverse forms of growth were independent from one another. (H. Cleveland, "La troisième phase de l'alliance", *Revue de l'OTAN [NATO]* (Brussels), 6, December 1978).

transnational strategy breaks down into local small change, counterbalancing the expatriation of the centres of decision and the delocalisation of national economies by the localisation of their discourse and their ways of approaching the market. Whereas the movement toward the internationalisation of capital tends to sweep aside these "firmly rooted cultures", these "deeply entrenched traditional relations" and "distinctive national identities", the multinational mega-machine speaks more and more of national, regional and local identity and the need for decentralisation. There is a paradox. No one can, in effect, deny that today there exists a transnational discourse on "national identity and the recognition of the national soul", to use the words of the Managing Director of Colgate in France, who admits, referring to England, Germany and France:

The fundamental need for a national identity is the major obstacle to a multi-country management approach, at least for these three countries which cultivate, rightly or wrongly, a national pride equal to that of the United States. It matters little whether this is right or wrong; the fact is there, and to develop an overall management philosophy, any multinational company ought to take it into account.<sup>95</sup>

One knows the flexibility of these enterprises which strive to fit the shape of the social terrain in each reality in order to be able to continue their activities.<sup>96</sup> It is not surprising for example to discover the presence of one of the top American advertising agencies among the partisans and agents of the decentralisation of the television monopoly in Spain. It explains itself:

The resurgence of local feeling and local languages, bottled up since the Civil War, is very evident in the fifteen months since Franco's death. The government seems prepared to accept this phenomenon, which is similar to that of Scotland and Wales in the U.K.

Use of local language (Catalonia, Valenciano, Basque) advertising in radio is flourishing. So are newspapers. But TV remains the leader . . .

Local Spanish companies are excluded from advertising in their strongest regions, either exclusively or at different weight levels.

In all cases, the ability to communicate local messages to the viewer suffers and consumer choice is reduced. Furthermore, without regional television facilities, the different characteristics of the Spanish peoples, their climate and geography and their purchasing power cannot be taken into account. At the simplest level, whitewashing means more to the inhabitants of the white houses of sunny Andalusia in the south than it does to the rain-swept Galicians of the north-west.<sup>97</sup>

95. R. Crain, "French Colgate Chief: First and Foremost a Business Manager" *Advertising Age*, 12 July 1976.

96. For more information and analysis on the localist strategy of transnational firms and native bourgeoisies, see A. and M. Mattelart, *De l'usage des medias en temps de crise*, op. cit., the chapter, "La culture intérieure".

97. D. Butter, "Y & R Spain Pushes for Regional TV to Spur Heavy Ups, Testing", *Advertising Age*, 23 May 1977.

98. On the impact of this manifesto for a Third Cinema on filmmakers of various countries, see the dossier, "L'influence du 'Troisième Cinéma' dans le monde", edited by Guy Hennebelle and CinemaAction, *Revue Tiers-Monde* (issue devoted to Audiovisual and Development) (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France), XX, 79, July-September 1979.

Obviously, one cannot confuse the localist discourse of the businessman, which barely hides the de-territorialisation schemes of transnational capital, with the powerful return to the local expressed by many movements which contest the jacobin, centralising state in the name of grass-roots democracy. National culture, like regional culture or any other culture which, in this epoch of globalisation, seeks to preserve, flourish and cultivate specificity and diversity, is a terrain for the confrontation of antagonistic interests which stimulate movements and motivate very different projects for bringing groups and peoples together. But this is another story.

### READING THE PAST FROM THE PRESENT

One does not read an anthology on popular communication in the 1980s in the same way one would have in the 1960s or even in 1974. One does not read today a manifesto "Towards a Third Cinema" on the engagement of filmmakers in respect to processes of liberation as one would have in 1969, in an environment of solidarity with the revolutionary movements in countries of the periphery.<sup>98</sup> The success at the end of the 1960s of a film like *La hora de los hornos* and its impact on the consciousness of progressive sectors in the central countries, has nothing in common with the lukewarm reception given to Third World films today in the metropolitan countries. Neither does one read in 1982 a text on propaganda and agitation written in the 1920s as one would have in 1974.

Not that these texts are outdated. However, what has profoundly changed in the last few years, are the conditions of the production of meaning and reading. Other concerns cross the consciousness of individuals, groups and classes which continue to want to change their way of life. The certainties and doubts of today are not longer the certainties and doubts of yesterday. Many doubts have been transformed into certainties and vice versa. If it is true that the past has to help us to think the present and to judge it critically, it is also true that the present imposes on us a way of reading the past. It is one of those periods in which to appraise past and marks a turning point for the future. A time of restructuring and reflection on past strategies, a changing of the relations of force, a time, some will say, of crisis, implicitly thinking of degeneration without ever seeing in it the germs of new possibilities.

It is a time of crises of thought, theory, models for an approach to reality, of a way of life, of a mode of production and of a mode of group organisation.

Empiricism is in disarray. It has been dying for a long time; but like the phoenix, it is always reborn from its ashes with a smaller and smaller head and an increasingly monstrous body, overweight from an abundance of information which it never can master and explain. The critical look back, "revisits" to past positions on paradigms of progress, development and modernisation that one thought were unshakeable, show that some of its followers timidly confess that empiricism has not succeeded in offering a satisfying theory for approaching the problem of culture and

communication.<sup>99</sup> We are far from the lofty attitude of Robert K. Merton who, over 25 years ago, disqualified as speculative the philosophical and sociological schools which dared to pose the problem of the social model underlying their theories. The Frankfurt School is rediscovered. One is even ready to recognise the status of the "new critical school" (or rather one is forced to recognise it). The international relations of force in the academic and political field has changed. For want of being abandoned, the old functionalist school needs new sources and new forms of legitimation. The confessions and self-criticisms do not succeed in dissimulating, under a new meta-language, a desire to change nothing of past authoritarian practices. With great pomp and ceremony, the dominant paradigms are driven out the front door, only to be re-introduced surreptitiously through the back door. What is presented to us as a sensational conversion looks very much like a diversion. The old science of communication embraces the new modalities and needs of the expansion of capital. One of the most significant examples is undoubtedly the evolution of the theory (if it can be called a theory) of diffusionism. For the first time, its promoters, who spread their communication strategies in the service of birth-control and agricultural "modernisation" for over two decades in Latin America and Asia, admit the inadequacy of former approaches. Even today, they allow themselves to assail those whom they advised yesterday to adopt the diffusionist panacea as the only solution for promoting "development". They seem to be astonished, even irritated, at the idea that these countries, decidedly backward(!), continue to want to apply them. In the words an adviser to the Venezuelan government and disciple of Everett Rogers:

The influence of the American model of diffusionism is reflected in the development strategies of numerous countries, even though everything points to the fact that this model does not enable one to approach small farmers adequately. Dependence on this model is partly due to the fact that the majority of researchers working in this field, as much in Venezuela as the rest of Latin America have been trained in North American universities where the values of the philosophy of diffusionism were taught. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) itself points out,

99. To situate empiricism, particularly that of the United States, see Todd Gitlin, "The Dominant Paradigm", *Theory and Society*, VI, 2. See also Jean-Marie Piemme, *La télévision telle qu'on la parle*, Brussels, Editions Nathan-Labour, 1978; Kaarle Nordenstreng, "Communication Research in the U.S.", *Gazette*, XIV, 1968.

100. Jeremiah O'Sullivan Ryan, *Bases teóricas para la formulación de una política de comunicación agrícola*, Caracas, Sptember 1980. On the revision of diffusionist theses, see Everett Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm", *Communication Research*, Vol 3, 3, April 1976. To measure the reality of this change in relation to the former conception, see J. O'Sullivan, E. Rogers, E. Contreras-Budge, *Communication in Agricultural Development*, Stanford, California, Institute for Communication Research, 1979; above all see E. Rodgers, D. Solomon and R. Adhikarya, *Further Directions for USAID's Communication Policies in Population*, Stanford, ICR, 1979.

in a document published in 1978, that it is necessary to move away from established American patterns of education and agricultural extension to seek new models and experiences which are of more particular interest to small farmers in developing countries.<sup>100</sup>

Diffusionism is dead, long live convergence! In proposing their new model of convergence whereby "communication is defined as a process of information exchange between two or more people who try to give a common meaning to symbolic events", the ex-diffusionists seem to definitively turn their backs on the centralising conception of the linear model of persuasive communication that they still upheld as late as 1975. They justify their sudden turnaround by the fact that the "unilateral communication of persuasion was fitted into the old model of development whereas the convergence model better fits the theoretical conception of development as participation, self-fulfillment and justice". They celebrate the virtues of the principle, "small is beautiful". They proclaim the goodness and technical efficiency of "dialogic communication" as well as the installation of participatory communication which ought to enable small farmers and local groups to determine their needs and formulate their demands for techniques and technologies by themselves. They have forged a new concept, "feed-forward", to indicate that messages must be elaborated on the basis of the needs expressed by the peasants. Finally, they speak of self-management and self-reliance.

However, they continue, without careful phrasing, to speak of their target-population as "customers". But they also put on the same footing, self-development projects and experiences from the most diametrically opposed political projects, from *de facto* and *de jure* dictatorships like Guatemala, South Korea and the Philippines, to socialist regimes like Tanzania, without forgetting Taiwan after having made a mandatory detour through the Peoples' Republic of China. To read and observe these people, one is lead to believe that small media have a democratic quality *per se*, or even better, that they produce *per se* democratic communication structures. They define their practice and their object of research with a sophism. Having agreed that small media are soft, decentralising technologies, these small media therefore can only give birth to decentralised networks and social relations which escape from the authoritarian heaviness and constraint of large media. Among the converted to the dominant paradigm, thus there is no questioning of power, neither by mediators, nor as materialised by the whole of the social structures in which they operate. By abstaining from questioning the political context of their interventions and studying the necessary relation between "decentralised communication" and the decentralised network of social organisations, they reduce to nothing the original notion of self-reliance, a notion indissociable from that of political mobilisation.

Internally, the implementation of the concept of *individual self-reliance* requires that conditions are created for the mobilisation of the population. This requires a substantial raising of mass-consciousness through greater participation that, in turn, is not very likely to occur without drastic changes in the class structure of

the individual countries. Only through the mobilisation and organisation of the masses can the reliance on foreign capital be decreased. This focus on the population as a whole is a function not only of the need to mobilise available domestic capital but also as an expression of the fundamental aim of this approach, which is to satisfy the basic needs of all classes and not only the wants of the elites and small middle-classes. [Our emphasis.-A.M.]. The concept of individual self-reliance, therefore, draws attention to the internal conditions in developing countries, the need for change within these countries, and the importance of such change of the development process.<sup>101</sup>

However, they continue to resort to the motivations and the methods of imposition of market studies and marketing campaigns to bring out the needs of local populations and serve them up again as the authentic expression of their speech and identity. Seen in this perspective, the new legitimising discourses which rely on the demand for participation and dialogue cannot hide the fact that what is new is not the promotion of self-management and self-development, but rather the promotion of self-exploitation. Furthermore, these new forms of exploitation of people by other people are perfectly in keeping with the new low-profile strategies of transnational capital, which is also obliged to maintain a decentralising, participative and localist discourse.

But, is not marxism itself in crisis?, empiricists hasten to retort to relativise their own stagnation. Admittedly, marxism is prey to profound revisions and is not only questioned by those who like the ephemeral French "new philosophers", make it their job to destabilise previously adulated paradigms, but now refuse the whole marxian conceptual heritage *en bloc*. However, the field of communications research is not the best one to see the crisis in marxism. Here, it flourishes, and different contributions from multiple realities proliferate as never before. One of the reasons for this, perhaps, is that the major interrogations on models of growth and democracy,

101. Karl P. Sauvart, "The Poor Countries and the Rich: A Few Steps Forward, *Dissent*, Winter 1978.

For a critique of the use of light communication technologies in the periphery, see Josianne Jouet, "Critique de l'utilisation des medias legers dans le Tiers Monde", *Revue Tiers-Monde*, XX, 79, July-September 1979.

The evolution of the author of *Small is Beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher, is a good example of the impasses inherent in a certain conception of soft, decentralised technologies. In one of his most recent works, *Good Work*, a quasi-mystical plea spills out from a technical analysis increasingly enveloped by spiritual and religious references. Placed on this terrain, critical discussion on technology has scarcely any chance of contributing fruitful responses to the fundamental question of the link which could exist between direct democracy and light technology.

102. M. Crozier, S. Huntington, J. Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy. Report On the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*, New York University Press, 1975. The extreme right in the central countries go much further: they are rebuilding themselves and metamorphosing into a "new right". They openly assail the "egalitarian mirage" and demand a "pluralist competition and meritocracy" instead.

Ideas that no-one has been putting forward since the war are resurfacing little by little. They can be summed up

where historical materialism has been forced to abandon the consequences of dogmatism, all converge in the field of new communications systems. This research, established within a marxist paradigm, tries to surmount in this field perhaps more than elsewhere, the limits of mechanism and economism as it is forced to cut across rigid disciplines and compartmentalised spheres of social life.

What is more and more refuted in this research is an a-critical confidence in the mechanically progressive and liberating role of the development of the productive forces. Also more and more refuted is the idea of revolution imposed from above by a conquest of political power which is swept away by the idea of revolution as a process of mobilising the consciousness of multiple actors, as a process of self-transformation wherein each of these actors, from the everyday aspects of class struggle, become an essential force in the gestation of popular hegemony. Yet still more and more refuted is the way of conceiving the construction of socialism, but also the forms of organisation of popular resistance. What is in crisis is not so much the marxist paradigm as such but the ossified theories which in its name and in the name of socialism have legitimised the most profoundly authoritarian practices and expelled from their field of reflection and action disturbing questions for the consecrated authorities. What is being exploded today are the conceptual prisons which have prevented these questions from breaking out into the open. Present at one time or another in all experiences of revolutionary rupture (from the October revolution to the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua) and in the whole marxist revolutionary tradition, these critical questions are beginning to cut cross all forces of change. The deep revisions, but also the search for new conceptual categories does not start from zero. They start from a patrimony which is the fruit of an accumulation of struggles and is the response to the process of de-memorisation, the forgetting of history, which has marked the trajectory of so many progressive forces. More than ever, it seems necessary to assert central theoretical aspect of marxism, the dialectic.

If the schemas enabling one to grasp and interpret reality are in crisis, it is because this reality is itself in crisis, as much for the ruling classes as the subaltern classes. The former are beginning to wonder where the liberal democracies are going, what is the fate of "really existing democracy" while the latter are formulating a question that was thought to be resolved: what is democracy?

Western democracies are in crisis. This is affirmed by the system's own ideologues who have been forced to admit since 1975 that it is not a question of a simple conjunctural crisis, but really a structural crisis which affects the very form of these societies. The myth of progress which accompanied the rapid development of these "industrial democracies" is collapsing in ruins: "We have come to recognise that there are potentially desirable limits to economic growth. There are also potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy."<sup>102</sup> The forms of coexistence and com-

munication between the different classes and groups institutionalised by liberal democracy and its liberal doctrine of information are undergoing a profound transformation. The hegemony of the liberal doctrine of information and the theory of public opinion is increasingly questioned by the establishment of practices of "exception" and "crises", and the return of neoconservative forces and authoritarian forms of social management contrary to constitutional liberties.<sup>103</sup> This difficulty in realising the collective will must be taken into account in judging the modes of implantation of new communications technologies into the social fabric. Communication technologies are political tools for the construction of consensus but also are an industrial apparatus are set up as a capitalist solution to the crisis. The computer and micro-electronics are becoming the instruments of this new version of the "New Deal". It is not surprising that the science of communication which accompanied the rapid development of the monopolist bourgeoisie and legitimised the functioning of its means of communication in its time of ascendancy, as much in politics as in economics, finds itself profoundly called into question, insofar as traditional systems of social co-optation (the "means of social control" as the Trilateral Commission call it, preoccupied as they are with the "ungovernability" of Western democracies) see their credibility damaged.

very briefly: social inequalities, injustices, in short, the world such as it is, proceed directly and spontaneously from the nature of things; the present social order is thus the necessary result of human nature in the current state of its development, and the only progress possible is by allowing the forces behind this "nature" to act without constraint. Any measure taken to prevent the free play of the market, the free play of selection is an hindrance to social development, an insupportable constraint that goes against nature, a factor of regression....It is certain that this ideological evolution fits the crisis of capitalism like a glove. (Editorial in the Socialist monthly, *Après-Demain* (Paris), February 1981.)

Many people rightly see in this return to "nature" the ideological legitimisation of the theories of the economist Milton Friedman, father of the "Chicago Boys", who are rampant in the Southern Cone of Latin America, but also the admitted or unadmitted inspiration for the economic recovery policies in numerous central countries (for example Great Britain).

103. See, for instance, Bertram Gross, *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America*, New York, McEvans, 1980; Philip Schlesinger "Prince's Gate, 1980: The Media Politics of Siege Management" *Screen Education* (London), 37, Winter 1980/81; Stuart Ewen, "Mass Culture, Narcissism and the Moral Economy of War", *Telos*, 44, Summer 1980.

The report released by the Trilateral Commission in 1975 undoubtedly went too far on the thorny issue of the necessity of limiting the freedom of the press (see Volume 1 of this anthology), as afterwards no document has come forward to specify these general propositions. But the brutality of these affirmations, out of keeping with the low profile strategy of the Commission, obliges us to become aware of the mechanisms implemented to correct the interference of public opinion in decision-making. For even if these experts have not come up with a particular analysis on the way they conceive the functioning of the communication apparatuses in a hybrid situation, where it is a question of creating a national consensus on the basis of the

It was thought that liberal democracy was an irreversible advance. It was also thought that the different compartmentalised sciences which assured the ideological reproduction of liberal democracy was an irreversible advance. Alas, we must be disillusioned.

Amongst the subaltern classes in the big advanced capitalist countries, particularly in Europe, where the workers parties' struggles have inflected the logic of bourgeois domination since the end of the last century, there is a real difficulty in understanding, and especially imagining, a response to these new modes of social domination. Left parties and mass organisations which are the communication systems of the popular classes are racked by doubts. Among them, the questioning of the theory of the party as the vanguard of the masses, which has failed to allow sufficient latitude for the expression of self-organisation and the many facets of revolution; the refusal to consider the trade union as a simple transmission belt for party policy (when it is not simply for the party leadership); the emergence of secondary fronts which question the principal front, production and the factory, and which announce the emergence of a new type of social consciousness and the conflicts of tomorrow (the feminist, anti-nuclear and regionalist movements and all the demands of specific groups); and the disenchantment with the

internationalisation of the national industrial production apparatus and the subsequent vassalisation of the local economy, the practice of the Commission speaks volumes on their conception of the role of public opinion in political life on a supra-national scale. By giving themselves the title of a "group of private citizens" and refusing to institutionalise themselves, the founders of the Commission have shown how organs of community discussion recognised up until now as international forums and national parliaments were going to be jeopardised or at least only fill a legitimising and symbolic function, or even be converted into a simple simulacrum ratifying decisions taken elsewhere. Weary of the overly politicised confrontations, in their opinion, which took place in the representative institutions of national and international opinion, ruling politicians and businessmen are attempting to set up a right of permanent exception which inaugurates procedures and forms of concertation and the taking of expeditive and directly operational decisions which escape from the sluggishness of representative apparatuses: A sort of war council, tailored to the pragmatic model of Anglo-American diplomacy and bargaining with its network of "contact groups", "think tanks", "informal meetings" and "work commissions", whose experts, the only holders of information, are being internationalised. This war council is preventing any democratic control by institutions which are the historical fruit of the evolution of the relations of force between classes. Little by little, a theory placing security above liberty is replacing the theory of public opinion underlying the political organisation and the organisation of the media and mass culture in liberal democracies. The electoral victory of Reagan and his choice of strategies of force undoubtedly means the shelving of the consensus strategies of the Trilateral Commission, more in line with the project of Carter. However, this relative recession of the Trilateral Commission's project in no way signifies that its diagnosis on the need to finish with the 'excesses of democracy' has been invalidated; or that the need for the transnational bourgeoisies to find mechanisms of dialogue and mutual consultation similar to those of the Trilateral has vanished. On the contrary!

models proposed by the countries of "really existing socialism".

There is also, however, a certain inability to re-think the communication networks of proletarian internationalism and rediscover a credible anti-imperialist strategy. The anti-imperialism of the 1960s, nourished by external conflicts as in Latin America or South-East Asia is changed. For the first time, the formation of an industrial reserve army on a world-wide scale places all the world's workers in direct competition. Working class action lags behind the internationalisation of the economy. As the leader of the second-largest French trade union (CFDT) remarked in August 1980, trying to explain a certain incapacity discernable in the workers' movement in Europe:

It is the inadequacy of classical responses in terms of relaunching growth or nationalisation. Whereas all alternatives lead necessarily to another type of growth and development, and coordinated activity on an international level. This feeling of not having grasped the crisis firstly seems to be the consequence of a profound discrepancy. On the one hand, the strategy of the multinationals seems to develop inexorably, remodelling the international division of labour and redistributing the production of textiles, steel and automobiles throughout the world; on the other hand, trade union or political activity remains essentially national, as much in the forces it brings together as the interlocutors it aims at.<sup>104</sup>

One knows the difficulties of the workers' movement in questioning the model of growth constructed on the unequal exchange between the centre and the periphery. An innovative and alternative project for the creation of a different industrial apparatus can only take the road of internationalism, but at the cost of a fall in the standard of living in the advanced capitalist countries. In an earlier interview, the same trade union leader remarked on the need "to enrich the union struggle and enlarge the field of negotiations on the basis of everyday problems, so as to change the lives of the French people". Showing himself completely conscious of the aggravation of the inequalities of development, he pointed out that

104. Edmond Maire, "Le mouvement ouvrier face aux idéologies de crise", *Le Monde*, 21 August 1980.

105. "Un entretien avec Edmond maire", *Le Monde*, 23 August 1978. In English, see E. Maire, "The Solidarity of the International Labour Movement As An Essential Element in the Establishment of New International Order", IFDA (International Foundation for Development Alternatives) (Dossier 4), February 1979.

106. Edmond Maire, *art cit.*

107. Several political organisations in Europe are beginning to be preoccupied with these transformations. See for more information notably in France the journal *NON! Repères pour le socialisme*, (Paris), Nos 2,3 and 4. In Italy, the journal *Ikon* (Milan) is an obligatory reference. In Great Britain, see Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, "New Technology, Luddism and the Critique of Political Economy", mss., 1981.

Other social tensions can also be foreseen. As a French trade unionist declared in *Le Monde* 26 April 1981 in respect to automation and the multiplication of robots in factories which, even if they improve productivity and suppress tedious work, also suppress jobs:

The factory without workers is not perhaps able to be generalised, but it is no longer a myth, but the result of

it was, "physically unthinkable that the whole world live like the United States" and that, "this does not respond to the wishes of all peoples, in any case". However, when it was a question of solidarity with peripheral countries, he was forced to confess that, "in some domains, for example, relations between developed and slightly industrialised countries, it is difficult to go beyond making people sensitive to this problem".<sup>105</sup>

However, the relative inability of the workers' movement in the central countries also comes from the impression of not having grasped the major technological transformations accompanying the upheavals of political, economic and cultural apparatuses:

These new techniques, whether telematic systems, nuclear power or biochemistry, are going to lead to profound modifications in everyday life, work organisation, individual liberties. They seem to be developing outside the collective control of organised wage-earners and pose questions which are foreign to their traditional modes of reasoning and action.<sup>106</sup>

The restructuring of the world economy could splinter the working class between those lucky enough to be aboard ultramodern industries and those left to themselves. The application of the new computer technologies to the production process could add a second splintering. Mechanisation, which by concentrating workers, also enabled the formation of class consciousness, is being overtaken by the process of deconcentration of work. The dangers of isolation and the loss of collective consciousness brought about by the new reality question the legitimacy of the role of the trade union and collective action. What is this new reality? The increased segmentation of the collective workforce into molecular units (autonomous teams, systems etc); atomisation of the worker in work units by a high division of work tasks (work processes are increasingly conceived for interchangeable workers with "push-button", surveillance" or "question-response" tasks greatly multiplied); the uncertainty of work through a down-grading of the great mass of "executors" and the banalisation of their jobs; delocalisation of work in time and space (part-time work, work at home, work at great distance from the home; US experts have calculated that in today's industrial society, 20-25% of jobs could be done at home); weak trade union membership in the sectors and enterprises affected by computerisation and automatization; and new differentiation of the social groups within the enterprise (employees covered by it and those unprotected with their cohort of temporary and contractual workers, holiday workers, and the multiplication of sub-contracting). One feels the ambivalence of this technological change which, if it promises less time spent in transport, more flexible hours, less absenteeism, a better environment, less bosses on one's back, more free time, also brings about a lack of overture on the outside world and on others, a non-questioning of social equipment, nuclear withdrawal encouraging individualism, the difficulty of contact with colleagues and unions, soft-control/self-control, and surveillance at home.<sup>107</sup>

All these factors conspire against the idea of establishing the popular today as a collective action as a central axis of a critical theory of communication and culture. Even if in all previous phases of their hegemony, the dominant classes did everything to limit the field of action of the practices of collective resistance, more than ever before, in the current phase of the expansion of capital, the social space reserved for forms of living based on solidarity find their legitimacy undermined and their boundaries shrinking. Increasingly, the implicit or explicit idea is advanced that anything touching on the popular, the working class, the popular classes, belongs to a pre-technological world and has no place in the decor of a "post-industrial" or an "information" society. The myth of the end of ideologies already signified, in fact, that the end of politics, the end of parties, mass organisations and demonstrations, had been decreed, with the decline of the popular having already been celebrated under the umbrella of American political sociology. The offensive is today amplified. By denouncing the limits of the nation-state in order to convert it into a docile relay of the transnational system, people like Daniel Bell<sup>108</sup> forged the concept of the post-industrial society and launched the rallying cry for the "end of ideologies", to attack the last bastion of a certain idea of popular sovereignty implicit in the juridico-political ideology of the liberal bourgeoisie and its 19th-century state. The logic of

our present technical ability. What needs to be known is the industrial and social policy these technical abilities will serve. Some bosses perhaps dream of the social peace of an empty factory. This is a short-sighted dream, as the increase of the number of unemployed creates other sources of conflict.

In the face of these resistances and reservations that can be remarked in trade unions, transnational corporations are trying to find the right answer:

The new developments will have as profound an effect on people as did the Industrial Revolution....Partly because labour is more powerful, vocal, and organised than in the last Industrial Revolution it is far more necessary to consider, when formulating strategy, the impact of today's new technologies on the workforce and to ensure that employees are actively involved in the new developments. Labour's international connections (though not as strong as those of multinational businesses) are an important factor to be recognised. It is worth noting just how organised and thoughtful the trade unions are regarding new office technologies. White collar unions in particular have carefully examined the impact of new technologies, not only their likely effect on employment, but also the effects of the changed work role on those who will keep their jobs, in terms of productivity level, satisfaction, status, skills, health and safety. In different countries the unions have different objectives and this is likely to create problems for those companies operating internationally. For example some unions voice doubts as to whether the economy will be able to recover from the impact of new technology on jobs. One response has been to press for a commitment to full employment, with public services being expanded to take in labour displaced by the new technologies. On the other hand some unions argue for increased paid leisure, and a shorter working week, year and life as negotiating targets. This latter solution to the likely unemployment shortfall is perhaps the least viable. In a fairly static or slowly growing market any company which introduces new technologies in order to

the technocratic society and transnational bourgeoisies which restore the individual and the household as the privileged units of a society guided by science and technology is a logic that evicts the popular. In other words, the logic of transnationalisation cannot let civil society go "free"; it requires the dismantling of all networks of solidarity.

Once more, what we remarked in connection with the double movement around the national can be said here with its own modalities. Transnational capitalism intersets two apparently contradictory discourses which are, in fact, complementary: internationalism which favours the expansion of transnationals ("Be international, be with it"), and the shriveling up on oneself, isolation, even marginalisation (unemployment, youth, housewives, atomisation, individualism, not only a fear of collectivism, but of the collectivity).

This new reality, marked by the redefinition of the relation between the state and the citizen, in which overall systems of information make their appearance, engenders also new sources of conflict, and opens up new terrains of struggle which politicise the whole of civil society. The revolt of French students and workers in May 1968, despite its apparent failure, tried in a premonitory way, to point this out when its diffuse and disparate movement with its moments of enlightenment spoke of "no longer changing the world, but changing one's way of life" and set off "in search for something else".<sup>109</sup>

make cost savings through higher productivity per worker and maintains its labour force will seriously undermine its competitiveness. Clearly the unions are preparing to meet the "challenge of the microprocessor" both at the top and grass roots level. This begs the question whether management is equally well prepared. (Judith Forrester, "Multinational Businesses and the Office of the Future", *Multinational Business*, (The Economist Intelligence Unit, London), 3, 1980.)

108. Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post-industrial Society*, New York, Basic Books, 1973. From the same author, see *The End of Ideology*. On his conception of the information society, see his article in *Harvard Business Review*, "Communications Technology, For Better or For Worse", May-June 1979.

109. This spirit of May 1968 in respect to communication was picked up, notably by papers like *Liberation* (Paris) that sought to express this "search for an alternative". In the words of its first issue (18 April 1973):

Since May 1968, the need for a new daily paper has been felt everywhere. A whole movement of ideas seeks to express itself, a movement that cuts across all the currents of the existing Left, organised or not. Admittedly, it is confused, crossed by divisions, but nevertheless glued together around a common refusal of an authoritarian conception of life and around a common aspiration: for a democracy rejecting the exploitation of work, everyday violence in the name of profits, the violence of men against women, the repressions of sexuality, racism, a spoilt environment.

The "Manifesto" of the paper which appeared in December 1972 read as follows:

Today, the daily press gives the floor to the bosses' politicians, to the powerful who have moreover financed this press, and it is content, when it has no other choice, to cite piecemeal the phrases of workers and peasants. The daily, *Liberation* will give the floor to the people and cite piecemeal the phrases of the powerful....It will overturn the world of the daily press. Whereas the



However, on this terrain where it is a question of the way of life, the mode of production and group modes of organisation, one finds today not only subaltern groups and classes but also the dominant classes, which have learnt from the recent past and tried to reply to the demands of the new fronts of struggle to get out of their own crisis of society and civilisation. From now on, two projects of decentralisation confront one another in advanced capitalist societies, which shows the vulnerability of the apparatus of domination.

In one project, the bourgeoisie feel the need to "decentralise" its mechanisms of power without ever losing its hold on them; decentralisation within concentration! (See the section on the localist strategy of the bourgeoisies linked to international capital.) The decentralisation envisaged in this perspective becomes a way of re-legitimising an increasingly de-legitimised centralised power.

Decentralisation has become the password for the computerisation of society, which is hawked by the best-sellers of J.J. Servan-Schreiber and Alvin Toffler, who see a panacea for under-development and the crisis of institutions in the new computer technologies. Numerous political and economic reasons encourage this proposed decentralisation, which under the appearance of a libertarian project, applies, in fact, neo-liberal dogmas. There is a need to end the overly authoritarian, overly centralised and overly interventionist state, to terminate its role of regulating and redistributing central economic and social power; a need to extricate the state from its responsibilities to give free reign to the laws of the market, each individual becoming responsible for him or herself. This call to be liberated from the Welfare State is paved with diverse justifications. Among them, affirming that the principle of equality, the basic principle of public service, goes against human nature; claiming that the absence of "market" regulation creates unjustified and useless needs (for example in health and education); and pretending that in countries with strong workers' movements, trade union officials and organisations have taken over the state. We should not forget either, the claim that supervision by the state destroys the spirit of initiative. These principles orient economic policies (the inaugural speech of President Ronald Reagan is revealing on this point; it is rooted in the conviction that the cause of the economic crisis is the growing presence of the state in the economy which through its "welfare interventions" only stimulates inflationary tendencies). However, beyond questioning the role of the state in the economy, there is also a questioning of the relation between the state and its

servile reporter of the daily press, to get the feel of the times, will go to talk with a senator or chief adviser to the government, the journalist from *Liberation* will go out to talk with the people, both young and old, with members of workshop strike committees, the poorly-housed, and consumers. (See F.M. Samuelson, *Il était une fois Libé...*, Paris, Seuil, 1979).

The same type of objective was taken up by the various free radios which sprung up several years later: see Claude Colin, *Le radio, instrument d'intervention sociale et politique*, 1980, doctoral thesis, Université de Grenoble, publication forthcoming.

citizens and all public services. The assaults on the public services can be noted as much in the tendency to "privatise" public service communication systems in numerous countries as in the attacks on social security systems (a historical gain of the popular classes). The decentralisation toward the citizen has its counterbalance in a decentralisation towards local communities whose activity is accepted (or even encouraged) on the condition that it does not touch immediately political interests: individual atomisation and the scattering of local collectivities.

This attempted retreat from the Welfare state – the Keynesian state, issued from the capitalist responses to the 1929 crisis – indicates the incapacity today of both liberal capitalism and the social-democratic model (and the type of society they legitimate) to respond to the crisis in capital accumulation. However, we should not think that this attempt is not without drawbacks for the hegemonic classes. The anti-democratic measures presupposed by these neo-liberal strategies could, in effect, have an opposite effect. They run the risk of increasing the base of the "discontented" front. Groups which are not used to rubbing shoulders when it comes to social demands could find themselves side by side in refusing what they judge as an aggression against the gains of liberal democracy. Furthermore, there is also a widening of themes and demands (social aid, unemployment, health, education) which are more linked to the exercise of everyday power. The process of forced decentralisation on the model of "everyone for themselves", or the self-sufficiency of each isolated group, is also a double-edged sword. It opens up debate and poses decentralisation as a stake. It is also an occasion for progressive forces to question themselves about democracy and the state as a site for class struggle. Projected into a situation where they are forced to assume responsibility for themselves when the state abandons its responsibilities towards them, groups which struggle against these anti-democratic measures can hardly avoid an analysis of the necessary articulation between their demand for the "democratisation" of the state and the search for new forms of solidarity and a decentralisation which means a real redistribution of power and responsibility.

One must consider the underlying logic of capitalism trying to escape from its structural crises and discover new sources of legitimation to be able to situate the models of social implantation proposed for new communications technologies. They are attempting to respond to specific needs. The need, as the absolute liberty of the market is always accompanied by a maximum of social repression and a reduction of individual liberties, to intimately associate each citizen in the maintenance of public order; the transformation of each user of communication networks into an agent of public order; the need to let all humanity in the technological era be the guardian of its own prison; the political and economic need to redeploy the advertising and commercial approach to reach the mass of consumers in the most miniaturised and localised cubbyhole possible; the necessity of commoditising the increased free time by filling it with "communication"; and the introduction of the schema of use and

exchange value in the whole of civil society and in all domains of individual and social life. Until now, the communication network of liberal-democratic institutionality has functioned as a veritable mass line from above, vertically projecting hegemonic values on the mass of users. To this superstructural line, now insufficient for producing opinion and manufacturing consensus, the ruling classes are attempting to add, through the multiplication of its interlocking communication networks, a mass line from below. They are even giving themselves the luxury of offering user-citizens schemas of "participation". This participation, which reinforces a narcissistic integration into a consumption communication system, can in no way be confused with integration in a democratic system of production and decision-making wherein participation would be established as a central element of the idea of democracy. The President of Warner Cable, the company which promoted the QUBE system (Quesion your tuBE), a cable television system established in Columbus, Ohio, which offers viewers participatory status, has defined how he sees this radical change:

It's not television, not even cable television such as we know it but a superior stage, a supermarket of electronic services. For 30 years, American households have watched television. Today, we have installed an inverter: television is going to watch viewers. (*Télérama* (Paris), August 78).

With the global information networks, the dividing line separating, in everyday life, individuals and institutions, the public sphere and the private sphere, is becoming increasingly blurred. The genuine desire, by many protest groups, for a return to the individual after a period which put too much emphasis on collective ideals, becomes, in the recuperating light of the ruling power's new communication machines, an occasion for a shivering withdrawal into one's shell.

The other pole of the decentralisation project turns it into a stake for the re-definition of democracy (between these two antagonistic poles, decentralisation as atomisation and decentralisation as the reformulation of democracy, can obviously be found many other variants according to the particular circumstances of the relations of force in each society). This project is linked to the emergence of new democratic actors who seek new inter-personal relations and a new group identity, no longer only a

110. On the contradictory stakes of the new communication technologies, see the articles of Section H3 in this volume as well as A. Matelart and J.-M. Piemme, "New Means of Communication: New Questions for the Left", *Media, Culture and Society* (London), 2, 1980.

111. Nicos Poulantzas, "La crise des partis", *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 1979. See also his conversation with Stuart Hall and Alan Hunt, *Marxism Today*, July 1979.

Critical reflection on the political strategies followed by the Left over the last twenty years has arisen also in peripheral countries. See notably the dossier on "Democracy and Socialist Struggle" (by Alan Wolfe, Theotonio dos Santos, Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, Herbert Souza, Ernesto Laclau), *LARU Studies* (Toronto), III, 1, January-April 1979; and the dossier "Populism and Popular Ideologies" (a conference sponsored by the Latin American Studies Committee, Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto), *LARU studies*, III, 2-3, January 1980.

class identity. The recent history of community television and free radios, as well as that of regional demands and all "non-factory", multi-class movements show how important it is not to resign from society at large and to avoid the dangers of being a minority which is always to the advantage of large corporate groups in the last instance.<sup>110</sup> All innovative forces and activities are likely to have a double usage: subversive and counter-subversive. Ecology as a radical questioning of a model of development destructive of the environment, and ecology as the promotion of the "quality of life" synonymous with an approval of the system, which attacks the consequences without touching the causes; regional struggle as the expression of a common will to rediscover a collective identity and its self-management, and the ruling power's localist proposal as a quick and direct access to the transnational culture of consensus. In a world where cultural innovation has deserted large apparatuses, where the appearance of new communication networks unmasks the crisis of official networks as much as the possible advent of practices of rupture, the dominant class, to go beyond their moral crisis and renovate their cultural production, needs to appropriate the creative surplus value of these individual and collective spaces of resistance.

These experiences show us that the question of organisation remain a fundamental question and one must not confuse the crisis of a particular model of organisation, like that affecting the apparatuses of popular parties, with a crisis in the idea of organisation. To believe the contrary is to enter into the logic of over-atomisation which is needed by the model of national and international capital accumulation at the moment. This said, the question of the articulation of all these movements, innovative agents of the historical process, and the large historical popular organisations remains wide open. One month before his tragic death, Nicos Poulantzas attempted to reply to this question:

Such are the main reasons for the crisis of mass workers' parties, at the moment when their presence in society, as in the field of social movements, appears more necessary than ever. For the search for a democratic socialism must succeed in articulating a deepened representative democracy and a democratised state with self-managed centres of direct democracy. Parties constitute an important means of this articulation, despite the current represented by Foucault and Guattari etc. . . . who advocate a complete autonomy of social movements, simple promoters of micro-resistances and fragmentary experimentation. The corporatism, privatisation and recuperation by the bourgeoisie cannot fail, in this case, to distort them, not in an improbable renaissance of a fascistic poujadism, but in an "Americanisation" which threatens European societies. The profound transformation of workers' parties, their internal democratisation, the adaptation of the traditional relations they maintain with mass organisations, an adapted responsibility toward their internal social diversity (intellectuals, for example); all these reforms have become necessary. They will enable the mastering of the effects of the crisis of the political system, while remaining present on the terrain of social movements.<sup>111</sup>

This reminder is undoubtedly important for countries where large historical workers' parties

exist. But it is also important elsewhere, for it enables us to correctly situate the political influence of the new social movements (women, national, racial and sexual minorities) which arise. It enables us to avoid a naive, unilateral celebration which assimilates, a little too rapidly, the emergence of these new movements with an obligatory emergence of new social relations of a new society.

Capitalism today finds it impossible to allow the existence of a critical petite bourgeoisie and needs to associate them, in one way or another, with the management of the new apparatuses of power by delegating certain tasks to them, in the new networks, for example. Once again, what is at stake behind the question of knowledge and competence, are the bases of a class alliance between the popular sectors and intellectual petite bourgeoisie. The change in class relations required by the restructuring of the mode of production will undoubtedly be one of the principal stakes of the next twenty years. This compels the progressive forces to further question the nature of the social division of labour as the foundation of the new power of the technocracy, in a society where the emergence of new forms of social control is more and more linked to technology.

The victory of the popular forces in May 1981 in France – in sharp contrast with the actual crisis of the workers' movement described by trade union leaders and the wind from the Right blowing through most of the advanced capitalist countries – creates the political conditions for an general alternative path to the current logic of the capitalist telematic network dissemination model. The outcome of this struggle is important for the whole of the revolutionary movement which has very rarely had the occasion of questioning in practice the possibilities of a socialist democracy in an advanced capitalist country.

However, the future of the popular movement is being played out elsewhere also. Even if this "elsewhere", choice terrain of the great ideals of liberation in the 1960s-early 1970s, no longer mobilises the central countries to the same extent. Numerous elements have come to interfere with the relations between the centre and the periphery: the dominant feeling, skilfully maintained by the central powers, of the OPEC countries' "guilt" in the energy price rises; the presence of large contingents of immigrant workers, now resented as a "burden" in the recession; the competition of new countries attempting to industrialise; the upsurge of new forms of racism and ethnocentrism; the structural withdrawal of the workers' movement in European countries; the rupture signified by the support given by China to dictatorial regimes like that of Pinochet; the armed conflicts between socialist countries (the invasion of Vietnam by China); the intervention of Vietnam to put an end to the bloodthirsty Pol Pot regime, which aroused international indignation up until the day when the Vietnamese entered Cambodia; and finally, the intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and its disastrous impact on the cohesion of the Non-Aligned countries. Neither should we forget the perplexity in the face of the

112. Joseph Roy, "Marché de l'art. Pavane et fanfare", *L'Express* (Paris), 4-10 October 1980.

revolutionary explosion in Iran whose strange schemas – notably the importance of the cultural-religious factor – are far from entrenched past experiences and ideas, or rather dogmas, on the way dominated peripheral countries may cast off their yoke.

All these events, among others, have fractured the unanimity illustrated by the marches against the Pentagon or the U.S. embassies in Europe calling for an end to the war in Vietnam. Nevertheless, this increasing separation between the central and the peripheral countries, which means that today, the European press, for example, devotes ten times as much space to news on the situation in the Eastern European countries than to the decisive struggles unfolding for some years in El Salvador and Nicaragua, scarcely hides the fact that history is unfolding more and more in this "elsewhere". On all sides, this feeling of being in the process of a shift in hegemony, worries those who, up until now, were used to dominating the world by remote-control. Commenting on the 10th Biennale of antique dealers in Paris and the Burlington House Fair in London, both held within a few weeks of each other in Fall 1980, an art market specialist clearly expressed this sentiment piercing numerous domains of the collective mentality:

A formidable conservative reflex has swept away ten years of fashions with protest overtones. Escapes to distant plains of mystery are out. The Islamic Middle-East is out, pre-Colombian America almost absent, primitive art rare. One sticks to sure and safe values, recognised for a century. This reaction can be sensed in the objects themselves... This solemn, already sparse splendour, this return to traditions seems to exude a dream of grandeur which is slipping away. Illusion or reality? Here, one senses the approaching disappearance of a culture and its most cherished objects, on the point of being swallowed up for ever behind museum doors. An icy tomb which one never leaves.<sup>112</sup>

The distancing of the central countries in relation to the periphery is also measured by the growing autonomy of these dominated countries in respect to what is done and thought in the central countries. The field of research on communication and culture is once again exemplary here. Rather than posing the eternal question (poised yet again by a workshop at the XII Assembly and Scientific Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) held in Caracas in 1980), Can the models of Western science serve the Third World?, it is perhaps time to pose the inverse question: What lessons can be drawn from the experience of struggles undertaken by peripheral countries in the domain of popular communication networks, for the use in Europe and the United States? This enables us to avoid another increasingly current segregation which, by invoking the "lag" between the centre and the periphery, accepts the validity of historical materialism in the study of the "backyard systems" of the Third World and sanctions its own inadequacy to deal with the communication systems of the advanced capitalist societies. This is all the more paradoxical in that for the capitalist classes, the mystifying consciousness of an interdependence between all the components of a world system erase this dividing line.

The way in which revolutionary Mozambique has established a dialectical exchange between what is happening at the level of the creation of alternative media in Italy, and the necessity of creating a popular communication network in this African country is a good example of what reflections and practices, which cease being parallel, can contribute. Mozambique has no television and is afraid that, by installing it, it will reproduce the classic model of the centralised apparatus, difficult to handle and restrictive. This is why Mozambique has chosen to draw the consequences from the Italian experience of local television, but at the same time, extend them further. Whereas in Italy the installation of local television opposed, in an unequal relations of force, the large groups of the culture industries wanting to constitute an audiovisual empire, on the one hand, and on the other, dispersed movements and associations, the Mozambican project offers a dynamic created by the search for the political structures for popular power, wherein a decentralised television can find its *raison d'être*. This is an example among many others which shows the necessity of finding modes of articulation between the struggles of the periphery and the struggles of the centre.

Questions which have been posed in the revolutionary processes of so-called backward countries have been the forerunners of questions that progressive forces in advanced capitalist countries have only posed later. Well before free radios re-appeared in Europe, the questions which they provoked, notably concerning the impossibility of dissociating form and content, were sharply posed in a movement of reflection such as in Chile between 1970 and 1973.<sup>113</sup> However, to avoid repeating past errors in which experiments unfolding in the Third World have been taken as recipes and read as catechism – for how long have China and Cuba been asked to be model examples, before breaking with them? – there is a greater need than ever for a theoretical reflection enabling us to unite the general and the specific and vice versa. This detour through theory is necessary in order to approach these experiences as being problematic, knots of questions, both common and different, and would have the advantage of replying to the current objection "that which happens so far away doesn't concern us".

At a time when the norms of productivism and exponential growth are in an impasse; and when the ideal of technological modernity which laminates the real advances and differences of each people and destroys the natural eco-system (air, water, the living environment) is cracking, the situation in certain peripheral countries, which are gropingly exploring their own paths of liberation and breaking with a social model diffused by the central countries, helps us to

113. See Giovanni Cesareo, "The 'Form of Apparatus' In The Mass Media", *Media, Culture and Society*, 1, 3, July 1979.

114. Cited by Jean Chesneaux in *Le Monde diplomatique*, January 1980.

115. "Entrevista com Godard", *Tempo* (Maputo), 30 July 1978.

116. Armand Mattelart, *Transnationals and The Third World: The Struggle for Culture*, South Hadley, Ma., J.F. Bergin, 1983 forthcoming.

think of the future and formulate the right questions. As Whetu Tirakatene-Sullivan, a Maori woman member of parliament in New Zealand affirms:

We will never succeed in catching up with the train of the West, for it goes much quicker than us and feeds itself on our misery; anyway, it is going in the wrong direction. Let us therefore look for another way, but towards the future and not towards the past.<sup>114</sup>

This is the question put forward by countries which refuse to find the massive importation of satellites and other new technology the solution for the unequal exchange of information, and which militate against the myth of "informative wealth" as a criteria of growth. In the same way that they have begun to criticise economic models of growth, they are beginning to contest models of communication and culture which, up until now, have essentially done no more than distance the world's peoples from one another.

No one better than the filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard has expressed the need to interbreed what Ernst Bloch called "the anticipatory consciousness" of the protest forces of the periphery and those forces in the West which question the Western model of development. In the periphery, this anticipatory consciousness is announced by the critical questioning of the future of the central countries; in the central countries, it is manifested by the technological choices and social movements which foreshadow the choices and movements of tomorrow in the Third World. Before starting to shoot his latest film in Mozambique, a country free of all colonisation by mass culture, free from television and cinema, Jean-Luc Godard remarked:

It is a country that has not yet been contaminated, if I can put it that way, a country where a lot of people have not yet seen a film, and it is undoubtedly for this reason that they can teach us something irremediably lost in other places, in other regions. The way in which we are going to work will perhaps teach us as much about you as you about us.<sup>115</sup>

The pressure of the peripheral countries in this struggle to assert their cultural identity, a new phase of their political liberation, also unfolds in a context that is not exempt from contradictions. This is seen in the divergences arising when it is a question of taking a position in respect to a policy of self-reliance.<sup>116</sup>

In this part of the world, the essential questions are posed by the individuals, groups and organisations which have drawn the lessons from a recent and distant past, and which recognise the need to critically question the relation between "feeling" and "knowing", individuality and collectivity, and mass and organisation. By attempting to multiply forms of direct democracy, they also are rediscovering the plurality of voices which converge towards popular hegemony.

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## Antonio Gramsci NATIONAL-POPULAR LITERATURE, THE POPULAR NOVEL, AND OBSERVATIONS ON FOLKLORE

(Italy, 1929-35)

### THE CONCEPT OF 'NATIONAL POPULAR'

In a note in *Critica Fascista* of 1 August 1930, sorrow is expressed that two big daily papers, one in Rome and the other in Naples, have begun the serial publication of the novels *The Count of Montecristo* and *Joseph Balsam* by Alexandre Dumas and *The Calvary of a Mother* by Paul Fontenay.<sup>1</sup> *Critica* writes:

The French 19th century was undoubtedly a golden age for the serial novel but those papers that reprint novels of a century ago must have a very poor idea of their own readers, as if tastes, interests, literary experiences had not changed in the least since then. Not only that; why not bear in mind that, in spite of opinions to the contrary, a modern Italian novel exists? And to think that these people are ready to shed tears of ink over the unhappy fate of the nation's literature.

*Critica* confuses various types of problems: that of the lack of diffusion among the people of so-called artistic literature and that of the non-existence in Italy of a 'popular' literature, so that the papers are 'forced' to have recourse to other countries. (Certainly nothing theoretically stands in the way of a popular artistic literature, the most striking example is the 'popular' success of the great Russian novelists even today. In fact there is no popular acceptance of artistic literature nor a local production of 'popular' literature because there is no identity in their view of the world between 'writers' and 'people'; that is, popular sentiments are not lived as their own by the writers nor do the writers have a 'national educative' function, that is, they have not and do not set themselves the problem of elaborating popular sentiments which they have relived and made their own.) *Critica* does not even pose these questions and is incapable of drawing 'realistic' conclusions from the fact that if the novels of a century ago give pleasure it means that taste and ideology are precisely those of a century ago. Newspapers are political-financial organs and do not take it on themselves to distribute literature 'in their own columns' if that literature does not increase

This selection of texts was first written between 1929-1935 during the author's imprisonment, and have been published on numerous occasions, including in the anthology Antonio Gramsci, *Marxismo e letteratura*, Giuliano Manacorda, editor; Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1975. Reprinted by permission. It was translated from the Italian by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

their income. The serial novel is a means of circulating among the popular classes (remember the example of *Il Lavoro* of Genoa under the editorship of Giovanni Ansaldo, who reprinted the whole of French literature of this kind while at the same time attempting to give to the rest of his daily a high-cultured tone), which means political and financial success. Newspapers look for such a novel, a kind of novel, which is 'sure' to please the people, which will guarantee an 'enduring and permanent' readership. The man of the people buys only one paper if he buys one at all; the choice of the paper is not even personal but frequently that of the family group. The women are very important in the choice and insist on 'the nice, interesting novel' (which does not mean that the men too do not read the novel; but certainly the women are specially interested in the novel and in the miscellaneous news items.) That is the reason why purely political journals or journals of opinion have never been able to have a wide circulation (except in periods of political struggle). They were bought by young men and women, without excessive family commitments, who were strongly interested in the fortunes of their political opinions, and by a relatively small number of families strongly united in their ideas. In general, newspaper readers do not share the views of the paper they buy and are rarely influenced by them; one should study, from the point of view of journalistic technique, the case of *Il Secolo* and of *Il Lavoro*, which published up to three serial novels in order to achieve a high permanent print run (one must not think that for many readers the serial novel is like high-class 'literature' for cultivated persons: to be familiar with the novel *La Stampa* was publishing was a kind of 'social duty' in the porters' lodge, in the courtyard, in the dancehall. Each instalment gave rise to 'conversations' which sparkled with psychological intuition, the logical capacity for intuition of 'the most distinguished' kind, etc; it can be firmly stated that the readers of serial novels are interested in and are attached to their authors with much greater sincerity and more lively human interest than that shown in the salons of the so-called cultured people for the novels of D'Annunzio or the works of Pirandello).

But the most interesting problem is this: Why must Italian newspapers of 1930, if they wish to increase (or maintain) their circulation have to publish serial novels of a century ago (or modern novels of the same type)? And why does there not exist in Italy a 'national' literature of this kind, in spite of the fact that it would necessarily be financially rewarding? It should be noted that, in many languages, 'national' and 'popular' are synonymous or nearly so (in Russian, for instance, or in German where *volkisch* has an even more intimate meaning of race, or in the Slave languages in general; in French 'national' has a sense in which the term 'popular' has already more political overtones since it is linked to the idea of 'sovereignty': national sovereignty and popular sovereignty have equal value, or used to have). In Italy the term 'national' has a sense which is very restricted ideologically and in any case does not

1. Paul Fontenay, 18th-Century French writer of popular novels of little artistic value. [The footnotes are by the Italian editor, except where otherwise noted.]

coincide with 'popular' because in Italy the intellectuals are remote from the people, that is, from the 'nation' and are bound up instead with a tradition of caste, which has never been broken by a strong popular or national political movement from below. The tradition is 'bookish' and abstract and the typical modern intellectual feels himself closer to Annibal Caro,<sup>2</sup> or Ippolito Pindemonte<sup>3</sup> than to an Apulian or Sicilian peasant. The current term 'nation' in Italy is linked to this intellectual and bookish tradition, hence the ridiculous and basically dangerous ease of calling anyone 'anti-national' who does not have this archaeological and moth-eaten view of the interests of the country.

See the articles by Umberto Fracchia in *Italia Letteraria* of July 1930 and the *Letter to Umberto Fracchia on Criticism* by Ugo Ojetti in *Pegaso* of August 1930. The laments of Fracchia are very similar to those of *Critica Fascista*. The so-called 'artistic' 'national' literature is not popular in Italy. Whose fault is it? That of the public that does not read it? Of the critical writing which is incapable of presenting and extolling literary 'values' to the public? Of the papers which instead of publishing in instalments 'the modern Italian novel' publish the old *Count of Montecristo*? But why does the public in Italy not read while it reads in other countries? And is it true in any case that people do not read in Italy? Would it not be more accurate to pose the problem: why does the Italian public read foreign literature, popular or not, and does not read Italian literature? Has not this same Fracchia published ultimatums to the editors who publish (and therefore must correspondingly sell) foreign works, threatening government measures? And has there not been an attempt at government intervention, at least in part, by the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, Michele Bianchi?

What does the fact that the Italian people prefers to read foreign authors mean? It means that they are under the intellectual and moral hegemony of foreign intellectuals, that they feel themselves closer to foreign intellectuals than to 'domestic' ones; that is, that there does not exist in the country a national intellectual and moral bloc, not in terms of hierarchy and far less in terms of equality. The intellectuals do

2. Annibale Caro (1507-1566), humanist and poet, and author of a famous translation of the *Aeneid*.

3. Ippolito Pindemonte (1753-1828), Veronese poet, author of a famous translation of the *Odyssey* and friend of the great poet, Giacomo Leopardi. [Translator's note]

4. Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), French astronomer, famous for his popular scientific works.

5. Manzoni revised his historical novel, *The Betrothed*, so as to eliminate all provincialisms and to achieve a Tuscan vocabulary and style. [Translator's note]

6. Pierre-Jean Béranger (1780-1857), French satirical poet with a popular tone.

7. Papini wrote an article on Invernizio in *Il Resto del Carlino* during the war, around 1916: see if the article has been collected in a volume. Papini wrote something interesting about this honest, popular literary hen, noting precisely how she made her work to be read by ordinary people. [Gramsci's note]

8. Popular dramatic performances particularly common in Versilia and Tuscany in general.

9. A tragic figure from Dante, exiled and presumably murdered by her husband. [Translator's note]

not spring from the people, even if by accident some of them are of popular origins; they do not feel themselves bound to them (rhetoric apart), and do not know and do not feel the needs, the aspirations, the widespread sentiments, but, as far as the people are concerned, they are something detached, something in the air, a caste, that is to say, something that is not articulated as an organic function of the people itself.

The question must be extended to the whole of popular-national culture and not restricted only to narrative literature; the same things must be said about the theatre, about scientific literature in general (natural science, history etc). Why do writers like Flammarion<sup>4</sup> not appear in Italy? Why has a literature of popular science not emerged as in France and in other countries? These foreign books, when translated, are read and sought after and often enjoy great success. All this means that the 'cultivated class' with its intellectual activity is detached from the people-nation, not because the people-nation has not shown and still shows that it is interested in that activity at all levels, from the lowest (wretched serial novels) to the most elevated, so much so that it looks for foreign books in this connection, but because where the people-nation is concerned, the indigenous intellectual elements are more foreign than the foreigners. The question did not come up for the first time today, it has been there since the foundation of the Italian State and its earlier existence is a document that explains the delay in the political, national and unitary formation of the peninsula (see the book by Ruggero Bonghi on the unpopularity of Italian literature). The question of language posed by Manzoni<sup>5</sup> also reflects this problem, the problem of the intellectual and moral unity of the nation and the state which was sought in the unity of the language. But the unity of the language is one of the external and not exclusively necessary modes of national unity; in any case it is an effect and not a cause. Writings by F. Martini on the theatre: a whole literature on the theatre exists and continues to develop.

In Italy a national-popular literature has always been and continues to be lacking, whether narrative or in another genre. (In poetry types like Béranger<sup>6</sup> have been lacking and in general the type of the French *chansonnier*.) Yet popular writers have existed individually and have enjoyed great success: Guerrazzi had success and his books continue to be published and distributed; Carolina Invernizio<sup>7</sup> has been read and perhaps continues to be so, although she is on a lower level than writers like Ponson and Montépin. F. Mastraini has been read etc.

In the absence of a 'modern' literature of its own, some sectors of the ordinary people have satisfied their intellectual and artistic demands which do exist, in various ways, even if in an elementary and untutored way; the diffusion of the medieval knightly novels *Reali di Francia*, *Guerino detto Meschino* etc, especially in Southern Italy and in the mountains. The *maggi*<sup>8</sup> in Tuscany (the themes dealt with in the *maggi* are drawn from books, stories and especially legends which have become popular, like *Pia dei Tolomei*<sup>9</sup>; there are various publications on the *maggi* and their repertory).

Laymen have failed in their historical task as

educators and elaborators of the intellectual formation and moral conscience of the people-nation; they have not been able to satisfy the intellectual demands of the people, precisely because they have not represented a lay culture, have not managed to work out a modern 'humanism' capable of spreading even among the roughest and most uncultured layers of the people, which was necessary from the national point of view, because they had remained tied to an old-fashioned world, which was mean, abstract, too individualistic or too caste-bound. French popular literature, which is more widely diffused in Italy, on the other hand represents, to a greater or less degree, in a more or less attractive way, this modern humanism, this laicism in its modern guise, represented by Guerrazzi, Mastraini and the few other peasant writers. But if the laymen have failed the Catholics have had no greater success. One must not be taken in by the fair distribution which certain Catholic books have; it is due to the vast and powerful organisation of the Church, not to an internal expansive power; the books are presented at the very numerous ceremonies and are read as a punishment, as an imposition or in despair.

It is a striking fact that in the field of adventure literature the Catholics have been able only to produce shabby stuff; yet they have a first-class source in the travels and in the exciting and often dangerous lives of the missionaries. Yet even during the period of the greatest diffusion of the travel and adventure novel, Catholic literature on the subject has been paltry and in no way comparable to the lay works of French, English and German literature. The adventures of Cardinal Massaia in Abyssinia is the most notable book; for the rest there has been a flood of books by Ugo Mioni (formerly a Jesuit father), which often fall short by any standard. Even in popular scientific literature the Catholics have very little in spite of their great astronomers like Father Secchi (Jesuit) and in spite of the fact that astronomy is the science that interests the people most. This Catholic literature exudes Jesuit apologetics as the goat exudes rankness and is boring in its coarse petty-mindedness. The shortcomings of the Catholic intellectuals and the lack of success of their literature are one of the most striking indications of the deep gulf that exists between religion and the people. The latter finds itself in an extremely miserable state of indifference and of lack of a lively spiritual life. Religion has remained at the level of superstition and has not been replaced by a new lay and humanistic morality because of the impotence of the lay intellectuals (religion has neither been replaced nor profoundly transformed and given a national expression as in other countries, as has happened in the Jesuit movement itself in America; popular Italy is still living in the conditions created directly by the Counter-Reformation; at best religion has combined with pagan folklore and has

10. Henri Richebourg (born 1823), French writer, author of innumerable successful novels; Pierre Decourcelle (1856-1926), French writer, author of plays and comedies as well as numerous novels (*Les deux gosses*, *Le marchand de patrie*, etc).

11. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1822), English writer (*The Mysteries of Udolfo*, *The Italian*, etc).

remained at that stage.)

The serial novel takes the place of (and at the same time encourages) the fantasies of the man of the people, it is a real state of dreaming with open eyes. One can see what Freud and the psychiatrists mean about dreaming with open eyes. In this case one may say that in the people the fantasy is dependent on the 'inferiority complex' (social), which produces long fantasies around the idea of vendetta, of punishment of those responsible for evils endured etc. In *The Count of Montecristo* there are all the elements to nurse such fantasies and therefore to administer a narcotic which blunts the sense of suffering, etc.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF POPULAR NOVEL

There is a certain variety in types of popular novel and it should be noted that although all the types simultaneously enjoy a certain diffusion and success, one of them is by far the most successful. From this success one can identify a change in fundamental tastes, just as from the fact that the various types simultaneously enjoy a certain success one can prove that in the people there exist different cultural strata, different 'masses of sentiment' prevailing in one stratum or another, different popular 'models' of hero. The drawing up of a catalogue of these types and the historical establishment of their relative success is therefore important for the purpose of this essay: (1) the Victor Hugo, Eugene Sue type (*Les Misérables*, *Les Mystères de Paris*) of a markedly ideological and political nature, having a democratic tendency linked to the ideology of 1848; (2) the sentimental type, not political in the strict sense but in which is expressed what one might define as 'sentimental democracy' (Richebourg, Decourcelle<sup>10</sup> etc); (3) the type which presents itself as pure intrigue but has a conservative-reactionary ideological content (Montepin); (4) the historical novel of A. Dumas and of Ponson du Terrail, which over and above its historical character has a political-ideological character, but less marked: Ponson du Terrail is certainly reactionary and conservative but his praise of aristocrats and their faithful servants has a very different character from the historical picture presented by Alexandre Dumas, who however does not have marked democratic-political leanings but is rather pervaded by vague democratic feelings which are 'passive' and often come close to the 'sentimental' type; (5) the detective novel in its twin form (Lecocq, Rocambole, Sherlock Holmes, Arsène Lupin); (6) the Gothic novel (ghosts, mysterious castles etc: Anne Radcliffe<sup>11</sup> etc.) and (7) the scientific adventure and travel novel, which can be tendentious or simply a novel of intrigue (J. Verne, Bousenard).

Each of these types has various national aspects (in America the adventure novel is the epic of the pioneers etc.). One can observe how in the overall production of each country there is an implicit nationalistic sentiment, not expressed rhetorically but skilfully insinuated into the story. In Verne and the French writers the anti-English sentiment, linked to the loss of the colonies and the scars from naval defeats, is very strong; in the travel adventure novel the French clash not with the Germans but with the

English. The anti-English feeling is alive also in the historical novel and even in the sentimental novel (e.g. George Sand; the reaction to the Hundred Years War and the murder of Jeanne d'Arc<sup>12</sup> and the fate of Napoleon).

In Italy none of these types has had (numerous) writers of any distinction (not literary distinction but 'commercial' value in terms of invention, of ingenious plot construction which although complicated is worked out with a certain rationality). Not even the detective novel, which has such international success (and financial success for both authors and publishers) has had authors in Italy; yet many novels, especially historical ones, have taken Italy for their subject and the historical experiences of its cities, provinces, institutions and people. Thus Venetian history with its political, judicial and police organisations has provided material and continues to do so for popular novelists of every country except Italy. A certain success has been achieved in Italy by popular literature on the life of the brigands but the product is of very low quality.

The last and most recent type of popular book is the fictionalised biography, which in every way represents an unconscious attempt to satisfy the cultural demands of some popular sectors which are the most culturally evolved and which are not satisfied with history as presented by Dumas. Even this literature has not many representatives in Italy (Mazzucchelli, Cesare Giardini etc.); not only can the Italians not be compared in terms of numbers, productivity and pleasing literary gifts with the French, German and English, but what is more significant, they choose their subjects outside Italy (Mazzucchelli and Giardini in France, Eucardio Momigliano in England) in order to adapt to Italian popular taste which was formed by historical novels, especially French ones. An Italian writer would not write a fictionalised biography of Cola di Rienzo, Masaniello, or Michele di Lando<sup>13</sup> without feeling it his duty to cram it with tedious rhetorical 'excuses' in case one should think . . . believe . . . , etc. It is true that the success of fictionalised biographies has induced many publishers to begin publishing biographical series but this is a case of books which are to fictionalised biography what *The Nun of Monza* is to *The Count of Montecristo*; it is a case of the usual biographical framework which is often correct philosophically and which can at most find a few thousand readers but not become popular.

One should note that some types of popular novel listed above have counterparts in the theatre and today in the cinema. In the theatre the considerable success of Dario Niccodemi is certainly due to the fact that he has contrived to dramatised views and themes closely linked to popular ideology as in *Scampolo* (The Sample), in *Aigrette*, in *Volata* (Flight) etc. Even in Gioacchino Forzano there is something similar but on the model of Ponson du Terrail with conservative

12. The war fought on French territory between England and France from 1339 to 1459; in 1429 Jeanne d'Arc liberated Orleans but, captured by the English, was tried for witchcraft and burned alive in Rouen in 1431.

13. Leaders of popular uprisings; Cola di Rienzo in Rome in 1347 and 1354, Masaniello in Naples in 1647 against the Spanish, Michele di Lando in Florence with the uprising of the Ciompi, the wool-workers, in 1378.

tendencies. The theatrical work which has had the greatest popular success in Italy is *La Morte Civile* (Civil Death) by Giacometti, which is Italian in character; it has had no worthwhile imitators (still in the non-literary sense). In this branch of the theatre one can see how a whole series of playwrights of great literary value can give very much pleasure to the popular public: Ibsen's *Doll's House* is very well received by most city people, in so far as the sentiments depicted by the author and his moral tendency find a profound echo in popular psychology. What should be the so-called *theatre of ideas* if not this: the representation of passions linked to social mores which represent a 'progressive' catharsis, represent the drama of the most intellectually and morally advanced sector of society which expresses the historical development immanent in the existing mores themselves? These passions and that kind of drama must however be depicted and not developed like a thesis, a propaganda speech; that is, the author must live in the real world with all its contradictory demands and not express sentiments absorbed solely from books.

### OBSERVATIONS ON FOLKLORE

Giovanni Crocioni (in *Problemi fondamentali del folklore* (Fundamental Problems of Folklore, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1928) criticises as confused and imprecise the classification of folklore material proposed by Pitré in his 1897 preface to *Bibliografia delle tradizioni popolari* (Bibliography of Popular Traditions) and proposes a categorisation of his own in four sections: art, literature, science, and popular morality. But this categorisation has also been criticised as imprecise, badly defined and too broad. Raffaele Ciampini, in *Fiera Letteraria* of 30 December 1928 asks: 'Is this scientific? How, for example, do superstitions fit in? And what does popular morality mean? How does one study it scientifically? And why then not talk about popular religion?'

We can say that up to now folklore has been prevalently studied as a 'picturesque' subject (in reality, up to now what has been collected is only material for scholarly work and the science of folklore has consisted primarily of studies of methods of gathering, selecting and classifying such material, that is, of the study of the practical precautions and the empirical principles necessary for the profitable development of a particular aspect of scholarly work; in saying this we do not ignore the historical importance and significance of some great folklore scholars). One ought to study it instead as a 'concept of the world and of life', to a large extent an implicit one, of a given strata of society (defined in terms of time and space) in opposition (this too, is mostly implicit, mechanical, objective) to the 'official' concepts of the world (or, in a wider sense, those of the cultured sectors of a historically determined society), which have followed each other in the course of historical development. (Hence the close relationship between folklore and 'common-sense', which is the folklore of philosophy.) A concept of the world not only not elaborated and unsystematic because the people (that is, the totality of the subaltern and instrumental classes of every form of society that has existed up to now) by definition cannot have elaborated systematic ideas, politically

organised and centralised in the course of their contradictory development, but because this development is complex. Complex not only in the sense of being diverse and juxtaposed, but also in the sense of being stratified from the most crude to the less crude; if, indeed, one should not speak of an undigested mass of fragments of all the concepts of the world and of life which have succeeded each other in history, the great majority of which are found only in folklore as the surviving mutilated and contaminated documents.

Modern thought and science also contribute continually new elements to 'modern folklore' in so far as certain scientific notions and certain opinions torn from their contexts and more or less distorted, continually fall into the popular domain and are 'inserted' into the mosaic of tradition. (The *Scoperta dell'America* (The Discovery of America) by C. Pascarella shows how the ideas diffused by textbooks and by the Popular University on Christopher Columbus and on a whole series of scientific opinions can be assimilated in a bizarre manner.) Folklore can be understood only as a reflection of the conditions of the cultural life of the people, although certain concepts specific to folklore continue to exist even after the conditions have (or seem to be) changed, giving rise to bizarre combinations.

Certainly a 'people's religion' exists, especially in the Catholic and Greek Orthodox countries, very different from that of the intellectuals (if they are religious) and especially from that organically organised by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although it can be held that all religions, even the most polished and refined, are 'folklore' in relation to modern thought. The prime difference is that religions, especially the Catholic one, have been 'elaborated and systematised' by intellectuals and by the ecclesiastical hierarchy and therefore present special problems. (It remains to be seen whether this elaboration and systematisation may not be necessary to maintain the diffusion of a complex folklore: the state of the Church before and after the Reformation and the Council of Trent and the different historical-cultural development of the Reformed countries and of the orthodox ones after the Reformation and Trent are very significant elements.)

Thus it is true that a 'popular morality' exists, understood as a defined body (in time and space) of maxims for practical conduct and the forms of behaviour that derive from them or have produced them; a morality that is strictly tied, like superstition, to real religious beliefs. There exist imperatives which are much stronger, more tenacious and effectual than those of the official 'morality'. In this sphere, too, one has to distinguish between different strata: those which are fossilised, which mirror conditions of past life and are therefore conservative and reactionary, and those which are a series of innovations, often creative and progressive, determined spontaneously by the forms and conditions of life in a process of development and which are in contradiction to or simply different from the morality of the ruling strata.

Ciampini agrees very much with the need, on which Crocioni insists, for folklore to be taught in teacher-training schools, but then denies that the question of the usefulness of folklore can be raised

(there is undoubtedly confusion between 'the science of folklore', 'knowledge of folklore' and 'folklore', that is, 'the existence of folklore'; it seems Ciampini actually means to say 'the existence of folklore'. Thus teachers ought not to challenge the Ptolemaic concept which is itself folklore). For Ciampini, folklore (?) is an end in itself or only useful in so far as it offers a people the elements for a deeper knowledge of itself (here folklore should read 'knowledge and science of folklore'). To study superstitions in order to uproot them would be for Ciampini as if folklore committed suicide, while science is merely disinterested knowledge, an end in itself! But then why teach folklore in teacher-training schools? To increase the disinterested culture of the teacher? To show them what they must not destroy? As is apparent, Ciampini's ideas are very confused and indeed deeply incoherent, since in another text Ciampini himself will recognise that the State is not agnostic but has its own concept of life and has a duty to spread it by educating the masses of the nation. But this formative activity of the State, which finds expression — over and above in general political activity — especially in school, does not develop from nothing or on nothing; in reality it is in competition with and in contradiction to other explicit and implicit concepts and among them by no means the least or least tenacious is folklore which must however be 'overcome'. To know folklore means, therefore, that the teacher should know what other concepts of the world and of life are actually at work in the mental and moral formation of the youngest generations, so as to root them out and to substitute for them concepts which are considered superior. From the elementary schools up to . . . the faculties of agriculture, in reality, folklore was already systematically under attack: the teaching of folklore to teachers ought to reinforce still more this systematic work.

Certainly to achieve this end one would have to change the spirit of folklore research besides deepening and widening it. Folklore must not be thought of as an oddity, something strange or picturesque, but as something very serious and to be taken seriously. Only thus will teaching be more efficient and really bring about the birth of a new culture in the large popular masses, that is to say, the gap between modern culture and popular culture or folklore will disappear. An activity of this kind, carried out in depth, would correspond on the intellectual level to what the Reformation was in the Protestant countries.

**Michèle Mattelart**

**CHILE:  
POLITICAL FORMATION  
AND THE CRITICAL  
READING OF TELEVISION  
(Chile, 1971; France, 1978)**

It is difficult for any reflection on communication policies not to investigate audience ratings which are the traditional way of knowing what the public thinks. While the primary objective of the audience polls is to regulate the market rationality in the distribution of cultural goods, and also to emphasize the democratic value of the audience contact, one would have to be very clever to be able to say which of these two requirements was the most important. In the meantime, a model of production and a "universal" speech continue to be legitimised and justified, encouraging this mechanical reduction of publics, unified by their membership in the club of consumers. This model supposedly corresponds to the desires and tastes of everyone, but in fact, it espouses the particular contours of the demand which is supposed to emanate from the "average man", that ambiguous receiver of mass communications in the service of social inertia.

Between 1970 and 1973 Chile went through a deepening of social contradictions and a radicalisation of class struggle in which two historic projects confronted each other daily in all sectors of social life. What had been given to be read as universal values by the dominant classes, acquired, in the light of the specific interests and particular demands which emerged from the masses mobilised in the construction of their future, both its historical sense and the conditions of its reversibility.

Television research, of which a few fragmentary results will be presented here, was inscribed in this particular moment and partook of this experience.<sup>1</sup>

Undertaken in Santiago in 1971, it responded to a precise operational goal. It was a question of persuading, through an investigation into the attitudes and the demands of the television publics, the tendency to reproduce existing conditions, manifest in certain left sectors who remained prisoners of economist tendencies and misunderstood the productive dimension of the cultural and ideological front on the political level. The possibilities of change within the national television apparatus were certainly

This text is a summarised version of a Spanish text originally written with Mabel Piccini in Chile 1971, and was first published as "La television y los sectores populares" in *Comunicación y Cultura* (Buenos Aires), 2, March 1974. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1982. Reprinted by permission of the author. This is its first English publication.

handicapped by the persistence of the Christian Democrats' personnel, and the quota system (the proportional distribution of personnel between the left parties) imposed by the Popular Unity regime. On top of this, a policy of change ran the risk of being held back by the laws of the market and the necessity of competing with the conservative parties' channels which continued operation. However, when it was a question of establishing the programming for the national television, the arguments put forward to continue, for example, soap operas and musical variety shows at peak viewing hours, revealed, among other things, the weight of opinion polls and with them, the bourgeois modes of knowledge. From the heaviest and irrevocable legitimations, flourished invocations like, "that's what the people want", "that's what corresponds to the public taste". Given this, a debate on the notion of popular culture found itself engaged against the dominant tendency to confine the 'popular' to a given state of consumption, calculated by opinion polls, and omitting (venial sin?) to take into account the incidence of the 'popular' at the production level.

Here we must consider the way different left political currents invest, confront, and express themselves in the cultural sphere. The policies set up in the communications apparatuses, defined as producers of 'a consensus' or 'common will', permit us to see how these last two notions function as anchors for strategies and tactics within political projects whose contours they embrace. The left expressed two projects which closely corresponded to different projects of class alliances on the information and mass culture front. For certain sectors of the Popular Unity, the dynamics of this alliance had to come from the necessity of rallying the middle classes, whose utopia remained central in the search for a consensus. The other project, a minority within the Popular Unity but counting, as we shall see, on a large popular base, proposed to link up the apparatuses of cultural production with the concrete moments of the taking of power. This latter project triumphed, after the big October crisis, in Channel 9 of the University of Chile, which was opened totally to the dynamic of the workers' movement which had stopped the corporatist offensive of the employers' associations, professional organisations, doctors' and lawyers' associations etc. On the other hand, in the national television Channel 7, the first project was implanted, fractured from time to time by some isolated productions.

The research we carried out was part of this debate. In opposition to the abstract knowledge of a homogenised public with frozen passive values attached to consumerism, it proposed a concrete knowledge of the modes of circulation and consumption of television messages among the various sectors of the Chilean working class. In this way we took into account the discontinuous character of the demands which emerges from this 'public', particularly in times

1. This research was also integrally published in Spanish in Armand and Michèle Mattelart's *Frentes culturales y movilización de masas*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1977, and in French in the *De l'usage des medias en temps de crise*, Paris, Alain Moreau, 1979. The co-author, Mabel Piccini, an Argentinian researcher, is currently exiled in Mexico.

of crisis and rupture of the traditional order where the middle classes no longer generate the demands which now correspond to those of the popular sectors who have the dynamic of change.

This study also proposed to evaluate what the opinion polls neglect, namely the effect of television, the procedures of consumption, the degrees of criticism, or even rejection which can be covered over in the act of consuming the dominant cultural products; thus refuting the inescapably passive character that one is tempted to attach to the masses' reception of the messages destined for them.

This procedure, which provides a radically new way of studying the effects of the mass media, moreover is in harmony with the recently felt need to mediate the general notion of cultural imperialism, by considering the particular realities of domination that are covered over by this notion. These particularities are defined from specific modes of resistance, arising from national popular cultures and historical phases likely to encourage (or not) ideological mobilisation.

To test the concrete functioning of the mass media, it is important to analyse as closely as possible this relation of 'domination' to eventually explain the silence or the response of the masses faced with the mechanisms of power. And also to explain the possible disturbances arising from the alternatives proposed by the parties supposed to represent them, and the alternatives which are contained in the masses already, coiled in a history and a culture of resistance.

This type of study, exploratory as it is on the methodological level, has the great value of helping to constitute a practical knowledge of the conditions in which ideological struggle is engaged, seen as a concrete field of class struggle. It is the living, diverse and diffuse aspect of this reality which is represented today by the anti-establishment free radios or local newspapers in the western democracies as well as the forms of derision, humour and resistance to censorship, yesterday in the Portugal of Salazar and the Spain of Franco and today in Brazil and Chile.

## GUIDELINES

To measure the different levels of appreciation and criticism created by television practice among the

2. Most of these *poblaciones* have been disbanded. Nueva La Habana suffered the most radical repression. Their inhabitants have been dispersed to other zones and uprooted from these centres of urban concentration. Needless to say, they have been given new names by the military regime.

3. These various workers' ensembles can be briefly characterised as follows:

*Población Ex-Sumar*: a residential area established by the textile company Sumar (called Ex-Sumar in the Popular Unity period) which was designed to facilitate the grouping of skilled workers in the immediate neighbourhood of the industrial complex. Its essential trait: Ex-Sumar had not been the outcome of struggles for housing, but the fruit of an employer policy linked to the interests of the textile monopoly. The *población* was provided with good domestic equipment and a very homogenous social base, which in spite of the nationalisation of the textile industry, presented a low level of political mobilisation, maintaining a deep separation between the *población* and the factory, between

various sectors of the Chilean working class, we took as our universe of work the outlying residential zones normally called *poblaciones* (shanty towns). In spite of what one might think, these *poblaciones* are not where one finds social disintegration, or for that matter, concentrations of *lumpen*, but the only places where the working classes, or even office workers, can live. The reason we did our research in the *poblaciones* was to reply to one of the basic questions of the study: is the residential unit the natural setting for television? The consumption of television is inscribed, in effect, in the surroundings and the specific temporality of everyday life, and is closely linked to family life and the organisation of free time by different social groups. In this way, when we speak of "working class audiences" for television we include not only individuals and groups engaged in the industrial production process (men especially) but also women linked directly or indirectly with this mode of production, and the young people who constitute its reserve forces.

We decided to apply our study to four *poblaciones*, after having tried to define through an initial exploration their principal characteristics, in order to obtain the most representative working class sample. The *poblaciones* Ex-Sumar, La Victoria, San Gregorio and Nueva La Habana were chosen.<sup>2</sup> These areas represent (hierarchically) at least three moments of working class protest action emanating from their residential units in the domains of housing, health, work and education. However, even if their demands are of the same type, considerable differences can exist in the way these are articulated in a revolutionary strategy. In effect, each *población* chosen represents a very precise level within the *poblaciones* front and therefore different modes of social practice resulting from the internal dynamic created by the interplay of numerous variables. Among them are the dominant social base, the type of political leadership, the type of internal organisation, the conditions and the forms in which the terrain had been conquered, and derived from this last variable, the type of relation with the State. These internal conditions encourage different articulations with the general political conjuncture and permit the formation and expression of different levels of class consciousness and different forms of political participation and mobilisation.<sup>3</sup>

the interests of the workers and the "specific" interests of the *pobladores*. The type of organisation which governed community life, rather poorly developed, came from the model implanted by the Christian-Democratic Frei administration: neighbourhood committees, mothers' centres, sports centre. These instances of local power remained under the hegemony of Christian Democracy, despite the presence of dispersed left elements.

*La Victoria* and *San Gregorio*: there are sufficient similarities between these two *poblaciones* to present them together. Both date from the government of Jorge Alessandri (Conservative Party, 1959-64) and responded to the assistance programs and urgent housing plans set up to meet the explosive pressure of the proletarian sectors. Both zones in expansion, they were characterised in 1971 by their low level of equipment and progressive construction plans. Their social composition reflected a certain popular heterogeneity (unskilled workers, employees and *lumpen*). One important difference in the origin and subsequent development of the two *poblaciones* is the fact that La

Inside this world of the *poblaciones* we carried out 100 selected interviews based on the following variables: (1) contact with television and sufficient experience with its programming; (2) proportional distribution of various political tendencies; and (3) equal distribution between the two sexes.

The second criteria of selection tried to reconstruct the plurality of politico-ideological expression within the working class. In order to establish the approximate percentages of these tendencies, we used the results of the previous presidential election (1970) as a basis of reference. Therefore 60% of the interviews were carried out among sympathisers or militants of the different left parties (whether or not they were part of the Popular Unity government) and the other 40% among sympathisers or militants of the opposition parties (Christian Democrats, National Party, and the rightwing fraction of the Radical Party). The study was organised on this fundamental variable.

The number of television sets, which until the end of the 1960s remained heavily concentrated among the middle and upper classes, began to increase among the working class from 1970. The project to redistribute consumer goods implemented by the Allende Government, but begun under the Frei administration, set off the large-scale purchasing of television sets, aided by credit plans and lower prices. However, to make up for the absence of sets in many working class homes,<sup>4</sup> collective television was installed in cultural centres or in people's homes. This mode of reception, unique to the popular sectors, is also not taken into account by the opinion polls which only consider the 'classical' norms of viewing as being the family unit.

*If television makes no distinction between publics, the public make a distinction between the different effects of television.*

The *poblaciones* in their great majority, over and

Victoria was the result of the first occupation of land to take place in Santiago, and of the direct struggle of the *pobladores* for housing (which they constructed themselves). San Gregorio, on the other hand, was the fruit of a policy of State assistance. The mechanisms of community integration which functioned in both were inspired by the system of power installed by the Christian Democrats, even if there was a change on a level of political hegemony. Even through the Christian Democrats and the National Party (the traditional Right) remained at the head of certain organisations, the popular parties, for the most part, disputed and conquered local power (which, in terms of a cultural front, did not necessarily mean a radical break).

Nueva La Habana represented, of the *poblaciones* chosen, a qualitatively different instance of the urban proletarian movement. The result of a new political strategy from the revolutionary sectors within and outside the Popular Unity, even its designation of "encampment" refers to the new character of the struggle on land conquered in flagrant violation of bourgeois legality. For, even if the "land taking" was carried out peacefully in November 1970 with the indirect support of the popular government who decided not to repress the workers, it was nonetheless an 'illegal' takeover. The necessity of defending this conquest gave birth to a contingent with a great capacity for combativity and power of mobilisation. These encampments, and Nueva La Habana in particular, succeeded in forming a sort of 'free territory', often in open contradiction

above the political contradictions. They were conscious that TV does not operate in homogenous fashion on society as a whole, but particularly, works differently in each social layer. It is certain that the drastically unequal character of the distribution of goods and possibilities in a dependent country has every chance of intensifying this consciousness. The above context will always refute the dominant 'classes' notion of a public as a compact ensemble, by opposing it with a notion of a broken up, discontinuous public which represents the class character of audiences, their interests, specific needs and the distinct modalities which mark their use of a medium.

Question: *Are the effects of television identical on people who are well-off and people from the poblaciones?*

	Left Sectors		Right Sectors	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Identical effects	8	5	30	25
Different effects	87	88	65	70
No response	5	7	5	5
	100	100	100	100

Those who agree that the effects are similar (more numerous in the right wing, opposition sector) referred to the stereotype of a universal and democratic television in which various groups would find a cohesion through the media, united in the fascination exercised by the image and by the desire to imitate the same values. The reasons invoked were of this type: "Television is for the whole country. Kids from rich areas as well as kids from the *poblaciones* want to imitate what they see on television" (*Poblador* from San Gregorio); "We all have the same motivations; before, the rich went to the cinema, now they watch television like everybody else" (*Pobladora* from San Gregorio); "Television interests everyone and is everywhere" (*Pobladora* from Nueva La Habana);

with the State and its apparatuses.

The social base of the encampment was composed of the fraction of the proletariat with the lowest wage scale and from a high proportion of crisis sectors. The encampment tried to absorb in its organisations, a large part of this mass on the edge of the production process by incorporating them into work brigades responsible for constructing housing. A preliminary negotiation with State organisms had allowed the application of a new construction plan. Among the four *poblaciones* chosen, Nueva La Habana had the lowest level of consumption and the most precarious living conditions. However, on the level of organisation, it constituted an original experiment.

The traditional organisations, which often proved to be bureaucratic forms of local power, were replaced by a politico-administrative organisation which took a block of houses as the basic cell of a structure diversified into *fronts* (work, health, housing, security, culture, green spaces, etc) in permanent interaction and correlation with two higher authorities, the *jefatura* and *el directorio*. However, in the last instance, a popular assembly solved the most important problems of the *población*. The fronts generated, through internal discussion, decisions relative to the *población*, and if necessary, imposed them on State organisms.

4. In 1972 there were 400,000 television sets in greater Santiago; 64% were concentrated in the middle and upper classes, 36% among the popular classes.

"The effects are similar because the programs are made for everyone. Television does not make any distinctions" (*Pobladora* from Ex-Sumar).

On the other hand, there are three levels of intervention amongst those claiming that the effects are different.

1. Both categories agreed that the importance granted to television in the organisation of free time is in function of the material possibilities of each social sector. This factor also determines the amount of time the small screen occupies among sources of distraction.

People from rich areas have other ways of amusing themselves. They don't attach much importance to TV. On the other hand, television is very important in the *poblaciones*. (*Pobladora* from La Victoria).

The residents of the *población* don't have the money for other diversions. (*Pobladora* from San Gregorio).

2. The differences are analysed in function of cultural variables. The higher the cultural level, the greater the impermeability to the media and vice-versa, the lower the cultural level, the greater the permeability, adherence and faith in television. The dominant hierarchy of values transmitted by television meets with less resistance in the *poblaciones* which expect more from the media, in so far as their chances of access to other sources of culture, information and amusement are more reduced.

In the left sectors:

People with means have another level of life and knowledge. They know everything said on TV. (*Pobladora* from San Gregorio).

Rich people are brighter, less naive; they don't let themselves be taken in like the *pobladores*. (*Pobladora* from Nueva La Habana).

The difference in culture and education means that people from the *población* are more permeable to, more affected by television. They swallow it. (*Poblador* from La Victoria).

In the opposition sectors:

People with large incomes have another culture. They can take pleasure in programs of symphonic music, for example. The *pobladores* can't. (*Poblador* from La Victoria).

Because of their level of education, the population of the *poblaciones* are much simpler; they become worked up much more easily; television has more impact on them. (*Poblador* from Ex-Sumar).

The effects are different: people from the *población* are much more ignorant, they let themselves be influenced too easily. People with more culture are not so influenced by television. (*Pobladora* from San Gregorio).

3. The third type of response represents a higher level of critical perspective of the phenomenon. It tends to emphasize that, given the divergences of objective class interests, the demands expressed by various social sectors are not the same. The pinpointing of this fundamental clivage is accompanied by another idea: the mechanisms of alienation operate differently from one social sector to another, given the divorce which exists between their respective environments and possibilities. In effect, the living standard of the bourgeoisie is compatible with the style of goods and social status advertised by the media. The dispossessed classes, on the other hand, subjected to the same shows and advertisements, have no other evasion

than to consume the signs of this unequal distribution.

In the left sectors:

It doesn't cost people from well-off areas very much to follow the fashions on TV. People from the *poblaciones* have to steal, or break and enter to have that. (*Poblador* from Ex-Sumar).

One's economic situation and qualifications are very important. For example, the bourgeois buys the washing machine on TV for his wife, but the *poblador* takes it like a kick in the face. (*Poblador* from Nueva La Habana).

Luxury doesn't have the same alienating effect on them because luxury is a part of their life. (*Poblador* from Nueva La Habana).

There are special programs for people from well-off areas, they don't want to see poverty, they don't want it shown on television. (*Pobladora* from Ex-Suma).

In the opposition sectors:

The effects are different because the knowledge and the means are different according to whether people are rich or poor. For example, when they talk on television about making an exquisite meal, who are they talking to? In the *población*, we don't have the means to cook like that. (*Pobladora* from La Victoria).

The upper classes are not interested in programs on the *población*, whereas we have to see too many programs which only refer to them. (*Poblador* from La Victoria).

The fact that the great majority of the working class seems to recognise that television exercises different effects on different sectors of society by no means signifies that the various groups and tendencies which make up this class evaluate uniformly the role that television could fill regarding the individual and the social group to which he belongs. The level of class consciousness and the nature of the political project which a man or woman follows are factors of essential discrimination here.

35% of the men and 33% of the women belonging to the sectors supporting the Popular Unity project, attributed a positive value to the effects produced on themselves and on their social group by television. In the sectors of opposition to the Popular Unity project, these percentages were 37.5% and 50% respectively. This consensus was established on the recognition of the role which television fills as a dispenser of culture, information, and amusement. *The desire and the need to learn*, but also to be amused, and to be informed about what is happening in the country and the world, are, at least, partially satisfied in the programming of the small screen. Note however, that this demand for education is not formulated in a homogenous fashion in the various *poblaciones* and the political circles. In Ex-Sumar, for example, which benefits, as we have said, from less precarious living conditions, it becomes the need to incorporate the cultural elements which make up the panoply of the 'average man', a codified knowledge situated to some extent outside the requirements of concrete life, and conferring prestige and status:

Television brings us elements of knowledge which we would not otherwise know. It tells us of the latest progress and innovations. It shows us people with knowledge who share part of their culture with us.

In flagrant contrast is this opinion from a woman from Nueva La Habana;



We are surprised and stupefied when we see films about great discoveries, but we don't even know how our men work, the way of working in the coal mines, for example. We know more about astronauts than miners.

There is a great divorce between these two demands for knowledge. The first refers to an audience which confusedly considers its class as a moment capable of being surpassed through an integration into modernity. The "universal values" distributed by television are considered necessary to assimilate in order to overcome conditions of marginality. The social role of the media is situated in a perspective of individual advancement. Opinions like "television allows me to keep in contact with the community", "it serves to unite people" are, in fact, responses conforming to the project of social integration which the technological means of communication serve by eroding away the tangible aspect of class contradictions.

The second demand, a demand for another type of knowledge, refers to critical evaluations of the effects of television which emerge in the most radical sectors, who analyse, often verbosely, the social control mechanisms implemented by television and the demobilising effects it produces. It is the whole organisation of a given mode of leisure and everyday life that is indicted. By conforming to the norms of private life and isolation in the family enclosure, by developing forms of amusement cut off from the concrete life of these sectors, the television circuit enters into contradiction with the efforts made from the *poblaciones* front<sup>5</sup> to promote the organisation and mobilisation of these popular sectors. A leader of Nueva La Habana explained:

In our *población*, there are a lot of TV sets. The comrades make sacrifices to buy them and afterwards, naturally, they want to profit as much as possible. Every evening, they are transfixed in front of the programs and watch everything. We think that currently, television is a factor of permanent demobilisation. Because they watch television and are drenched with bourgeois ideology, these comrades don't participate in organisations and become used to not struggling. While we are making efforts to arouse the interest of the *poblador* for the construction of badly-needed houses, the television shows him a car, and unfortunately, the *poblador* begins to think of it much too much. Television undoes the work done elsewhere.

## TWO TRADITIONAL GENRES AND A CLASS INTERPRETATION

When one confronts the popularity ratings of various programs with the working-class criticisms of programming policy, accused on the one hand of continuing to give preference to North-American programs and, in general, fiction and entertainment shows, and on the other, of insufficiently documenting the new reality that the country is constructing, one cannot fail to be astonished by the apparent contradiction. For if

5. The research from where we take these fragments studies in detail the different ways the political parties with the biggest working class audience envisaged the cultural front and the ideological struggle.

6. Latin America produces and consumes a very high proportion of these series which have an equivalent in the press in the photo-novel. Today, under the Latin-American dictatorships, this genre is undergoing a renewal.

the people interviewed had a sharp critical sense, formulating new demands, even constructing alternatives for the media, on the level of everyday consumption, they remained under the weight and influence of the traditional programming. If obliged to define their preferences within the normal framework, they subscribed to traditional "tastes", and seemed dedicated to the conventional order which governs television programming. Soap operas and detective series are two genres which command the greatest approval of the Latin-American popular public.<sup>6</sup> To discover if a uniform interpretation and a large-scale satisfaction are hidden behind this vast popular viewing, we tried to study the concrete attitude of the working public *vis-à-vis* this genre of program and to clarify the procedures of its reception.

## THE SERIES AND SOAP OPERAS

Conceived as a space where specifically feminine conflicts unfold, the series or soap opera generates a very clear segregation between the two sexes at the level of consumption. But there is also another segregation operating within the feminine category. For if the construction of the genre is designed for a mainly feminine audience, women are capable of having very different attitudes towards it, perceiving, for example, the ideological mechanisms at play within this narrative system.

Those who approve the soap opera (proportionally less numerous than those who follow them regularly) justify them by the following arguments: they are easy programs which keep the audience excited through continual activities and multiple comings and goings. They touch on real problems of a sentimental nature which are found in everyone's experience; a typical mechanism of identification which is one of the powerful trumps of the genre. They show individuals crossing over class barriers (a question of symbolic revenge? The *pobladores* focus on this capacity to struggle against social inequalities, crowned with success). They propose a feminine specificity which is inscribed in the romantic order of things (the *pobladores* in particular appreciate this theme as being what they see as a protest against their condition as women).

However, the success of the series and soap operas (witnessed by the statistics) does not take into account the different interpretations given to them and conceals in particular an ensemble of contradictions flourishing in the comments and criticisms of their most faithful clients. In part, the *pobladores* recognise the narrative code which governs this type of story, unifying everyone in one and the same text. They discover, moreover, that this code has its own internal logic, its own laws, which have nothing to do with the laws of concrete reality.

A large percentage of *pobladores* pointed out, in effect, the fundamental similarity existing between the various soap operas. The fact that they recognise invariable laws throughout the thematic variations demonstrates, on the one hand, their vast knowledge of these 'stories', and on the other, the slight distance, irony or the frankly critical attitude which they have towards this genre of story. The most demystified viewing was found among the women from Nueva La

Habana.

In the left sectors:

These series always show young people, daddy's boys, individuals with posh jobs, in the role of lovers, never a *poblador*. The people always appear in the role of the subordinate or the young girl who, thanks to a miraculous meeting, becomes a 'lady' from one minute to the next. But education and social position aren't bought just like that. These series give a deformed vision of reality. To confront society in reality is not so easy. (*Poblador* from Ex-Sumar)

It's always an impossible love story between rich and poor. Society is seen to be unjust for preventing this romance, but the fact that society makes people die of hunger is of no interest. (*Pobladora* from Nueva La Habana).

Perhaps stories similar to those shown in television series can occur in reality, but at what price? In reality, one cannot become rich without exploiting someone else, while these serials show the path to wealth as being easy. On whose backs do these young men and women become rich? All this gives false hope to working-class people. (*Poblador* from Nueva la Habana).

In the opposition sectors:

All the romantic serials are the same; a rich man falls in love with a servant girl. The action and the ending are always the same as well. (*Pobladora* from Ex-Sumar).

Generally, they exploit the same type of situation; romantic problems, poverty, and the personal efforts one must make to pull through. (*Pobladora* from La Victoria).

It is very rare in reality to come across the situations shown in the series. They show aspirations, but in reality people cannot concretise them so easily. (*Pobladora* from Ex-Sumar).

## DETECTIVE AND SPY SERIES

Unlike soap operas, the detective genre attracts the interest of both men and women.

The majority of the public base their liking of this type of program on its value as 'pure amusement'; the audience's emotions are not engaged, but on the contrary, they encourage a relation of participation (rather than a process of identification) which triggers an intellectual activity to solve the *enigmas* of the story. In this respect, there are two levels of appreciation:

1. One is limited to pointing out the efficiency of the classical ingredients of the genre: action, suspense, exoticism. Political connotations, not lacking in series like "Mission Impossible" or "The FBI", do not pass unnoticed in the eyes of the most mobilised individuals, but are displaced because of the pleasure given by those elements interpreted as being characteristic of the genre.

2. The other values more specifically the pleasure and the intellectual work required for unscrambling the genre's rules: the unknowns, alibis, lost and found leads, and the technological gadgets which intervene in the progression of the action and the resolution of the puzzle.

However, a first critical look finds a certain consensus between all sectors concerning the norms which govern the type of distraction and use of free time which these series offer:

— the vacuity of the genre is stressed, its value

being limited to "distraction" ("a waste of time", some said), divorced from any "educational pretensions". Here, we have an echo of the repeated demand of the working public that television, taken as a substitute for the sources of formal education which are lacking, should provide knowledge and not disassociate education from free time. (We have very briefly noticed above in two comments that this educative mission of TV can be very differently interpreted and conceived); and

— the amount of violence contained by this genre is denounced as well as the demonstrative effect attributed to it: the increase in delinquency in the world of the *poblaciones* is thought to have a relation with these programs which effect mainly children and young people.

This homogeneity of the various sectors, apparent in the two previous levels, breaks down when confronted with the ideological structures of this type of story. The political variable then has a significant effect. Whereas 35% of the right opposition sectors (men and women) explicitly approve the system of values consecrated by these series, a similar percentage in the other sectors give critical interpretation of the conception of the order underlying the detective genre.

1. Right-wing *pobladores* tend towards a "realist" interpretation of detective films. Victims of the conventions of "truth" implemented by the bourgeois narrative, they establish an analogy between the "themes" treated by the genre and the everyday problems they live through.

They compare the "show" to their own context, breaking off elements of the story which present an analogy to their own reality: rapes, alcoholism, vagrancy, delinquency, drugs etc. From a mechanical transposition of the elements of the story to their own life, they subscribe totally to the ideological scheme which underlies the series, in the way that they interpret reality and erect a principle of order with which to resolve the conflicts. For this reason, a high value is given to the efficiency with which the repressive apparatuses fight against vice and delinquency ("these series show the truth and find solutions to problems, it should be like that in the *población*", *Poblador* from San Gregorio). This approval of the principle of order attains its culminating point with the justifications for the police institution and its special forces. The importance of their mission is underlined and the "self-sacrifice" and "humanity" of their function as "watchman for the people", and as the guardian angels of law and the community are celebrated.

2. Left-wing *pobladores* tend to read detective series as products of a social class which insinuates, through its cultural objects, an interpretative grid of reality and a determined concept of social relations. They first denounce, in general, the link between these programs (of North-American fabrication) and the imperialist transmitter and its mechanisms of domination and aggression against the dependent people. Secondly, they express a consciousness of belonging to the oppressed and their class solidarity with them enters into conflict with the rules of a genre which too often puts them in the role of the "bad guy" or "thug".

Because of their content and intention, I prefer not to see these series. It is sufficient to see the characters; the hero or good guy is always American, while the others, murderers etc come, in general, from a socialist country. The North American comes over as being super-brilliant, and has all the authority he needs to intervene in the affairs of any country. (*Poblador* from La Victoria).

These programs always show the yankees as saving humanity, swallowing up the poor countries, but saving them from Communism. (*Pobladora* from Ex-Sumar).

The detective always appears as the benefactor and the crook almost always repents. The detective is the good guy, very human, while the delinquent is the opposite. But in reality, it's not always like that. Yet it's always justice, "right", "society" which wins. It's propaganda for bourgeois justice. (*Pobladora* from Nueva La Habana).

### TOWARDS ALTERNATIVES FOR CHANGE

"The people on television" is the expression which emphasises, in all the sectors interviewed, the demand for change. This said, this unanimous will glosses over very discontinuous ways of envisaging this popular presence on television.

Unfortunately, in this presentation, we cannot go more deeply into notions as complex as 'popular' and its "representation" which we will try to do in the integral presentation of this research. Note however that the criteria is far from being unanimous among the people who were the objects of this research; for some, soap operas incarnate the very idea of a popular genre. For others, only news reports and documentaries made at grassroots level under the direct control of those interested would figure in this category.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of it all, a general outline can be ascertained, especially in the criticisms of the national television channel. It exists in the quasi-unanimous attacks against the inequality between the efforts made to link the TV to the project of the working class, and the weight of classical programming with its large quantity of "superficial and alienating series". The *pobladores* criticised the inorganic and fragmentary character of these efforts, affirming that TV continued to fix its norms in function of the values and needs of another class. The expression of other social sectors, attention to their problems and centres of interest only constituted, given the criteria of normality which continued to govern production, fleeting and accidental appearances. Another criticism was grafted piece by piece onto this one. It derived from the way journalism is practised — the *pobladores* indirectly referred to one of its essential traits — sensationalism. If the expression of popular reality never comes to be anything other than a conjunctural fact, it is not only because of the character of programming (which

7. A "popular television" could be seen for several months when Channel 9 was under workers' control, after the big October crisis. The people appropriated a technological communication media and reinterpreted the genres (forums, dramas, sketches, shows). Whoever saw these programs realised that forms of popular expression are not necessarily closed within the insupportable limits of the pamphlet or the bastardised reproduction of dominant forms. Something unusual happened. Something rich and new.

accords little importance to programs linked to this reality) but also because of the perspective in which events are approached and treated. For the workers, what is left out is the everyday life of social groups to which they belong, the character of their actions and work, their forms of struggle, their collective efforts for the conquest of a more just social order; their "normality" as it were. What is given preference, on the contrary, are exceptional facts which border on the detective story, or the dramatic actions which incite the grand gestures of paternalist policies.

When some people hear of the Nueva La Habana "camp" they think immediately of politics, of taking up arms. This is the image created by the press. But no newspaper, no radio, no TV channel has spoken of the theatre or Sunday shows of the *pobladores*, or of our efforts to make our children study (*Poblador* from Nueva La Habana).

Asked to define their concept of a new television practice linked to their interests, the *pobladores* put forward two positions closely dependent on the different levels of class consciousness and degrees of mobilisation and combativity. It is possible to reconstruct through their comments, two projects expressing their concepts of TV and its role and function in connection with their class interests. These projects can be extrapolated from the confrontation between the two groups of texts ("A" and "B") below:

A "Television has to take us into account and show the problems, floods, unsolid houses, humidity and delinquents so that a solution can be found". (*Poblador*, San Gregorio).

B "What we do is an example to others. TV should come speak to us and film us. It would be a stimulus for us. For others, it would help raise their consciousness and to organise themselves". (*Poblador*, Nueva La Habana).

A "The conditions here should be shown to public opinion. There is no sidewalks, no paving on the streets. In this way, people could see what is happening here and perhaps solutions could be found". (*Poblador*, San Gregorio).

"Delinquency should be shown. Truth is stranger than fiction. During a festival here, there were five deaths: more than in the westerns or gangster films. The reality of alcoholism is another thing that should be made known". (*Pobladora*, La Victoria).

B "It would be important for the TV to show how we organise ourselves into Neighbourhood Committees, Mothers' Centres, Food Centres, so that it could serve our organisation, our education and the training of leaders. The life of the *población* must be studied and shown, especially in bourgeois houses so that they don't forget our existence". (*Poblador*, La Victoria).

"TV must reflect the life of the *poblaciones* and show this social reality to make known the forms of development, objectives and projects of the workers. But these programs must be established beginning with the people, the masses and their struggles here and in the factory. It is fundamentally important to integrate them into the tasks at all levels, even cultural". (*Poblador*, La Victoria).

Through the confrontation of texts A and B, we

can feel the discontinuity of the television demands arising in the popular sectors. In category A, there is no real alternative project to the present one; whereas in category B there are to a certain extent, embryonic elements which foreshadow a rupture with the traditional cycle of production/consumption. This discontinuous character of the demands leads us back to the unequal way in which the dominated live the system of domination and are subjected to the weight of ideological domination. There are, finally, various levels of class consciousness manifested in the qualitatively different nature of the demands expressed. In A, the media is conceived uniquely as an *instrument of pressure* through which the dominated aspire to put across their material claims. This is not a critical position, nor an alternative to the extent that this elementary requirement does not articulate — because it remains within the limits of a demand for help — a global project which demands the means of communication be used as fundamental instruments of another hegemony.

This is, precisely, the character of the demand expressed in category B: the media are conceived as being the instrument of expression of a growing popular power. This power is expressed in new forms of organisation and demands the participation of the subaltern classes in all the fronts of struggle: economic, political, but also cultural.

This project, without underestimating, in the living conjuncture of the country the particular needs of various clienteles, nor the requirements in this domain as in others of class alliances, fixes its priorities according to the concrete interests of the popular sectors. Here is a way of breaking the circle of stereotypes whose incessant activity and apparent variety serve the repression exercised by the dominant classes over anyone foreign to their order.

## Leon Trotsky PROLETARIAN CULTURE AND PROLETARIAN ART (USSR, 1924)

Every ruling class creates its own culture, and consequently, its own art. History has known the slave-owning cultures of the East and of classic antiquity, the feudal culture of mediaeval Europe and the bourgeois culture which now rules the world. It would follow from this, that the proletariat has also to create its own culture and its own art.

The question, however, is not as simple as it seems at first glance. Society in which slave-owners were the ruling class, existed for many and many centuries. The same is true of Feudalism. Bourgeois culture, if one were to count only from the time of its open and turbulent manifestation, that is, from the period of the Renaissance, has existed five centuries, but it did not reach its greatest flowering until the Nineteenth Century, or, more correctly, the second half of it. History shows that the formation of a new culture which centres around a ruling class demands considerable time and reaches completion only at the period preceding the political decadence of that class.

Will the proletariat have enough time to create a "proletarian" culture? In contrast to the regime of the slave-owners and of the feudal lords and of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat regards its dictatorship as a brief period of transition. When we wish to denounce the all-too-optimistic views about the transition to Socialism, we point out that the period of the social revolution, on a world scale, will last not months and not years, but decades—decades, but not centuries, and certainly not thousands of years. Can the proletariat in this time create a new culture? It is legitimate to doubt this, because the years of social revolution will be years of fierce class struggles in which destruction will occupy more room than new construction. At any rate, the energy of the proletariat itself will be spent mainly in conquering power, in retaining and strengthening it and in applying it to the most urgent needs of existence and of further struggle. The proletariat, however, will reach its highest tension and the fullest manifestation of its class character during this revolutionary period and it will be within such narrow limits that the possibility of planful, cultural reconstruction will be confined. On the other hand, as the new regime will be more and more protected from political and military surprises and as the conditions for cultural creation will become more favourable, the proletariat will be more and more dissolved into a Socialist community and will free itself from its

This text was first published in the USSR in 1924. It was translated into English by Rose Strunsky and published in the author's *Literature and Revolution*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, The University of Michigan Press, 1971.

class characteristics and thus cease to be a proletariat. In other words, there can be no question of the creation of a new culture, that is, of construction on a large historic scale during the period of dictatorship. The cultural reconstruction which will begin when the need of the iron clutch of a dictatorship unparalleled in history will have disappeared, will not have a class character. This seems to lead to the conclusion that there is no proletarian culture and that there never will be any and in fact there is no reason to regret this. The proletariat acquires power for the purpose of doing away forever with class culture and to make way for human culture. We frequently seem to forget this.

The formless talk about proletarian culture, in antithesis to bourgeois culture, feeds on the extremely uncritical identification of the historic destinies of the proletariat with those of the bourgeoisie. A shallow and purely liberal method of making analogies of historic forms has nothing in common with Marxism. There is no real analogy between the historic development of the bourgeoisie and of the working-class.

The development of bourgeois culture began several centuries before the bourgeoisie took into its own hands the power of the state by means of a series of revolutions. Even when the bourgeoisie was a third estate, almost deprived of its rights, it played a great and continually growing part in all the fields of culture. This is especially clear in the case of architecture. The Gothic churches were not built suddenly, under the impulse of a religious inspiration. The construction of the Cologne cathedral, its architecture and its sculpture, sum up the architectural experience of mankind from the time of the cave and combine the elements of this experience in a new style which expresses the culture of its own epoch which is, in the final analysis, the social structure and technique of this epoch. The old pre-bourgeoisie of the guilds was the factual builder of the Gothic. When it grew and waxed strong, that is when it became richer, the bourgeoisie passed through the Gothic stage consciously and actively and created its own architectural style, not for the church, however, but for its own palaces. With its basis on the Gothic, it turned to antiquity, especially to Roman architecture and the Moorish, and applied all these to the conditions and needs of the new city community, thus creating the Renaissance (Italy at the end of the first quarter of the Fifteenth Century). Specialists may count the elements which the Renaissance owes to antiquity and those it owes to the Gothic and may argue as to which side is the stronger. But the Renaissance only begins when the new social class, already culturally satiated, feels itself strong enough to come out from under the yoke of the Gothic arch, to look at Gothic art and on all that preceded it as material for its own disposal, and to use the technique of the past for its own artistic aims. This refers also to all the other arts, but with this difference, that because of their greater flexibility, that is, of their lesser dependence upon utilitarian aims and materials, the "free" arts do not reveal the dialectics of successive styles with such firm logic as does architecture.

From the time of the Renaissance and of the Reformation which created more favourable intellectual and political conditions for the bourgeoisie in

feudal society, to the time of the Revolution which transferred power to the bourgeoisie (in France), there passed three or four centuries of growth in the material and intellectual force of the bourgeoisie. The great French Revolution and the wars which grew out of it temporarily lowered the material level of culture. But later the capitalist regime became established as the "natural" and the "eternal."

Thus the fundamental processes of the growth of bourgeois culture and of its crystallization into style were determined by the characteristics of the bourgeoisie as a possessing and exploiting class. The bourgeoisie not only developed materially within feudal society, entwining itself in various ways with the latter and attracting wealth into its own hands, but it weaned the intelligentsia to its side and created its cultural foundation (schools, universities, academies, newspapers, magazines) long before it openly took possession of the state. It is sufficient to remember that the German bourgeoisie, with its incomparable technology, philosophy, science and art, allowed the power of the state to lie in the hands of a feudal bureaucratic class as late as 1918 and decided, or, more correctly, was forced to take power into its own hands only when the material foundations of German culture began to fall to pieces.

But one may answer: It took thousands of years to create the slave-owning art and only hundreds of years for the bourgeois art. Why, then, could not proletarian art be created in tens of years? The technical bases of life are not at all the same at present and therefore the tempo is also different. This objection, which at first sight seems convincing, in reality misses the crux of the question. Undoubtedly, in the development of the new society, the time will come when economics, cultural life and art will receive the greatest impulse forward. At the present time we can only create fancies about their tempo. In a society which will have thrown off the pinching and stultifying worry about one's daily bread, in which community restaurants will prepare good, wholesome and tasteful food for all to choose, in which communal laundries will wash clean everyone's good linen, in which children, all the children, will be well fed and strong and gay, and in which they will absorb the fundamental elements of science and art as they absorb albumen and air and the warmth of the sun, in a society in which electricity and the radio will not be the crafts they are today, but will come from inexhaustible sources of super-power at the call of a central button, in which there will be no "useless mouths," in which the liberated egotism of man—a mighty force!—will be directed wholly towards the understanding, the transformation and the betterment of the universe—in such a society the dynamic development of culture will be incomparable with anything that went on the past. But all this will come only after a climb, prolonged and difficult, which is still ahead of us. And we are speaking only about the period of the climb.

But is not the present moment dynamic? It is in the highest degree. But its dynamics is centered in politics. The War and the Revolution were dynamic, but very much at the expense of technology and culture. It is true that the War has produced a long series of technical inventions. But the poverty which it has

produced has put off the practical application of these inventions for a long time and with this their possibility of revolutionizing life. This refers to radio, to aviation, and to many mechanical discoveries. On the other hand, the Revolution lays out the ground for a new society. But it does so with the methods of the old society, with the class struggle, with violence, destruction and annihilation. If the proletarian Revolution had not come, mankind would have been strangled by its own contradictions. The Revolution saved society and culture, but by means of the most cruel surgery. All the active forces are concentrated in politics and in the revolutionary struggle, everything else is shoved back into the background and everything which is a hindrance is cruelly trampled under foot. In this process, of course, there is an ebb and flow; military Communism gives place to the NEP, which, in its turn, passes through various stages. But in its essence, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an organization for the production of the culture of a new society, but a revolutionary and military system struggling for it. One must not forget this. We think that the historian of the future will place the culminating point of the old society on the 2nd of August, 1914, when the maddened power of bourgeois culture let loose upon the world the blood and fire of an imperialistic war. The beginning of the new history of mankind will be dated from November 7, 1917. The fundamental stages of the development of mankind we think will be established somewhat as follows: pre-historic "history" of primitive man; ancient history, whose rise was based on slavery; the Middle Ages, based on serfdom; Capitalism, with free wage exploitation; and finally, Socialist society, with, let us hope, its painless transition to a stateless Commune. At any rate, the twenty, thirty, or fifty years of proletarian world revolution will go down in history as the most difficult climb from one system to another, but in no case as an independent epoch of proletarian culture.

At present, in these years of respite, some illusions may arise in our Soviet Republic as regards this. We have put the cultural questions on the order of the day. By projecting our present-day problems into the distant future, one can think himself through a long series of years into proletarian culture. But no matter how important and vitally necessary our culture-building may be, it is entirely dominated by the approach of European and world revolution. We are, as before, merely soldiers in a campaign. We are bivouacking for a day. Our shirt has to be washed, our hair has to be cut and combed and, most important of all the rifle has to be cleaned and oiled. Our entire present-day economic and cultural work is nothing more than a bringing of ourselves into order between two battles and two campaigns. The principal battles are ahead and may be not so far off. Our epoch is not yet an epoch of new culture, but only the entrance to it. We must, first of all, take possession, politically, of the most important elements of the old culture, to such an extent, at least, as to be able to pave the way for a new culture.

This becomes especially clear when one considers the problem as one should, in its international character. The proletariat was, and remains, a non-possessing

class. This alone restricted it very much from acquiring those elements of bourgeois culture which have entered into the inventory of mankind forever. In a certain sense, one may truly say that the proletariat also, at least the European proletariat, had its epoch of reformation. This occurred in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, when, without making an attempt on the power of the state directly, it conquered for itself under the bourgeois system more favourable legal conditions for development. But, in the first place, for this period of "reformation" (parliamentarism and social reforms) which coincides mainly with the period of the Second International, history allowed the working-class approximately as many decades as it allowed the bourgeoisie centuries. In the second class, the proletariat, during this preparatory period, did not at all become a richer class and did not concentrate in its hands material power. On the contrary, from a social and cultural point of view, it became more and more unfortunate. The bourgeoisie came into power fully armed with the culture of its time. The proletariat, on the other hand, comes into power fully armed only with the acute need of mastering culture. The problem of a proletariat which has conquered power consists, first of all, in taking into its own hands the apparatus of culture—the industries, schools, publications, press, theaters, etc.—which did not serve it before, and thus to open up the path of culture for itself.

Our task in Russia is complicated by the poverty of our entire cultural tradition and by the material destruction wrought by the events of the last decade. After the conquest of power and after almost six years of struggle for its retention and consolidation, our proletariat is forced to turn all its energies towards the creation of the most elementary conditions of material existence and of contact with the ABC of culture—ABC in the true and literal sense of the word. It is not for nothing that we have put to ourselves the task of having universal literacy in Russia by the tenth anniversary of the Soviet regime.

Someone may object that I take the concept of proletarian culture in too broad a sense. That if there may not be a fully and entirely developed proletarian culture, yet the working-class may succeed in putting its stamp upon culture before it is dissolved into a Communist society. Such an objection must be registered first of all as a serious retreat from the position that there will be a proletarian culture. It is not to be questioned but that the proletariat, during the time of its dictatorship, will put its stamp upon culture. However, this is a far cry from a proletarian culture in the sense of a developed and completely harmonious system of knowledge and of art in all material and spiritual fields of work. For tens of millions of people for the first time in history to master reading and writing and arithmetic, is in itself a new cultural fact of great importance. The essence of the new culture will be not an aristocratic one for a privileged minority, but a mass culture, a universal and popular one. Quantity will pass into quality; with the growth of the quantity of culture will come in a rise in its level and a change in its character. But this process will develop only through a series of historic stages. In the degree to which it is successful it will weaken the class character

of the proletariat and in this way it will wipe out the basis of a proletarian culture.

But how about the upper strata of the working-class? About its intellectual vanguard? Can one not say that in these circles, narrow though they are, a development of proletarian culture is already taking place today? Have we not the Socialist Academy? Red professors? Some are guilty of putting the question in this very abstract way. The idea seems to be that it is possible to create a proletarian culture by laboratory methods. In fact, the texture of culture is woven at the points where the relationships and inter-actions of the intelligentsia of a class and of the class itself meet. The bourgeois culture—the technical, political, philosophical and artistic—was developed by the inter-action of the bourgeoisie and its inventors, leaders, thinkers and poets. The reader created the writer and the writer created the reader. This is true in an immeasurably greater degree of the proletariat, because its economics and politics and culture can be built only on the basis of the creative activity of the masses. The main task of the proletarian intelligentsia in the immediate future is not the abstract formation of a new culture regardless of the absence of a basis for it, but definite culture-bearing, that is, a systematic, planful and, of course, critical imparting to the backward masses of the essential elements of the culture which already exists. It is impossible to create a class culture behind the backs of a class. And to build culture in cooperation with the working-class and in close contact with its general historic rise, one has to build Socialism, even though in the rough. In this process, the class characteristics of society will not become stronger, but, on the contrary, will begin to dissolve and to disappear in direct ratio to the success of the Revolution. The liberating significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat consists in the fact that it is temporary—for a brief period only—that it is a means of clearing the road and of laying the foundations of a society without classes and of a culture based upon solidarity.

In order to explain the idea of a period of culture-bearing in the development of the working-class more concretely, let us consider the historic succession not of classes, but of generations. Their continuity is expressed in the fact that each one of them, given a developing and not a decadent society, adds its treasure to the past accumulations of culture. But before it can do so, each new generation must pass through a stage of apprenticeship. It appropriates existing culture and transforms it in its own way, making it more or less different from that of the older generation. But this appropriation is not, as yet, a new creation, that is, it is not a creation of new cultural values, but only a premise for them. To a certain degree, that which has been said may also be applied to the destinies of the working masses which are rising towards epoch-making creative work. One has only to add that before the proletariat will have passed out of the stage of cultural apprenticeship, it will have ceased to be a proletariat. Let us also not forget that the upper layer of the bourgeois third estate passed its cultural apprenticeship under the roof of feudal society; that while still within the womb of feudal society it surpassed the old ruling estates culturally and became the instigator of culture before it came into power. It

is different with the proletariat in general and with the Russian proletariat in particular. The proletariat is forced to take power before it has appropriated the fundamental elements of bourgeois culture; it is forced to overthrow bourgeois society by revolutionary violence for the very reason that society does not allow it access to culture. The working-class strives to transform the state apparatus into a powerful pump for quenching the cultural thirst of the masses. This is a task of immeasurable historic importance. But, if one is not to use words lightly, it is not as yet a creation of a special proletarian culture. "Proletarian culture," "proletarian art," etc., in three cases out of ten is used uncritically to designate the culture and art of the coming Communist society, in two cases out of ten to designate the fact that special groups of the proletariat are acquiring separate elements of pre-proletarian culture, and finally, in five cases out of ten, it represents a jumble of concepts and words out of which one can make neither head nor tail.

Here is a recent example, one of a hundred, where a slovenly, uncritical and dangerous use of the term "proletarian culture" is made. "The economic basis and its corresponding system of super-structures," writes Sizoff, "form the cultural characteristics of an epoch (feudal, bourgeois or proletarian)." Thus the epoch of proletarian culture is placed here on the same plane as that of the bourgeois. But that which is here called the proletarian epoch is only a brief transition from one social-cultural system to another, from Capitalism to Socialism. The establishment of the bourgeois regime was also preceded by a transitional epoch. But the bourgeois Revolution tried, successfully, to perpetuate the domination of the bourgeoisie, while the proletarian Revolution has for its aim the liquidation of the proletariat as a class in as brief a period as possible. The length of this period depends entirely upon the success of the Revolution. Is it not amazing that one can forget this and place the proletarian cultural epoch on the same plane with that of feudal and bourgeois culture?

But if this is so, does it follow that we have no proletarian science? Are we not to say that the materialistic conception of history and the Marxist criticism of political economy represent invaluable scientific elements of a proletarian culture?

Of course, the materialistic conception of history and the labor theory of value have an immeasurable significance for the arming of the proletariat as a class and for science in general. There is more true science in the "Communist Manifesto" alone than in all the libraries of historical and historico-philosophical compilations, speculations and falsifications of the professors. But can one say that Marxism represents a product of proletarian culture? And can one say that we are already making use of Marxism, not in political battles only, but in broad scientific tasks as well?

Marx and Engels came out of the ranks of the petty bourgeois democracy and, of course, were brought up on its culture and not on the culture of the proletariat. If there had been no working-class, with its strikes, struggles, sufferings and revolts, there would, of course, have been no scientific Communism, because there would have been no historical necessity for it. But its theory was formed entirely on the basis of bourgeois culture both scientific and

political, though it declared a fight to the finish upon that culture. Under the pressure of capitalistic contradictions, the universalizing thought of the bourgeois democracy, of its boldest, most honest, and most far-sighted representatives, rises to the heights of a marvelous renunciation, armed with all the critical weapons of bourgeois science. Such is the origin of Marxism.

The proletariat found its weapon in Marxism not at once, and not fully even to this day. Today this weapon serves political aims almost primarily and exclusively. The broad realistic application and the methodologic development of dialectic materialism are still entirely in the future. Only in a Socialist society will Marxism cease to be a one-sided weapon of political struggle and become a means of scientific creation, a most important element and instrument of spiritual culture.

All science, in greater or lesser degree, unquestionably reflects the tendencies of the ruling class. The more closely science attaches itself to the practical tasks of conquering nature (physics, chemistry, natural science in general), the greater is its non-class and human contribution. The more deeply science is connected with the social mechanism of exploitation (political economy), or the more abstractly it generalizes the entire experience of mankind (psychology, not in its experimental, physiological sense but in its so-called "philosophic sense"), the more does it obey the class egotism of the bourgeoisie and the less significant is its contribution to the general sum of human knowledge. In the domain of the experimental sciences, there exist different degrees of scientific integrity and objectivity, depending upon the scope of the generalizations made. As a general rule, the bourgeois tendencies have found a much freer place for themselves in the higher spheres of methodological philosophy, of *Weltanschauung*. It is therefore necessary to clear the structure of science from the bottom to the top, or, more correctly, from the top to the bottom, because one has to begin from the upper stories. But it would be naive to think that the proletariat must revamp critically all science inherited from the bourgeoisie, before applying it to Socialist reconstruction. This is just the same as saying with the Utopian moralists: before building a new society, the proletariat must rise to the heights of Communist ethics. As a matter of fact, the proletariat will reconstruct ethics as well as science radically, but he will do so after he will have constructed a new society, even though in the rough. But are we not travelling in a vicious circle? How is one to build a new society with the aid of the old science and the old morals? Here we must bring in a little dialectics, that very dialectics which we now put so uneconomically into lyric poetry and into our office bookkeeping and into our cabbage soup and into our porridge. In order to begin work, the proletarian vanguard needs certain points of departure, certain scientific methods which liberate the mind from the ideologic yoke of the bourgeoisie; it is mastering these; in part has already mastered them. It has tested its fundamental method in many battles, under various conditions. But this is a long way from proletarian science. A revolutionary class cannot stop

its struggle, because the Party has not yet decided whether it should or should not accept the hypothesis of electrons and ions, the psychoanalytical theory of Freud, the new mathematical discoveries of relativity, etc. True, after it has conquered power, the proletariat will find a much greater opportunity for mastering science and for revising it. This is more easily said than done. The proletariat cannot postpone Socialist reconstruction until the time when its new scientists, many of whom are still running about in short trousers, will test and clean all the instruments and all the channels of knowledge. The proletariat rejects what is clearly unnecessary, false and reactionary, and in the various fields of its reconstruction makes use of the methods and conclusions of present-day science, taking them necessarily with the percentage of reactionary class-alloy which is contained in them. The practical result will justify itself generally and on the whole, because such a use when controlled by a Socialist goal will gradually manage and select the methods and conclusions of the theory. And by that time there will have grown up scientists who are educated under the new conditions. At any rate, the proletariat will have to carry its Socialist reconstruction to quite a high degree, that is, provide for real material security and for the satisfaction of society culturally before it will be able to carry out a general purification of science from top to bottom. I do not mean to say by this anything against the Marxist work of criticism, which many in small circles and in seminars are trying to carry through in various fields. This work is necessary and fruitful. It should be extended and deepened in every way. But one has to maintain the Marxism sense of the measure of things to count up the specific gravity of such experiments and efforts today in relation to the general scale of our historic work.

Does the foregoing exclude the possibility that even in the period of revolutionary dictatorship, there might appear eminent scientists, inventors, dramatists and poets out of the ranks of the proletariat? Not in the least. But it would be extremely light-minded to give the name of proletarian culture, even to the most valuable achievements of individual representatives of the working-class. One cannot turn the concept of culture into the small change of individual daily living and determine the success of a class culture by the proletarian passports of individual inventors or poets. Culture is the organic sum of knowledge and capacity which characterizes the entire society, or at least its ruling class. It embraces and penetrates all fields of human work and unifies them into a system. Individual achievements rise above this level and elevate it gradually.

Does such an organic inter-relation exist between our present-day proletarian poetry and the cultural work of the working-class in its entirety? It is quite evident that it does not. Individual workers or groups of workers are developing contacts with the art which was created by the bourgeois intelligentsia and are making use of its technique, for the time being, in quite an eclectic manner. But is it for the purpose of giving expression to their own internal proletarian world? The fact is that it is far from being so. The work of the proletarian poets lacks an organic quality,

which is produced only by a profound interaction between art and the development of culture in general. We have the literary works of talented and gifted proletarians, but that is not proletarian literature. However, they may prove to be some of its springs.

It is possible that in the work of the present generation many germs and roots and springs will be revealed to which some future descendant will trace the various sectors of the culture of the future, just as our present-day historians of art trace the theater of Ibsen to the church mystery, or Impressionism and Cubism to the paintings of the monks. In the economy of art, as in the economy of nature, nothing is lost, and everything is connected in the large. But factually, concretely, vitally, the present-day work of the poets who have sprung from the proletariat is not developing at all in accordance with the plan which is behind the process of preparing the conditions of the future Socialist culture, that is, the process of elevating the masses.

The proletarian poets were greatly pained and aroused against Dubovskoy because of an article in which he expressed—side by side with ideas which seem to be doubtful—a series of truths which are a little bitter, but fundamentally indisputable. Dubovskoy's conclusion is that proletarian poetry does not lie in the "Kuznitsa" group, but in the local factory newspapers, written by anonymous authors. The thought here is true though it is expressed paradoxically. One might with as much reason say that the proletarian Shakespeares and Goethes are running about barefoot somewhere today in the elementary schools. Undoubtedly the work of the factory poets is much more organic, in the sense of its being connected with the life, environment and interests of the working masses. None the less, it is not proletarian literature, but it expresses in writing the molecular process of the cultural rise of the proletariat. We have already explained above that this is not one and the same thing. The letters of the workers, the local poets, the complainants, are carrying on a great cultural work, breaking up the ground and preparing it for future sowing. But a cultural and artistic harvest of full value will be, happily! Socialist and not "proletarian."

Pletnev, in an interesting article on the methods of proletarian poetry, expresses the thought that the works of the proletarian poets, apart from their artistic value, are significant because of their direct contact with the life of a class. By giving examples of proletarian poetry Pletnev shows convincingly the changes in the moods of the worker poets and their relation to the general development of the life and struggles of the proletariat. Pletnev proves irrefutably by this that the products of proletarian poetry—not all, but many—are significant cultural and historical documents. But this does not at all mean that they are artistic documents. "Let us suppose, if you please, that these poems are weak, old in form, illiterate," says Pletnev, in characterizing one of the worker poets who rose from a prayerful mood to a militant revolutionary one—"but do they not mark just the same the growth of the proletarian poet?" Undoubtedly; the weak, the colorless, and even the illiterate poems may reflect the path of the political growth of a poet and of a class and may have an

immeasurable significance as a symptom of culture. But weak and, what is more, illiterate poems do not make up proletarian poetry, because they do not make up poetry at all. It is extremely interesting that, while tracing the political evolution of the worker poets which went hand in hand with the revolutionary growth of the class, Pletnev justly points out that among the proletarian writers there has been a breaking away from their class during the latter years, especially since the beginning of the New Economic Policy. Pletnev explains "the crisis of proletarian poetry" and the simultaneous trend towards Formalism and towards Philistinism by the neglect of the poets by the Party. From this it has resulted that the poets "have not resisted the colossal pressure of bourgeois ideology and have given way, or are giving way". The explanation is clearly insufficient. What kind of colossal pressure of bourgeois ideology exists among us? One should not exaggerate. Let us not quarrel about whether the Party could have done more for proletarian poetry than it has done. But this alone no more covers the question of why this poetry lacks the power of resistance than does the violent "class" gesture (in the manner of the manifesto of "Kuznitsa") compensate it for its insufficient power of resistance. The fact is that in the pre-revolutionary period, and during the first period of the Revolution, the proletarian poets regarded versification not as an art which had its own laws, but as one of the means of complaining of one's sad fate, or of expressing one's revolutionary mood. The proletarian poets approached poetry as an art and as a craft only during these latter years, after the tension of the civil war was relaxed. Then it became clear that the proletariat had not yet created a cultural background in art, but that the bourgeois intelligentsia had such a background for better or for worse. It is not the fact that the Party or its leaders did "not help sufficiently", but that the masses were not artistically prepared; and art, just as science, demands preparation. Our proletariat has its political culture, within limits sufficient for securing its dictatorship, but it has no artistic culture. While the proletarian poets marched in the general ranks of the military, their poems, as was said above, retained the importance of revolutionary documents. But when these poets were faced with the problems of craftsmanship and art, they began to seek for themselves willy-nilly a new environment. It is, therefore, not a matter of their being neglected—the cause lies in a deeper historic condition. However, this does not mean that the worker poets who are passing through a crisis have been lost entirely for the proletariat. Let us hope that some, at least, will come out stronger from this crisis. Still, it doesn't look as if the present groups of worker poets are destined to lay immutable foundations for a new great poetry. Most likely this will be the privilege of distant generations, which, too will have to pass through crises. For there will be plenty of ideologic and cultural deviations, waverings and errors for a long time to come, the cause of which will lie in the cultural immaturity of the working-class.

The study of literary technique alone is a necessary stage and it is not a brief one. Technique is noticed most markedly in the case of those who have not mastered it. One can say with full justice about many of the young proletarian writers that it is not they who

are the masters of technique, but that the technique is their master. For the more talented, this is merely a disease of growth. But they who refuse to master technique will come to look "unnatural," imitative, and even buffoon-like. It would be monstrous to conclude from this that the technique of bourgeois art is not necessary to the workers. Yet there are many who fall into this error. "Give us," they say, "something even pock-marked, but our own." This is false and untrue. A pock-marked art is no art and is therefore not necessary to the working masses. Those who believe in a "pock-marked" art are imbued to a considerable extent with contempt for the masses and are like the breed of politicians who have no faith in class power but who flatter and praise the class when "all is well." On the heels of the demagogues come the sincere fools who have taken up this simple formula of a pseudo-proletarian art. This is not Marxism, but reactionary populism, falsified a little to suit a "proletarian" ideology. Proletarian art should not be second-rate art. One has to learn regardless of the fact that learning carries within itself certain dangers because out of necessity one has to learn from one's enemies. One has to learn and the importance of such organizations as the Proletcult [The Organization for Proletarian Culture] cannot be measured by the rapidity with which they create a new literature, but by the extent to which they help elevate the literary level of the working-class, beginning with its upper strata.

Such terms as "proletarian literature" and "proletarian culture" are dangerous, because they erroneously compress the culture of the future into the narrow limits of the present day. They falsify perspectives, they violate proportions, they distort standards and they cultivate the arrogance of small circles which is most dangerous.

But if we are to reject the term "proletarian culture," what shall we do with the Proletcult? Let us agree, then, that the Proletcult means to work for proletarian culture, that is, to struggle obstinately to raise the cultural level of the working-class. In truth, such an interpretation will not diminish the importance of the Proletcult by one iota.

In their manifesto already mentioned, the proletarian writers of "Kuznitsa" declare that "style is class," and that therefore the writers who are outsiders socially are unable to create a style of art which would correspond to the nature of the proletariat. It would follow from this that the "Kuznitsa" group is proletarian both in its composition and in its tendency and that it is creating a proletarian art.

"Style is class." However, style is not born with a class at all. A class finds its style in extremely complex ways. It would be very simple if a writer, just because he was a proletarian, loyal to his class, could stand at the crossing of the roads and announce: "I am the style of the proletariat!"

"Style is class"—not alone in art, but above all in politics. Politics is the only field in which the proletariat has really created its own style. But how? Not at all by means of a simple syllogism: each class has its own style; the proletariat is a class; it assigns to such and such a proletarian group the task of formulating its political style. No! The road is far more complex. The elaboration of proletarian politics went through

economic strikes, through a struggle for the right to organize, through the Utopian schools of the English and the French, through the workers' participation in revolutionary struggles under the leadership of bourgeois democrats, through the "Communist Manifesto," through the establishment of the Socialist Party which, however, subordinated itself to the "style" of other classes, through the split among the Socialists and the organization of the Communists, through the struggle of the Communists for a united front, and it will go through a whole series of other stages which are still ahead of us. All the energy of the proletariat which remains at its disposal after meeting the elementary demands of life, has gone and is going towards the elaboration of this political "style" while, on the contrary, the historic rise of the bourgeoisie took place with a comparative evenness in all fields of social life. That is, the bourgeoisie grew rich, organized itself, shaped itself philosophically and aesthetically and accumulated habits of government. On the other hand, the whole process of self-determination of the proletariat, a class unfortunate economically, assumes an intensely one-sided, revolutionary and political character and reaches its highest expression in the Communist Party.

If we were to compare the rise in art with the rise in politics, we would have to say that here at the present time we find ourselves approximately in the same stage as when the first faint movements of the masses coincided with the efforts of the intelligentsia and of a few workers to construct Utopian systems. We heartily hope that the poets of "Kuznitsa" will contribute to the art of the future, if not to a proletarian, at least to a Socialist art. But to recognize the monopoly of "Kuznitsa" to express "proletarian style" at the present super-primitive stage of the process would be an unpardonable error. The activity of "Kuznitsa" in relation to the proletariat is carried on on the same plane as that of "Lef" and "Krug" and the other groups which try to find an artistic expression for the Revolution, and, in all honesty, we do not know which one of these contributions will prove to be the biggest.

For instance, many proletarian poets have an undoubted trace of Futurist influence. The talented Kazin has imbibed the elements of Futurist technique. Bezimensky is unthinkable without Mayakovsky, and is a hope.

"Kuznitsa's" manifesto pictures the present situation in art as extremely dark and makes the following indictment: "the NEP-stage of the Revolution found itself surrounded by an art which resembles the grimaces of a gorilla." "Money is assigned for everything.... We have no Belinskys. Twilight hangs over the desert of art. We raise our voices and we lift the Red Flag..." etc., etc. They speak with great eloquence and even pompously of proletarian art sometimes as an art of the future and sometimes as an art of the present. "The monolith of class creates art in its own image only and in its own likeness. Its peculiar language, polyphonus, multi-coloured and multi-imaged... promotes the might of a great style by its simplicity, clarity and precision." But if all this is true, why is there a desert of art and why the twilight over the desert? This evident contradiction can only be understood in the sense that the authors of this

manifesto contrast the art which is protected by the Soviet Government and which is a desert covered by twilight with the proletarian art of big canvases and great style, which, however, is not getting the necessary recognition because there are no "Belinskys" and because the place of the Belinskys is taken by "a few comrades, publicists from our ranks, who were accustomed to draw cart-shafts." At the risk of being included among the cart-shaft order, I must say, however, that the manifesto of "Kuznitsa" is not penetrated with the spirit of class Messianism, but with the spirit of an arrogant small circle. "Kuznitsa" speaks of itself as the exclusive carrier of revolutionary art in the same terms as do the Futurists, Imagists, "Serapion Fraternity" and the others. Where is that "art of the big canvas, of the large style, that monumental art?" Where, oh, where is it? No matter how one may value the works of individual poets who are of proletarian origin—and they need careful and strictly individualized criticism—there is, nevertheless, no proletarian art. One must not play with big words. It is not true that a proletarian style exists and that it is a big and monumental one at that. Where is it? And in what? And why? The proletarian poets are going through an apprenticeship, and the influence of other schools, principally the Futurist, can be found without using, so to speak, the microscopic methods of the Formalist school. This is not said as a reproach, for it is no sin. But monumental proletarian styles cannot be created by means of manifestos.

Our authors complain that there are no "Belinskys." If we were in need of juridical proof that the work of "Kuznitsa" is imbued with the moods of the isolated little world of the intelligentsia or of a little circle or school, we should find the material evidence for this in this phrase in minor key: "There are no Belinskys." Of course Belinsky is referred to here not as a person, but as the representative of a dynasty of Russian social critics, the inspirers and directors of the old literature. But our friends of "Kuznitsa" do not seem to understand that this dynasty ceased to exist when the proletarian masses appeared on the political arena. In a way, and in a very essential way, Plekhanov was the Marxist Belinsky, the last representative of this noble dynasty of publicists. The historic role of the Belinskys was to open up a breathing hole into social life by means of literature. Literary criticism took the place of politics and was a preparation for it. But that which was merely a hint for Belinsky and for the later representatives of radical publicism, has taken on in our day the flesh and blood of October and has become Soviet reality. If Belinsky, Tchernischevsky, Dobrolubov, Pisarev, Mikhailovsky, Plekhanov, were each in his own way the inspirers of social literature, or, what is more, the literary inspirers of an incipient social life, then does not our whole social life at the present time with its politics, its press, its meetings, its institutions, appear as the sufficient interpreter of its own ways? We have placed our entire social life under a projector, the light of Marxism illumines all the stages of our struggle and every institution is critically sounded from all sides. To sigh for the Belinskys under such a condition, is to reveal—alas!—the isolation of an intelligentsia group, entirely in the style (far from monumental) of the most pious populists of the left—the Ivanov-

Razumniks. "There are no Belinskys." But Belinsky was not a literary critic; he was a socially-minded leader of his epoch. And if Vissarion Belinsky could be transported alive into our times, he probably would be—let us not conceal this from the "Kuznitsa"—a member of the Politbureau. And, furious, he would most likely start drawing a cart-shaft. Did he not complain that he whose nature was to howl like a jackal, had to emit melodious notes?

It is not accidental that the poetry of small circles falls into the flat romanticism of "Cosmism" when it tries to overcome its isolation. The idea here approximately is that one should feel the entire world as a unity and oneself as an active part of that unity, with the prospect of commanding in the future not only the earth, but the entire cosmos. All this, of course, is very splendid, and terribly big. We came from Kursk and from Kaluga, we have conquered all Russia recently, and now we are going on towards world revolution. But are we to stop at the boundaries of "planetism"? Let us put the proletarian hoop on the barrel of the universe at once. What can be simpler? This is familiar business: we'll cover it all with our hat!

Cosmism seems, or may seem, extremely bold, vigorous, revolutionary and proletarian. But in reality, Cosmism contains the suggestion of very nearly deserting the complex and difficult problems of art on earth so as to escape into the interstellar spheres. In this way Cosmism turns out quite suddenly to be akin to mysticism. It is a very difficult task to put the starry kingdom into one's own artistic world, and to do this in some sort of a conative way, not only in a contemplative, and to do this quite independently of how much one is acquainted with astronomy. Still, it is not an urgent task. And it seems that the poets are becoming Cosmists, not because the population of the Milky Way is knocking at their doors and demanding an answer, but because the problems of earth are lending themselves to artistic expression with so much difficulty that it makes them feel like jumping into another world. However, it takes more than calling oneself a Cosmist to catch stars from heaven, especially as there is more interstellar emptiness in the universe than there are stars. Let them beware lest this doubtful tendency to fill up the gaps in one's point of view and in one's artistic work with the thinness of interstellar spaces, lead some of the Cosmists to the most subtle of matters, namely, to the Holy Ghost in which there are quite enough poetic dead bodies already at rest.

The nets and lassos thrown over the proletarian poets are the more dangerous, because these poets are almost all young, some of them still hardly out of their teens. The majority of them were awakened to poetry by the victory of the Revolution. They did not enter it as people already formed, but were carried along on the wings of spontaneity and by the storm and the hurricane. But this primitive intoxication affected all the bourgeois writers as well, who afterwards paid for it by a reactionary, mystic and every other kind of heavy head. The real difficulties and tests began when the rhythm of the Revolution slowed down, when the objective aims became more cloudy and when it was no longer possible simply to swim with the waves and to swallow and emit inspired bubbles, but one had to look around, dig oneself in

and sum up the situation. Then it was that the temptation came to jump straight off into the cosmos! But the earth? As in the case of the mystics, it may prove simply to be a springboard to the cosmos.

The revolutionary poets of our period are in need of being tempered—and a moral hardening is here more inseparable from an intellectual one than anywhere else. What is necessary here is a stable, flexible, activist point of view, saturated with facts and with an artistic feeling for the world. To understand and perceive truly not in a journalistic way but to feel to the very bottom the section of time in which we live, one has to know the past of mankind, its life, its work, its struggles, its hopes, its defeats, and its achievements. Astronomy and cosmogony are good things! But first of all, one has to know the history of mankind and the laws, the concrete facts, the picturesqueness and the personalities of contemporary life.

It is curious that those who make abstract formulas of proletarian poetry usually pass the poet by who, more than anyone else, has the right to be called the poet of revolutionary Russia. No complex critical methods are needed to determine his tendencies or his social bases. Demyan Biedny is here in the whole, made out of one piece. He is not a poet who has approached the Revolution, who has come down to it, who has accepted it. He is a Bolshevik whose weapon is poetry. And in this lies Demyan Biedny's exclusive power. The Revolution is, for him, no material for creation, but the highest authority, which has placed him at his post. His work is a social service not only in the final analysis, as all art is, but subjectively, in the consciousness of the poet himself. And this has been true from the very first days of his historic service. He grew up in the Party, he lived through the various phases of its development, he learned to think and to feel with his class from day to day and to reproduce this world of thoughts and feelings in concentrated form in the language of verses which have the shrewdness of fables, the sadness of songs, the boldness of couplets, as well as indignation and appeal. There is nothing of the dilettante in his anger and in his hatred. He hates with the well-placed hatred of the most revolutionary Party in the world. Some of his things have the power of a great and finished art, but there is also much of the newspaper in him, of a daily and second-rate newspaper at that. Not only in those rare cases when Apollo calls him to the holy sacrifice does Demyan Biedny create, but day in and day out, as the events and the Central Committee of the Party demand. But taken in its entirety, his work represents the most unusual and unique phenomenon in its way. Let those little poets of various schools who like to sniff at Demyan Biedny and to call him a newspaper feuilleton writer (sic!) dig in their memory and find another poet who by his verses has influenced so directly and actively the masses, the working and peasant masses, the Red Army masses, the many-millioned masses, during the greatest of all epochs.

Demyan Biedny does not seek new forms. He even emphasizes the fact that he uses the sacred old forms. But they are resurrected and re-born in his work, as an invaluable mechanism for the transmission of Bolshevik ideas. Demyan Biedny did not and will

not create a school; he himself was created by the school, called the Russian Communist Party, for the needs of a great epoch which will not come again. If one could free oneself from a metaphysical concept of proletarian culture and could regard the question from the point of view of what the proletariat reads, what it needs, what absorbs it, what impels it to action, what elevates its cultural level and so prepares the ground for a new art, then the work of Demyan Biedny would appear as proletarian and popular literature, that is, literature vitally needed by an awakened people. If this is not "true" poetry, it is something more than that.

The great historic figure, Ferdinand Lasalle, wrote at one time to Marx and Engels in London: "How willingly I would leave unwritten that which I know, in order to realize only part of that which I am 'capable of.'" In the spirit of these words, Demyan Biedny could say about himself: "I willingly leave to others to write in new and more complicated form *about* the Revolution, that I myself may write in the old form *for* the Revolution."

Oskar Negt  
Alexander Kluge

## THE PROLETARIAN PUBLIC SPHERE

(FRG, 1972)

### 1. THE PROLETARIAN PUBLIC SPHERE AS THE HISTORICAL COUNTER-CONCEPT TO THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE

Unlike the bourgeois class, in which the interests of the individuals who belong to it are organised and enforced alternatively in private and in public, the interests of the workers, being not realised, can only be organised when they become involved in a life-context, that is, in a form of public sphere specific to them. Only when they organise themselves in a form of a public sphere, do they develop at all as interests and are no longer merely possibilities.

The fact that these interests can realise themselves as social ones only through the eye of the needle of the exploitation of the commodity labour-power makes them, above all, the mere objects of other interests. If in the meantime they are directly suppressed, that is, if they are not socially exploited, then they survive as living labour-power, as raw materials. In this capacity, as extra-economic interests, they are in the forbidden zones of fantasy, deeper than tabus, and, as stereotypes of a rudimentary organisation of a proletarian life-context, cannot be further repressed. Nor can they be assimilated to it. In this respect they have two qualities: in their defensive attitude towards society, in their conservatism and in their sub-cultural expression they are still mere objects, but they are, at the same time, the solid bloc of real life which opposes the interests of exploitation. So long as capital is dependent on living labour as the source of value, this part of the proletarian life-context cannot be banished from the world.

This state of things characterises the preliminary phase of development of the proletarian public sphere, which holds for every stage of historical development. Whenever the attempt is made to fit this bloc into the interests of capital, for example, by subsuming the life-context under the capitalist interests of the programming and consciousness industries or of the new production of the public sphere, the accompanying process of repression and confinement produces, in the same quantity, the

This text was first published as a part of the authors' *Offentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von burgerlicher und proletarischer Offentlichkeit*, Frankfurt Am Main, Suhrkamp, 1973. Reprinted by permission of the authors. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

differentiated basis for a new and growing bloc. It is on the basis of this bloc of proletarian vital interests that Lenin said "There is no situation that is hopeless." It is no contradiction of this that at first no concrete solutions appear at this particular stage of social mediation. Capital cannot destroy the bloc and the proletarian cannot use it as a stepping-stone to take over society.

This basic phase of the proletarian public sphere is in reality seldom found in its pure form. It is overlaid with higher organised stages of the proletarian public sphere.<sup>1</sup> In the history of the workers' movement two aspects of this higher organisation have been especially important. It is necessary to distinguish them because all forms of the proletarian public sphere are a qualitative expression of the life-context of the proletariat and therefore — in contrast to the stylish nature of the quickly-changing bourgeois modes of the public sphere — have the tendency to exclude other, developed forms of the proletarian public sphere.

### 2. THE ASSIMILATION OF ELEMENTS OF THE PROLETARIAN CONTEXT WITH THE INTEGRATING MECHANISM OF THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE

Under this heading comes the integration of the energies of the workers' movement into forms of organisation which imitate the bourgeois public sphere. In all these cases the workers are, as a rule, divorced from the internal psychological means and from the institutional production tools with which they might adapt the bourgeois public sphere to their own interests or else produce specific forms of their own public sphere. In this sense, the empirical public sphere of the workers often appears as a variant of the bourgeois type.

If the workers attempt to overcome the special nature of their interests by seeking to grasp the apparent totality of the bourgeois production-context and the bourgeois world-context, then they experience a disappointment.

They try to abolish their proletarian life-context by means of something which is its exact opposite. They overlook the fact that the conditions of proletarian life are produced precisely by this contradiction. One cannot abolish the proletarian conditions of life without abolishing the bourgeois ones, just as one cannot abolish wage-labour without at the same time abolishing capital.

The unrealistic nature of the repeated historical attempts of the workers' movement to establish their interests without abolishing the bourgeois social system and yet separate from it, is however, not sensually demonstrable. The attempts find expression principally in the adoption of ideals: 'The ideal of the workers' movement must be achieved.' 'Humankind, progress, the right to work; ideas take the place of a truly emancipatory movement.'<sup>2</sup>

1. As opposed to this, it would not be concealed by the pure form of the bourgeois public sphere. It is precisely the result of confinement and repression, that is, precisely the opposite of this type of the bourgeois public sphere.

2. The analysis of the underlying process is complicated because labour-power is a mere object of production relations, but as living work, it is the subject. Its subjective character becomes an object by being subsumed under the

In those areas of society in which this mixture of proletarian interests and universal, ubiquitous bourgeois organisational norms takes shape, one can no longer simply speak of the bourgeois public sphere. It has been submerged in these areas but nevertheless is still present. The proletarian public sphere which comes about through the use of its own forms of organisation not only binds together truly proletarian interest and experiences, but concentrates them as a specific stage in the proletarian public sphere which also differentiates itself externally from bourgeois forms of the public sphere; trade unions, working-class estates, workers' clubs.

On this level, proletarian interests take part in the movement of society. In so far as that is the case, we find not only the appearance of participation, but real taking part. Not only can the apologists of the existing system of domination point to it, but the workers themselves also rightly see that here some of their demands are met; others they regard as promises for the future which are already granted in principle.

This assumption by the workers is not completely illusory. Their interests are really drawn into the life-context of society, just as they will be in the programming and consciousness industries of the future, but are so drawn in as mere objects, as things for the satisfaction of reified needs. The integration begins with the fact that they have marriages which imitate the bourgeois family; use the speech and culture of bourgeois society; and must use the institutions and organisations — mostly centralised — to maintain the *status quo*. The result is aporia; they cannot relinquish this form of proletarian public sphere, which limits them to a passive point of view; otherwise they would have to cut themselves off from their experiences and interests which are organised in this manner and have taken these forms. But they cannot maintain that state of affairs. It is blindness to the laws of motion of capital and the entire historical development if they attempt to maintain the *status quo* purely defensively — even when defence appears as the strongest method of struggle. The evidence is, that at the least sign of crisis or of a change in the *status quo* — perhaps through additional political repression — this state of affairs, which is assumed to be natural, alters the situation to their disadvantage. They become the

power relationship of the bourgeois public sphere. Precisely because the workers, without their social position having changed, 'consider themselves human beings', they are the victims of deception concerning the degree of reality of their actions and their state of social organisation. Amidst this mystification, they cannot see that they are the subject of an organisational situation which is foreign to them and over which they have actually no control. They experience this as personal conflict with the immediate representative of the relevant apparatus.

3. This form of proletarian public sphere cannot stand up to a normal crisis of capitalism; it can put up hardly any resistance to *coups* and fascism. In this situation the workers are indeed not the mere result and subject of the processes of capital, but only their remaining characteristics as objects are organised, so that they are once more short-circuited in the interests of capital. It is their character as objects which exploitation and its interests allow to exist as a reminder. In this connection political interests still have the character of hobbies.

object of a redistribution of mere raw materials in the context of social exploitation.

### 3. THE SELF-ORGANISATION OF WORKERS' INTERESTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A PROLETARIAN PUBLIC SPHERE WHICH CONFRONTS CAPITALIST SOCIETY AS A STRONGHOLD OF ITS OWN

Since the historical defeat of the British working-class movement in the mid-19th century, a reaction of self-defence has been typical of the workers' movement.<sup>3</sup> On this organisational level the workers determine their own identity by resistance to their bourgeois opponent. In this way they maintain themselves as something concretely separate. The unchanged conditions of proletarian life form the core of their development of identity. The capability of the commodity labour-power to 'speak' and to develop consciousness, that is, to develop into a subject, disappears because the pressure which the existing bourgeois social totality exercises on the opposing proletariat camp turns the workers into objects, politically, just as they are the objects of production relations in the economic domain. The bourgeois public sphere confronts the individual worker as a relationship of capital, but confronts the whole working-class above all as the State power monopoly, as an extra-economic power relationship. Consequently, the working-class organises itself as a political party; that is, as the extra-economic relationship of a counter-power. But this level of conflict and of class struggle is derivative.

In this situation, the real strengths of the workers are not effective. The real struggle goes on also within the proletarian himself; between his abstractly general bourgeois characteristics and his concretely special proletarian ones. But he must become organised and counted in the proletarian party; there must be a pretence that he is proletarian as a whole individual otherwise he belongs in the camp of the enemy. His chief characteristic is that he can on his own develop consciousness of his own character as a commodity. As a representative of the counter-power against the preceding power of bourgeois society, he must skip this process. As a result, he must present himself as the defender of human rights. In reality he is caught within an extremely limited horizon, but in his imagination he defends this 'human existence' like a bastion. He must become reified and make himself into an instrument in order to be able to fight his opponent. What he develops are not living conditions but struggle, which takes its direction from the enemy. If the enemy wins, then at once it has at its disposal norms and patterns of behaviour with which it fills the space it has conquered. If the worker or his organisation wins, he must first develop a new method of production and a new way of life. This is when the main task begins. Before this he must fight for something which he cannot yet know clearly. The greatest obstacle in this situation is that the relationship of the proletarian movement for emancipation to the whole of society, that is, the true historical mission, seems to be blocked when seen from the position of his own camp. The worker cannot think the whole of society without

landing in the camp of bourgeois society. He must choose between his own present identity and his historical character as a proletarian and revolutionary force which is raising up the whole of society to a new method of production.

This historical stage of the proletarian public sphere as the self-defence organ of the working class, in which the proletarian qualities of the individuals are concentrated as something reified into proletarian characters, has as its main function, the protection of individuals from the direct influence of bourgeois interests and ideologies. But it is not sufficiently rooted in the production process itself to effect a revolutionising of production. It does not possess the methods of production to break up the blocking node of family, education and the ways in which proletarian experience can be thwarted. It can only attempt theoretically, that is, at the level of mediation, to unify consciousness. In this connection, the conditions for working towards this end as an organisation are different from those in which this consciousness is produced by individuals in reality. However strong these organisations may seem compared to the classical bourgeois public sphere, they are equally incapable of holding their defensive line in the face of a fascist mass movement or of capitalist production which itself is capable of organising broad sections of proletarian existence, even if it is only in the form of mass deception.

Nevertheless, some important interests and experiences of the workers are bound up with this false method of organisation. The workers cannot cut themselves off from their mass organisation without losing this firmly-rooted part of their interests and experiences as well. So it is no solution when single, theoretically conscious individuals or groups detach themselves from the mass party or the trade union organisations. The masses could only follow them if they were to surrender parts of their identification as it has existed up to this point in time.<sup>4</sup> Participation in an experience of an isolated group, which was only theoretically — possibly correctly — formulated, could not induce them to do so.

The final stage of this process is produced by a

4. One of the important reasons for the failure of the splitting away of advanced groups of intellectuals from the mass organisations consists in the different ways in which experiences are shaped by intellectuals and workers. If the intelligentsia is capable of quickly building new methods of communication merely through their relations with groups in other countries, by reading books, by intercourse within groups of bourgeois intelligentsia, the experiences of the workers is so tied up with the organisation to which he has belonged up to now that he has little space for manoeuvre to make new friends with whom he may agree politically without being forced to give up accustomed habits. In any case, at each possible split from the mother-organisation his sacrifice is considerably greater than that of an intellectual. In general, the evidence is that such splits very soon lose their base. Usually, the workers go back to their customary organisations at the next election (see the fate of the PSIUP, probably the fate of the Manifesto Group, the fate of the KPD, the Lenin League, etc.). Something entirely different takes place when Russian social-democracy splits or when the USPD separates from the SPD on the question of law and order. In these cases, it is precisely the base organisations that carry out the split.

situation in which the workers no longer trust their own experience; yet as bearers of the commodity labour-power they would be precisely the ones to develop consciousness. But they can only develop as much consciousness as was implanted in them previously by real human beings. Instead of this, the party is credited with always being right. Here the opposite illusion arises and is mediated by the bourgeois public sphere. In it, a collective security system, in the sedimented consciousness of the bourgeois, becomes effective; yet individuals imagine that they are personalities who determine the movement of society. In the end, no one in the party organisation of the camp believes that he is in a position to produce experience by his own efforts, and the organisation, which, by no means encompasses the whole of proletarian experience, anymore than it encompasses the totality of social production, is looked upon as the centre of truth, the subject. Above all, this specific construction of a particular stage of the proletarian public sphere is very effective compared with that other, better form of the proletarian public sphere. The latter is efficiently fought against and hampered.

If the working-class organises itself effectively as a separate camp within bourgeois society, then the various tendencies reduce themselves to a form of the proletarian public sphere which is all-embracing. If the organisation of the proletarian life-context is not directed towards such a proletarian public sphere then the organisation of the camp is subject to a peculiar dialectic. Although it means to seal itself off from all forms of bourgeois life and to immunise individuals against them, it unconsciously reproduces the mechanisms of the bourgeois public sphere: confinement, false consciousness, dictatorship of the rules of procedures. It is penetrated through and through by abstract values. If anywhere then, it is at this point that we can see how far the siege mentality of numerous communist organisations has travelled from the Leninist concept of the party.

## Wolfgang Fritz Haug

### SOME THEORETICAL PROBLEMS IN THE DISCUSSION OF WORKING-CLASS CULTURE (FRG, 1977)

#### 1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOCIOLOGICAL AND SOCIALIST CONCEPTS OF CULTURE

The topic 'working-class culture' is open to very different interpretations, either sociologically, in which case it is what may be observed to be the cultural behaviour of the working-class in a given country at a given time, or it can be understood as the question of culture as seen from the standpoint of the working-class. In the latter case we mean that we relate to the subject from the beginning from the following standpoint and perspective; namely, that we look at things and evaluate them from a socialist perspective. In written papers on the subject as in our discussions the situation will constantly recur in which these two interpretations merge. And yet they are extremely different. Let us look at the sociological concept of culture, for example. From the sociological point of view we can identify many modes of behaviour as belonging to working-class culture; one might almost say a preponderance of modes of behaviour which are the result of the influence of the ideological apparatuses of imperialism: In the sociological sense, the 'cultural' modes of behaviour one may observe show how the workers are stuck fast in their basic existential condition, 'at home outside his work', while 'in his work he feels a stranger' (Marx); that is to say, show a basic condition of existence oriented towards the private.

In our country we have an almost unchallenged dominance of private culture in the working-class. So far as I can see, this differentiates our country considerably from some of the neighbouring countries, which has its historical causes. It would suffice to direct the attention of a sociological observer to the working-class in Italy, France or England, and one would find a mass of empirical material, of culture as practised by the working-class, which goes a long way towards the second meaning of the concepts con-

This text was originally presented at the conference "Kulturelle Bedürfnisse der Arbeiterklasse" organized by the Institut für Marxistischen Studien und Forschungen in Frankfurt am Main on 22-23 October 1977. It was first published in the anthology *Kulturelle Bedürfnisse der Arbeiterklasse*, Munich, Damnitz Verlag, 1978, and reprinted in *Das Argument* (West Berlin) XXI, 115, May-June 1979. Reprinted by permission of the author. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

tained in our title, namely, that of *class culture*. That is to say, that the workers from their own point of view consciously distance themselves from bourgeois culture (or petty-bourgeois philistinism) or else relate as far as perspectives are concerned — to put it succinctly — to the future of their class. In England, France and Italy we can discover ways of dressing, modes of normal consumption, in which a conscious and secure working-class culture finds expression and which we in the Federal German Republic today know only as fragmentary survivals. In either case, however, the following holds true: anyone who adopts the sociological tone of voice speaking about working-class culture must first and foremost discuss imperialist mass culture or else he feeds us the pap of illusions. And he must also discuss, in the defeated countries of the Second World War, in Japan and the Federal German Republic, how imperialist mass culture has imposed itself in what can only be called — from the sociological point of view — a sensational manner on the ruins of cultures which were relatively traditional in their development and also much more contradictory in their nature, cultures which corresponded more closely to what we can see in neighbouring countries. So the historical character of this special story must not be lost from sight. One feature of this historical character I should like to stress further is one which was analysed in a drastically strategic manner by Kurt Steinhaus. 'This is the fact that the specific mode of existence which the Americans call a 'way of life' and which has earned our country the name 'the Golden West' in the neighbouring socialist country sharing our language, is something very consciously developed by our rulers in the course of class struggle and deliberately imported into our country. It is not something primarily or actively fought for by the working-class. This way of life has been fought for, at most, by other working classes as a fellow combatant, in the second degree, so to speak. This was also the case here, when, for example, it was said that the German Democratic Republic was the third partner at wage negotiations. When trade unions made wage agreements during boom periods in the German Federal Republic it was always said that there was an invisible partner at the negotiating table, the Communists, out of fear of whom (or else with a clever eye to them) the ruling class made certain concessions or refused others. In short the sociological question concerning 'working-class culture' leads to results which are determined in a particular national way and in a historically different way from those in the neighbouring countries of Western Europe.

We must not theorise the results immediately — without a test, so to speak — that is to say, accept the sociological empirical date categorically and believe the results to be Marxist theory.

Here now are a few remarks on the second meaning of the concept of our title, 'working-class culture,' that is to say, *culture from the stand-point of the working-class and in a socialist perspective*. In the course of them I shall use the wider concept of culture.

1. Kurt Steinhaus: "Probleme der Systemauseinandersetzung im nachfaschistischen Deutschland" in *BDR-DDR, Vergleich der Gesellschaftssysteme*, Cologne, 1971.



Dorothea Kollandt has made a report on an empirical investigation in the course of which her group asked AEG workers the following question at the end of their shift: 'Do you have any cultural activities?' We learned that many of them did not answer or else said that they had no time for such things. We can take it that by 'cultural activities' the AEG workers understood something 'higher.' They presumably could not gather from the question that the people who asked it were perhaps also interested in how the workers drink beer in their spare time, play skat, tell jokes, talk about their boss, communicate during the breaks at work etc., and that all this can be shown to belong to the culture of the working-class, perhaps even to be something that contains seeds of a conscious class culture, which divides them from their class enemy and identifies them as such. No wonder, the language of politics has decided things differently; at party conferences or on other occasions there is a cultural programme, by which people understand the entertainment that comes after the speeches have been sat through. If 'working-class culture' were to mean those programmes for afterwards, that magazine section for socialists, then naturally the AEG workers had no answer. For such material they have little room in their lives. We must ask ourselves how the question can be put differently and how understanding can be achieved, in which case we are confronted by a wide spectrum of interests in their daily life which must be considered cultural activities. Perhaps we should admit that our concept of culture is still very vague and ambiguous. Some people understand it to mean Art and perhaps see things from the point of view of art-missionaries who think that humanity is concentrated and embodied in art and that this humanity must be brought to the working-class. Can one be a human being at all without this art? We can take it that this idea is buzzing around in many bourgeois-cultured heads in a half-thought out way. The cultural missionary attitude is something we must be somewhat suspicious of.

Perhaps we should think more clearly about the question why there is any point from the Marxist point of view of talking about culture alongside the usual concepts of historical materialism. What do we mean, when we give special attention to a particular dimension of activities? We should in this connection give weight to the indication by our Marxist classics that we should not attempt to project those activities whereby human beings produce values, in which they find a meaningful and enjoyable framework for their lives, from the springboard of theory; but develop them from the real actions of human beings. But that would mean that we would have to keep in mind the literal meaning of the word 'culture.'

The concept derives from peasant society. It is said that in ancient China children as a way of learning pleasurable, were told the story of the stupid peasant who in his impatience to see his rice-stalks grow more quickly went into the fields daily and tugged at the young plants until he had pulled them all out. Peasant modes of thought proceed far less 'from up there' than is possible or successful in other areas of human practice. Perhaps we must emphasise more strongly

the point of view of culture from below; that it is human beings themselves who carry on their cultural process or must develop the necessary capabilities for it. Perhaps we must define the function of political and trade union organisations as lying more in the creation of the conditions which encourage the processes of cultural independence. Cultural policies would then mean to nourish and develop the cultural stirrings of the masses, to echo attempts which are already present, to diffuse them more widely, and to give encouragement in the knowledge that culture in this sense can not be something coming from the centre but that it can only flourish as something diverse, something growing up from below, something to be supported.

The importance of organisation and a public context for this process can also not be rated too highly. On it depends whether the scattered attempts sink back into nothing or whether they stabilise themselves; whether they can in certain circumstances resist integration into the 'monopoly culture'; whether they develop a consciousness of their historical situation; whether they learn to understand what social resistances they must champion and what destructive steam-rollers of the cultural industry they must fight; whether they become conscious of the fact that it is not self-evident when someone takes up a guitar and writes songs for it, but that in practice it is an act aimed against the big corporations; and that it is done in a society in which vis-à-vis the 'monopoly culture' the guitarist shares an almost inevitable community of interests with many others in all areas. When this consciousness is reflected by the organisations concerning the numerous activities in the country then they can offer a perspective and a sense of direction which engages much more directly with reality than would the attempt to propagate cultural standards determined from above according to fixed patterns. Such encouragement by the political centre, of decentralised, varied cultural projects would be one of the ways in which the celebrated 'hegemony of the working-class', impelled by the most conscious organisations of that class, could achieve something; namely, by demonstrating in practice to the numerous decentralised projects and activities that they are best subsumed into that organisation, and that they can find encouragement and productive, active participation in its perspectives. In that case the decentralised cultural activities home in at once on the most conscious, progressive organisations of the working-class and that is precisely what Gramsci meant when he speaks about the hegemony of the working-class.

## 2. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "CULTURE" AND "IDEOLOGY"

The reports from the four seminars inform us — and this is a general conclusion — that nothing can be achieved without theoretical clarity and shared basic assumptions. If there was no preliminary theoretical clarification we found ourselves incapable of even reaching agreement on what the subject is when we say "culture", and far less why we are talking about it and what we really want to achieve practically. Clearly

when setting up such a working conference a certain weight must be given to the theoretical bases and their discussion.

In what follows I should like to raise in a sketchy way some cultural-theoretical issues. First, I want to glance back at the bourgeois tradition in which connection Thomas Metscher has very clearly established — contrary to our Marxist ideas about the "bourgeois" bogeyman — that it is here that the broadest concept of culture is to be found, and that it is even a problem of the bourgeois tradition that in the breath of the concept any clear definition becomes blurred. I quote the classic of German bourgeois sociology, Max Weber, who has defined culture as the result of the attribution of "value" by human beings: "From the point of view of the *human being*, "culture" is a finite excerpt from the senseless infinity of events in the world which has been endowed with sense and meaning." He makes a precise point: the excerpt which is endowed with meaning does not refer only to "phenomena to which value is attributed". He continues: "Prostitution is a *cultural* phenomenon just as much as religion or money, all three being such for the reason and only for the reason, that concerning their existence and the form they assume historically they touch our cultural interests directly or indirectly."<sup>2</sup>

If we had hoped in the course of the quotation to find out what culture interest amounts to we find ourselves disappointed and referred back to the beginning in a short-circuited argument. Culture is the result of the attribution of value from the point of view of cultural interest. But what that is exactly is only very vaguely expressed by Max Weber.

Thomas Metscher has called the precise definition of culture against the background of a very wide concept of culture one of the immediate tasks of Marxist discussion. I shall raise the problems of such attempts at definition without myself having a solution at hand.

I begin with Kasper Maase. He proposes to define the subject of the discussion of culture as "the connection of the material and spiritual conditions of life with the development of particular ways of life in the course of human beings' struggle with their environment."<sup>3</sup>

I can see certain difficulties in this proposed definition of the subject of the discussion; in particular I am not clear what is culturally specific in this connection, because what emerges from it we are accustomed in historical materialism to treat under the heading of other concepts. Why do we need, in addition to the concepts of historical materialism, among which the concept "culture" was not listed, at least by our classics, the concept of culture? What is its crucial difference from other concepts? I cannot discover it in Kasper Maase's definition; at least not clearly enough. Nor do I see how a cultural policy can be derived from this definition of the subject

2. Max Weber, "Die 'Objektivität' sozialwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis" in *Soziologie, Weltgeschichtliche Analysen*, J. Winkelmann, ed., Stuttgart, 1956, p223.

3. Kasper Maase, first thesis of a paper presented to this conference.

4. Rüdiger Hillgärtner, first and second theses of the paper presented to this conference.

5. Bertolt Brecht, *Me-ti. Buch der Wendungen*.

"culture". Or how cultural workers anywhere in local politics can deduce from it what they should do.

I shall now take a leap forward to the working definition around which Rüdiger Hillgärtner structures his theses.<sup>4</sup> He says: (1) Culture is an "aspect" of all human needs. Let us dwell a moment on this category—the aspect. According to it "culture" does not define a subject area in the sense of a territory which one can, so to speak, separate spatially from other territories, but means an aspect of the various territories; and the context in which the aspect is conceived is human needs. "The cultural aspect of needs is the moment of enjoyment." In short, he proposes to define the subject of cultural theory as the pleasurable relationship to human needs in so far as they are present in an area of human reality.

Now Marxism has traditionally a split relationship to pleasure. "Theoretically" it approves of the worldly life but in practice and in "practical ideology" pleasure is suspect. Pleasure appears to be counter to effort, to the sacrifice we are called upon to make, to renunciation. And it is ambiguous. Rüdiger Hillgärtner discusses this ambiguity in a later thesis when he refers to the manipulative fascination of the aesthetic which must be overcome. What of the relationship of militant effort to pleasure? Is it hostile antithesis? Or is it an antithesis which is one of life's living contradictions? In this connection I should like to refer to the answer given by Bertolt Brecht. He gives it in the story of how Lai-tu kindled a fire.

Me-ti said to Lai-tu: "I watched you making the fire . . . You looked like someone who is being forced to make a fire and since only I was there I had to assume that I was that exploiter." She said: "I wanted to get the room warm as quickly as possible." Me-ti said smiling: "I know what you wanted. But do you know? You wanted to make it comfortable for me, your guest. It had to be done quickly so that conversation could begin. I was supposed to be pleased to see you; the wood was supposed to be kindled; the water for the tea was supposed to boil. But all that came out of it was the fire. The moment was lost. One thing led to the next but nothing was for its own sake. Yet how much could have been expressed by making the fire! There is a tradition in it—hospitality is something beautiful. The movements with which the fine wood is made to kindle can be beautiful and inspire love; the moment can be used to the full and does not return. A painter who wanted to paint how you made the fire for your teacher would have had hardly anything to paint. There was no fun in the way you made the fire. It was merely slavery."<sup>5</sup>

If one interprets this story, which is intended didactically, in order to find its lesson, what emerges? The culture "value" that is talked about here is hospitality. The definition given to the culturally specific is this: the moment has to be won. So what does that mean? It is a question of doing what is necessary; the place has to be warmed. But that is not the "cultural" element in this case, in the sense Brecht gives to this concept, in so far as it is only necessary for something else and does not stand for itself. What he is concerned about is to derive something for the moment from the doing of something necessary; to be able to enjoy that act too, through the momentary connection with human needs. Hospitality must be contained in the very act

of kindling the fire.

I shall try to translate this into somewhat more comprehensible language in order to see whether we could work with it. Me-ti proposes to derive from the moment and the things of everyday life an aspect (and to alter them correspondingly to this end) whereby they "stand for themselves" and are no longer an expression of slavery but what Marx at the end of Volume III of *Das Kapital* in a somewhat old-fashioned way calls "the realm of freedom";<sup>6</sup> the development of human powers which is an end in itself. Is that not what we discover by way of a "cultural aspect" in all areas of life, even in work, even in its alienated form of wage-labour? "An end in itself" also means however that the end is defined by the individuals or groups themselves; any delegation of the cultural definition of ends to other agencies would turn it into its opposite. Even when the "monopoly culture" is offered to the masses—with alarming success—there must be a "cultural realisation" of that offer, which must be grasped by the addressee and accepted "by themselves" even if this moment of spontaneity is frequently reduced to a dwindling remnant by the imperialist mass culture.

I have already mentioned the Marxist rule not to start from theoretical constructs but from the real practice of human beings, and the powerful effects of this rule and of its employment on Marxist theory. Cultural "attribution of value" is a process present in life itself; the theoretician can only analyse how the processes develop or why they develop in a particular way or are blocked. He can then, like Me-ti in the story of how Lai-tu kindled the fire, foster further knowledge about the connection and thereby support spontaneity.

If we accept Brecht's teaching then we must conceive of the cultural as strictly distinguished from the economic and so not say everything = cultural, otherwise the concept of culture would become a new fashionable collective concept into which the totality of human phenomena would be subsumed.<sup>7</sup> What is the function of the economic? The production of the means of existence which, as the words say, serve as means to the end of human life itself. For human beings, their own lives are not means. "You only live once", the saying goes. That is to say, we should define the cultural aspect, as opposed to economic and political needs which are concerned with the means to societal ends, directly in terms of the aims of life, in the same way as actual human beings define them. In so far as individuals or groups dealing with

6. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Vol. III, (MEW, Vol. 25, p 828).

7. In contrast to Marx, in the work of the Soviet theorist, Arnoldov and others on *The Basis of Marxist-Leninist Cultural Theory* (Moscow, 1976) the accent is laid not on "the development of human powers which are felt as ends in themselves" but on concrete "values". Here is the definition of culture given by V. M. Meshuyev in the collective work mentioned above: "Culture is the realised, active, creative activity of human beings (individuals, social groups, classes, nations, society as a whole) in the sphere of material and mental production for the appropriation of the world, in the process of which socially significant material and intellectual values are created, collected, disseminated, exchanged and appropriated, as is the totality of the values in which the creative activity of human beings is concretely

anything from this point of view we should speak of the "cultural aspect", that is to say, in so far as human beings consider themselves ends in themselves. In contrast to the bourgeois concept of culture, which has been simultaneously harnessed and mystified by class rule as something that hovers above society, there would in this case be an approach to the democratic concept of culture "from below" in which the masses are understood as the historical subject just as they are in Marxism.

Now a glance at a somewhat different view by Dietrich Mühlberg<sup>8</sup>, one which has had an influence on some of the theses presented at this conference. Mühlberg defines the conceptualisation of culture as the self-consciousness of culture and sees this self-consciousness as part of ideology. He then examines the content of the concept of culture and finds: (1) that it includes the control of socialisation, education and training, the process, that is, through which, in crude terms, socially functioning "grown-ups" are made out of children. The second element contained in the concept of culture according to Mühlberg is as follows: (2) It controls the consciousness of solidarity within a society or the intellectual mediation between the individual and society, and is therefore the "driving belt" between these two entities. Culture is therefore a necessary condition for the reproduction of the production relations. We can see that these definitions result in a definition of ideology and indeed in a fairly exact one. In this case the cultural, as in Althusser, within the framework of a differently formulated theory,<sup>9</sup> is mixed together with the ideological. But thereby its special nature is lost.

Mühlberg ascribes the following achievements to the "concept of culture": (1) It directs individual life-activity; (2) It regulates the socialisation process; (3) It influences "general social development". This view takes one into the area of systems theory; what determines the concept is the perspective of the control of social processes; to that extent it has a socio-technical character. This characteristic finds drastic expression in the corresponding functional instructions to the social technician. Mühlberg sets out from the principle that the concept of culture is indeed, on the one hand, something that arises spontaneously; on the other, however, the scientific nature of the Marxist concept of culture excludes the working-class from its development: "Its basic assertions, which are remote from the living conditions of the workers, are produced by a division of

expressed". (p22). Here any specific differential of the cultural aspect threatens to be engulfed in a global totality. Every single concrete activity of human beings in history is here somehow equated with culture, and man = the cultural being. Class character, contradictions, eg between the "realm of necessity" and the "realm of freedom" have been abolished, as have the proposals for a democratic cultural policy. This concept of culture is in the strictest sense not materialist.

8. Dietrich Mühlberg, "Zur weiteren Ausarbeitung unserer wissenschaftlichen Kulturaffassung" in *Weimarer Beiträge*, 7, 1977, p 151ff.

9. "... culturel, c'est-à-dire idéologique..." ("cultural, that is, ideological") is the formula of Louis Althusser in *Philosophie et philosophie spontanée des savants*, Paris, 1974 p45.

labour and taken into the class." Further on Mühlberg speaks of the "production by the division of labour of cultural concepts of value" and of "those who develop them professionally" or of "the group of specialists who work them out."

Here we see the following idea: The workers' "concept of culture" under socialism is equated with "ideology". There is a group of specialists who work out the cultural values, a specialist circle of intellectuals, and bring them to the working-class. This seems to me to be questionable. Moreover it is at odds with the programme of the SED [Socialist Unity Party]. In this programme it is stated that the task is to create conditions so that capabilities can be developed. It is a question of opening up opportunities so that human beings can shape their lives and make them rich in content. Here an interesting distinction is made which is important for all attempts to define the subject of culture and for cultural policies. Namely the distinction between the determinants of the cultural process and the process itself. According to the SED programme, state or party measures should refer to the determinants and not directly to the cultural process. The cultural process is characterised by the spontaneous activity of individuals in the interest of their self-development and relates directly to the determinants in line with the facilitating, encouraging and orienting of this process.

I should like to draw a parallel between Gramsci's cultural hegemony and this formulation in the SED programme and then sum up. Gramsci's views in which he tells us intellectuals how we might work well are expressed in the concept of the "organic intellectuals" of the proletariat. By the concept of the organic intellectual he means, for example, (to apply it to our theme) that we should not produce "values" from a position outside the masses or the working-class. What we should do first of all is to take note of the fact that workers are constantly producing their own values themselves and, secondly, we should help them to work out an understanding of these values which is coherent and in tune with science. We should therefore not claim to influence the attitude of the working-class, which is something we could not in any case do and which is something that only leads to phraseology, on the one hand, and to the abandonment of the class demands which have become more than phrases on the other; but we should, on the basis of insight into the natural law that mass processes are always mediated by self-activity, enter into the cultural process of the masses and take part in it, supporting, generalising, rendering scientific, not so that a new division of labour creates a new specialist but that the masses themselves are enabled to take these, their own processes into their own hands.

### 3. SOME PROVISIONAL THESES

1. In an attempt to define a subject, even a definition of the subject of cultural theory, we should take as our starting-point the real actions of human beings and try to see what kinds of actions we might call cultural.

2. Proceeding in this way we discover that

culture cannot be conceived of as a realm of things, nor as a complex of facts, but an aspect of the totality of relationships and indeed the aspect in so far as human beings arrange their activities in a meaningful and sensually enjoyable way.

3. When I say that we should look at the actions of real human beings, the real human being is not confined to the individual nor the small group, the organisation of a class is part of the real human being so the activities of class-organisations must be included; and it is clear that Marxist discussions like the present one should take place either on the edge of a workers' organisation or be more or less closely connected with these activities.

4. It is important to distinguish between objective cultural conditions and subjective culture, this is especially important for any possibility of intervention in cultural processes.

5. I would propose that higher culture be thought of as genetically detached. Having become something "special" and apart from this general aspect of human existence, it is an aspect which persists even after its detachment, after its emergence as a "higher cultural" activity.

6. We should not equate culture with ideology nor with a scientific view of the world for the reason that culture is not based on an insight into necessity, as is a scientific view of the world, but on pleasure and humanity, which are concepts that have not been developed here but which were part of the discussion. While we can and must fight for a certain coherence in the sphere of the scientific view of the world, to pursue the regulatory aims of a closed system and to apply it to the field of culture would be destructive and would moreover always make us fall short in our attempts to grasp reality.

7. Cultural policies must concentrate on creating the conditions for self-development, giving direction to developments, engaging, and encouraging, in the same way as Lenin, in *What is to be done?*, conceived of the tasks of the central newspaper which was about to be set up, vis-à-vis political activities.

8. Gross mistakes have arisen and will continue to arise where people switch over to the cult of administration and education, concepts which play a part in Soviet discussions. The cult of education, that is to say, always looking at everything from an educational point of view, because one always deals with the masses as something to be educated and not yet of age, has the result that one cannot educate them at all; for the masses do not allow themselves to be "educated" but turn away in disgust from this constant attempt to influence them. The cult of education is an unsuccessful striving for success.

9. Culture must not be equated with propaganda. We must always be aware of the dialectic of the attempt to make into a instrument something which is an end to itself, or, to put it another way, the cultural should be what is perceived as non-instrumental, what even appears to be anti-instrumental. When it is instrumentalised we come up against a dialectic which cannot be avoided.

Finally I should like to sketch a reason for the numerous mistakes which have been committed in the cultural-policy tradition of Marxism and at the

same time to propose that we show understanding (to understand is not to forgive) of the fact that culture is so often equated with ideology. This false equation is put forward with great power because of the fact that the "cultural aspect" is related to the aim of a classless society. We strive towards a classless society as one in which the cultural, as defined at the beginning of this paper, has become a direct method of determining the nature of society. In this society human beings regard themselves directly as ends in themselves and consciously and without impediment relate all social activity to this goal. In that goal of the classless society the cultural aspect is almost entirely abolished, so thoroughly abolished that there is a danger of a misunderstanding: we might for that reason and without more ado turn it into an instrument for the struggle for that goal.

## F. POPULAR COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

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## Etienne Cabet Laurent-Antoine Pagnerre

### SUPPORT THE POPULAR PRESS

(France, 1834)

The daily press — that of the rich and their salons — is undoubtedly extremely useful, but the popular press is even more so, above all during the time following or preceding revolutions.

For the people are the nation's majority; they are the nation's strength; they make up the national guard, the army and all the organized forces of public order.

With them, all is possible; without them, nothing can be done.

They are the tool of both attack and defense, of oppression and emancipation.

Good, compassionate, appreciative, friend of order, law and justice — the people want what is right, spurn what is wrong and need only to be able to discern the one from the other. They will brave any peril in order to improve their lot and conquer their rights and dignity. Their love of liberty, equality and nation will enable them to renew past feats of heroism. Terrible in combat, the people are nevertheless capable of a generosity truly sublime.

In a word, it is not virtue but rather instruction that the masses lack.

Should the people become enlightened, made to understand their rights and duties and above all the facts and the truth; and if trust is placed in their common sense, wisdom, courage, justice and bountiful inspiration, they will know how to effectively defend their own interests against their enemies, their liberty against despotism, and the nation against the allied kings.

But if the people are deceived and kept in ignorance, they might (as it happens sometimes in the midst of the smoky gloom of the battlefield), just as well take their friends for enemies and enemies for friends. In the hands of their enemies they can become a tool of oppression against their friends, so closing their own shackles and beating themselves to death as they consolidate their oppressors' domination.

If the people, if the national guard, if the army, if the municipal guard and the gendarmerie, if all the forces of public order, if all the people's parties really knew — in a word — the truth, then they would feel it in their common interest to be united, to love and defend each other instead of hating and fighting each other. The soldier from the south, for example, would understand that it's not in his interest to go

This text was first published as a pamphlet by the newspaper, *Populaire* (Paris) in 1834, and was reprinted in *Cabet et les publications du "Populaire" 1831-1834*, Paris, EDHIS, 1974.

shoot at the people of the north, that is to say, his comrades' kin; no more so than his comrades would care to go shoot at the people of the south, his kin.

Deceiving and dividing the people, the national guard, the army, is the job of the people's enemies; the job of enlightening them is that of their friends. The people's primary interest is that of educating and informing themselves.

The government has all it needs to deceive and divide; it has the laws and the arbitrary of power; it has its civil service officials everywhere along with the police, the treasury and consequently writers, presses, journals, all kinds of brochures and armies of agents to distribute them; it sells its publications at the lowest of prices and often just gives them away; it swamps the people, the workshops, the countryside, the garrisons, guard houses and even homes with them; the government slips them under gateways and has the national guard drummers carrying them. All this, while using a thousand different means to stop independent writings and journals from reaching the people, forbidding their distribution in all areas linked to the people, and even in the Military Academy.

Whence the government's vindication; whence the provocation and slander of the parliamentary opposition, republicans and discontented patriots; whence the government's recruitment of ruffians.

It is in order to neutralize as much as possible all these poisons that the patriotic associations have been spreading their writings among the people and it's for this reason that *Bon Sens* and *Populaire* were founded.

The people well understood the immense utility of these publications: in Paris and in the *départements*, towns and countrysides, workers were scrambling to get *Populaire*. The government wants to destroy the people's press at any price and above all (as they weren't afraid of admitting in court), they want to destroy *Populaire*. It is in order to kill *Populaire* that they violate the constitution by enacting a law re-establishing censorship; it's in order to kill *Populaire* that they violate the independence of the nation's representation by prosecuting *Populaire's* principal editor, a member of the Chamber of Deputies.

They dare to maintain that the people's press is immoral! — their latest slander — but it's quite the contrary as the writings of *Bon Sens*, *Populaire* and the patriotic associations are certainly more decent and solemn than the government can endure. It is the government that we can accuse of all manners of immorality. In order to deceive, defame and slander at will the government is after a monopoly of the popular press; but that which is useful to the government can only be fatal to us; what it wants, we must abhor. The people's welfare, freedom of opposition, press and elections are at stake here.

Citizens, deputies, republicans and patriots of every nuance: let us unite in our efforts and the popular press will triumph over the enemies of the people.

Let us establish press associations everywhere; let us bring a newspaper and popular writings to every workshop and parish; let us set up group readings and discussions of public interests.

For us, there are no efforts or sacrifices to be spared in order to reach this goal.

However, we can no longer sell and hawk our journal in the street. We do not wish to do it that way anymore and we will replace street sales with subscription and home delivery.

The price of two *sous* a copy was a loss that we withstood in the interests of the people. This is obvious, as here are the costs of one page:

Stamp-duty .....	4 centimes
Paper .....	2 "
Printing .....	1 "
Hawker's Commission .....	2 "
	9 "

There was one centime left for the costs of editing, the printing plates, hawkers' uniforms, rent and administration.

The price of two *sous* was therefore, and we repeat it, a patriotic sacrifice.

This loss was even worse when, after such causes as bad weather, the hawkers had to return unsold copies to us.

Door to door sales would be an even less sure means of distribution than street sales; hundreds of copies could be left unsold and the loss would be too great to be repeated often.

Hence door to door sales are impossible. It is necessary that we know the exact number of copies to be printed and we can only know this by means of subscriptions.

Subscription is therefore the unavoidable necessity forced upon the popular press by the law.

Over and above that, subscription will put the principle of equality into practice with the worker receiving his newspaper like the manufacturer; the poor man will have his newspaper like the rich man, and at least until he enjoys his other political rights, he will be able to enjoy the right of freedom of the press. In this connection, the subscription becoming widespread among the people would be of an inestimable utility — freedom of the press would be a conquest worthy of a whole new kind of respect in the hands of the people.

The government will be covered with shame for the crime of having once again violated the constitution; instead of doing harm to the people, the law against public hawkers will be turned to their advantage in more than one respect.

*Populaire*, associated with *Propagande républicaine*, in addition will publish all the little books, brochures, catechisms, almanachs, and songs that might be of use to the people and will have them delivered to homes by its employees. These brochures will normally cost one or two *sous*.

Associations or citizens taking several hundred copies will be given major price reductions.

## Karl Marx

### (from) THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

(UK, 1871)

On the dawn of the 18th of March, Paris arose to the thunderburst of "Vive la Commune!" What is the Commune, that sphinx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

"The proletarians of Paris," said the Central Committee in its manifesto of the 18th March, "amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs... They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power." But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.

The centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature — organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour, — originates from the days of absolute monarchy, serving nascent middle-class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles against feudalism. Still, its development remained clogged by all manner of mediaeval rubbish, seigniorial rights, local privileges, municipal and guild monopolies and provincial constitutions. The gigantic broom of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century swept away all these relics of bygone times, thus clearing simultaneously the social soil of its last hindrances to the superstructure of the modern State edifice raised under the First Empire, itself the offspring of the coalition wars of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France. During the subsequent régimes the Government, placed under parliamentary control — that is, under the direct control of the propertied classes — became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the State power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely

This text was originally presented as part of a speech to the General Council of the International Working Men's Association in 1871, and is reprinted from the edition published by Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970.

repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief. The Revolution of 1830, resulting in the transfer of Government from the landlords to the capitalists, transferred it from the more remote to the more direct antagonists of the working men. The bourgeois Republicans, who, in the name of the Revolution of February, took the State power, used it for the June massacres, in order to convince the working class that "social" republic meant the republic ensuring their social subjection, and in order to convince the royalist bulk of the bourgeois and landlord class that they might safely leave the cares and emoluments of government to the bourgeois "Republicans." However, after their one heroic exploit of June, the bourgeois Republicans had, from the front, to fall back to the rear of the "Party of Order" — a combination formed by all the rival fractions and factions of the appropriating class in their now openly declared antagonism to the producing classes. The proper form of their joint-stock Government was the *Parliamentary Republic*, with Louis Bonaparte for its President. There was a régime of avowed class terrorism and deliberate insult towards the "vile multitude." If the Parliamentary Republic, as M. Thiers said, "divided them (the different fractions of the ruling class) least," it opened an abyss between that class and the whole body of society outside their spare ranks. The restraints by which their own divisions had under former régimes still checked the State power, were removed by their union; and in view of the threatening upheaval of the proletariat, they now used that State power mercilessly and ostentatiously as the national war-engine of capital against labour. In their uninterrupted crusade against the producing masses they were, however, bound not only to invest the executive with continually increased powers of repression, but at the same time to divest their own parliamentary stronghold — the National Assembly — one by one, of all its own means of defence against the Executive. The Executive, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, turned them out. The national offspring of the "Party-of-Order" Republic was the Second Empire.

The empire, with the *coup d'état* for its certificate of birth, universal suffrage for its sanction, and the sword for its sceptre, professed to rest upon the peasantry, the large mass of producers not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labour. It professed to save the working class by breaking down Parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subserviency of Government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working class; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation. It was acclaimed throughout the world as the saviour of society. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself. Its industry and commerce expanded to colossal dimensions; financial swindling celebrated cosmopolitan orgies; the misery of the masses was set off by a shameless

display of gorgeous, meretricious and debased luxury. The State power, apparently soaring high above society, was at the same time itself the greatest scandal of that society and the very hotbed of all its corruptions. Its own rottenness, and the rottenness of the society it had saved, were laid bare by the bayonet of Prussia, herself eagerly bent upon transferring the supreme seat of that régime from Paris to Berlin. Imperialism is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of the State power which nascent middle-class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital.

The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune. The cry of "social republic," with which the Revolution of February was ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did but express a vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule, but class-rule itself. The Commune was the positive form of that Republic.

Paris, the central seat of the old governmental power, and, at the same time, the social stronghold of the French working class, had risen in arms against the attempt of Thiers and the Rurals to restore and perpetuate that old governmental power bequeathed to them by the empire. Paris could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard, the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution. The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.

The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power," by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors,

the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal *régime* once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralized Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organization which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these districts assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat impératif* (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally mis-stated, but were to be discharged by Communal, and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organized by the Communal Constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern State power,

has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediæval Communes, which first preceded, and afterwards became the substratum of, that very State power. The Communal Constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small States, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins, that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production. The antagonism of the Commune against the State power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization. Peculiar historical circumstances may have prevented the classical development, as in France, of the bourgeois form of government, and may have allowed as in England, to complete the great central State organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councillors, and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties. The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the State parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. The provincial French middle class saw in the Commune an attempt to restore the sway their order had held over the country under Louis Philippe, and which, under Louis Napoleon, was supplanted by the pretended rule of the country over the towns. In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the, now superseded, State power. It could only enter into the head of a Bismarck, who, when not engaged in his intrigues of blood and iron, always likes to resume his old trade, so befitting his mental calibre, of contributor to *Kladderadatsch* (the Berlin *Punch*), it could only enter into such a head, to ascribe to the Paris Commune aspirations after that caricature of the old French municipal organization of 1791, the Prussian municipal constitution which degrades the town governments to mere secondary wheels in the police-machinery of the Prussian State. The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure — the standing army and State functionarism. Its very existence presupposed the non-existence of monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal incumbrance and indispensable cloak of class-rule. It supplied the Republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap government nor the "true Republic" was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the

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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

LIBERTÉ — ÉGALITÉ — FRATERNITÉ

N° 342

COMMUNE DE PARIS

# APPEL AUX OUVRIÈRES

Le Comité central de l'Union des femmes pour la défense de Paris et les soins aux blessés, chargé par la Commission de Travail et d'Échange de la Commune, de l'organisation du travail des femmes à Paris, de la constitution des chambres syndicales et fédérales des travailleuses unies,

Vu l'identité des chambres syndicales et fédérales des travailleurs, du groupement des ouvrières en sections de métier formant des associations productives libres, fédérées entre elles,

En conséquence, invite toutes les ouvrières à se réunir, aujourd'hui mercredi 17 mai, à la Bourse, à 7 heures du soir, afin de nommer des déléguées de chaque corporation pour constituer les chambres syndicales qui, à leur tour, enverront chacune deux déléguées pour la formation de la chambre fédérale des travailleuses.

Pour tous les renseignements, s'adresser au Comité de l'Union des femmes, institué et fonctionnant dans tous les arrondissements.

Siège du Comité central de l'Union : rue du Faubourg-Saint-Martin, à la Mairie du X<sup>e</sup> arrondissement.

Vu et approuvé :

Le Délégué au département du Travail  
et de l'Échange,

Léo FRANKEL.

La Commission exécutive du Comité central.

NATHALIE LE MEL.  
ALINE JACQUIER.  
LELOUP.  
BLANCHE LÉFEVRE.  
COLLIN.  
JARRY.

ÉLISABETH DMITRIEFF.

9 IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE. — Mai 1871.

One of the many posters published by the Paris Commune, this one published in May 1871 calling for working women to organize themselves (From Andre

Rossel, 1871: *La commune ou l'expérience du pouvoir*, Paris, Les yeux ouverts, 1970).

political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.

Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule. With labour emancipated, every man becomes a working man, and productive labour ceases to be a class attribute.

It is a strange fact. In spite of all the tall talk and all the immense literature, for the last sixty years, about Emancipation of Labour, no sooner do the working men anywhere take the subject into their own hands with a will than uprises at once all the apologetic phraseology of the mouth-pieces of present society with its two poles of Capital and Wages-slavery (the landlord now is but the sleeping partner of the capitalist), as if capitalist society was still in its purest state of virgin innocence, with its antagonisms still undeveloped, with its delusions still unexploded, with its prostitute realities not yet laid bare. The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class-property which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labour, into mere instruments of free and associated labour. — But this is Communism, "impossible" Communism! Why, those members of the ruling classes who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system — and they are many — have become the obtrusive and full-mouthed apostles of co-operative production. If co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the Capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production — what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, "possible" Communism?

The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois-doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crotchets in the oracular tone of

scientific infallibility.

When the Paris Commune took the management of the revolution in its own hands; when plain working men for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their "natural superiors," and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly, conscientiously, and efficiently, — performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what, according to high scientific authority, is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school-board, — the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag, the symbol of the Republic of Labour, floating over the Hôtel de Ville.

And yet, this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class — shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants — the wealthy capitalists alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever-recurring cause of dispute among the middle classes themselves — the debtor and creditor accounts. The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the working men's insurrection of June, 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Constituent Assembly. But this was not their only motive for now rallying round the working class. They felt that there was but one alternative — the Commune, or the Empire — under whatever name it might reappear. The Empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the *frères Ignorantins*, it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made — the disappearance of the Empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist *bohème*, the true middle-class Party of Order came out in the shape of the "Union Républicaine," enrolling themselves under the colours of the Commune and defending it against the wilful misconstruction of Thiers. Whether the gratitude of this great body of the middle class will stand the present severe trial, time must show.

The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that "its victory was their only hope." Of all the lies hatched at Versailles and re-echoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the Rurals represented the French peasantry. Think only of the love of the French peasant for the men to whom, after 1815, he had to pay the milliard of indemnity. In the eyes of the French peasant, the very existence of a great landed proprietor is in itself an encroachment on his conquests of 1789. The bourgeois, in 1848, had burdened his plot of land with the additional tax of forty-five cents in the franc; but then he did so in the name of the revolution; while now he had fomented a civil war against the revolution, to shift on to the peasant's

shoulders the chief load of the five milliards of indemnity to be paid to the Prussian. The Commune, on the other hand, in one of its first proclamations, declared that the true originators of the war would be made to pay its cost. The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood tax, — would have given him a cheap government, — transformed his present blood-suckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried communal agents, elected by, and responsible to, himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the *garde champêtre*, the gendarme, and the prefect; would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest. And the French peasant is, above all, a man of reckoning. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax-gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune — and that rule alone — held out to the French peasantry. It is, therefore, quite superfluous here to expatiate upon the more complicated but vital problems which the Commune alone was able, and at the same time compelled, to solve in favour of the peasant, *viz.*, the hypothecary debt, lying like an incubus upon his parcel of soil, the *prolétariat foncier* (the rural proletariat), daily growing upon it, and his expropriation from it enforced, at a more and more rapid rate, by the very development of modern agriculture and the competition of capitalist farming.

The French peasant had elected Louis Bonaparte president of the Republic; but the Party of Order created the Empire. What the French peasant really wants he commenced to show in 1849 and 1850, by opposing his *maire* to the Government's prefect, his schoolmaster to the Government's priest, and himself to the Government's gendarme. All the laws made by the Party of Order in January and February, 1850, were avowed measures of repression against the peasant. The peasant was a Bonapartist, because the great Revolution, with all its benefits to him, was, in his eyes, personified in Napoleon. This delusion, rapidly breaking down under the Second Empire (and in its very nature hostile to the Rurals), this prejudice of the past, how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry?

The Rurals — this was, in fact, their chief apprehension — knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest.

If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the heathly elements of French society, and therefore the truly national Government, it was, at the same time, as a working men's Government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world.

The Second Empire had been the jubilee of

cosmopolitan blacklegism, the rakes of all countries rushing in at its call for a share in its orgies and in the plunder of the French people. Even at this moment the right hand of Thiers is Ganesco, the foul Wallachian, and his left hand is Markovsky, the Russian spy. The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause. Between the foreign war lost by their treason, and the civil war fomented by their conspiracy with the foreign invader, the bourgeoisie had found the time to display their patriotism by organizing police-hunts upon the Germans in France. The Commune made a German working man its Minister of Labour. Thiers, the bourgeoisie, the Second Empire, had continually deluded Poland by loud professions of sympathy, while in reality betraying her to, and doing the dirty work of, Russia. The Commune honoured the heroic sons of Poland by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris. And, to broadly mark the new era of history it was conscious of initiating, under the eyes of the conquering Prussians, on the one side, and of the Bonapartist army, led by Bonapartist generals, on the other, the Commune pulled down that colossal symbol of martial glory, the Vendôme column.

The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people. Such were the abolition of the nightwork of journeymen bakers; the prohibition, under penalty, of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their workpeople fines under manifold pretexts — a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of legislator, judge, and executor, and filches the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender, to associations of workmen, under reserve of compensation, of all closed workshops and factories, no matter whether the respective capitalists had absconded or preferred to strike work.

The financial measures of the Commune, remarkable for their sagacity and moderation, could only be such as were compatible with the state of a besieged town. Considering the colossal robberies committed upon the city of Paris by the great financial companies and contractors, under the protection of Haussmann, the Commune would have had an incomparably better title to confiscate their property than Louis Napoleon had against the Orleans family. The Hohenzollern and the English oligarchs, who both have derived a good deal of their estates from Church plunder, were, of course, greatly shocked at the Commune clearing but 8,000 *f.* out of secularization.

While the Versailles Government, as soon as it had recovered some spirit and strength, used the most violent means against the Commune; while it put down the free expression of opinion all over France, even to the forbidding of meetings of delegates from the large towns; while it subjected Versailles and the rest of France to an espionage far surpassing that of the Second Empire; while it burned by its gendarme inquisitors all papers printed at Paris, and sifted all correspondence from and to Paris; while in the National Assembly the most timid attempts to put in a word for Paris were howled down in a manner un-

known even to the *Chambre introuvable* of 1816; with the savage warfare of Versailles outside, and its attempts at corruption and conspiracy inside Paris — would the Commune not have shamefully betrayed its trust by affecting to keep up all the decencies and appearances of liberalism as in a time of profound peace? Had the Government of the Commune been akin to that of M. Thiers, there would have been no more occasion to suppress Party-of-Order papers at Paris than there was to suppress Communal papers at Versailles.

It was irritating indeed to the Rurals that at the very same time they declared the return to the church to be the only means of salvation for France, the infidel Commune unearthed the peculiar mysteries of the Picpus nunnery, and of the Church of Saint Laurent. It was a satire upon M. Thiers that, while he showered grand crosses upon the Bonapartist generals in acknowledgement of their mastery in losing battles, signing capitulations, and turning cigarettes at Wilhelmshöhe, the Commune dismissed and arrested its generals whenever they were suspected of neglecting their duties. The expulsion from, and arrest by, the Commune of one of its members who had slipped in under a false name, and had undergone at Lyons six days' imprisonment for simple bankruptcy, was it not a deliberate insult hurled at the forger, Jules Favre, then still the foreign minister of France, still selling France to Bismarck, and still dictating his orders to that paragon government of Belgium? But indeed the Commune did not pretend to infallibility, the invariable attribute of all governments of the old stamp. It published its doings and sayings, it initiated the public into all its shortcomings.

In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere bawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the Government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. After the 18th of March, some such men did also turn up, and in some cases contrived to play pre-eminent parts. As far as their power went, they hampered the real action of the working class, exactly as men of that sort have hampered the full development of every previous revolution. They are an unavoidable evil: with time they are shaken off; but time was not allowed to the Commune.

Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris! No longer any trace of the meretricious Paris of the Second Empire. No longer was Paris the rendezvous of British landlords, Irish absentees, American ex-slaveholders and shoddy men, Russian ex-serfowners, and Wallachian boyards. No more corpses at the morgue, no nocturnal burglaries, scarcely any robberies; in fact, for the first time since the days of February, 1848, the streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind. "We," said a member of the Commune, "hear no longer of assassination, theft and personal assault; it seems indeed as if the police had dragged along with

it to Versailles all its Conservative friends." The *cocottes* had refound the scent of their protectors — the absconding men of family, religion, and, above all, of property. In their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface — heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity. Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris — almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates — radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!

Opposed to this new world at Paris, behold the old world at Versailles — that assembly of the ghouls of all defunct *régimes*, Legitimists and Orleanists, eager to feed upon the carcass of the nation — with a tail of antediluvian Republicans, sanctioning, by their presence in the Assembly, the slaveholders' rebellion, relying for the maintenance of their Parliamentary Republic upon the vanity of the senile mountebank at its head, and caricaturing 1789 by holding their ghastly meetings in the *Jeu de Paume*. There it was, this Assembly, the representative of everything dead in France, propped up to the semblance of life by nothing but the swords of the generals of Louis Bonaparte. Paris all truth, Versailles all lie; and that lie vented through the mouth of Thiers.

Thiers tells a deputation of the mayors of the Seine-et-Oise — "You may rely upon my word, which I have never broken!" He tells the Assembly itself that "it was the most freely elected and most Liberal Assembly France ever possessed"; he tells his motley soldiery that it was "the admiration of the world, and the finest army France ever possessed"; he tells the provinces that the bombardment of Paris by him was a myth: "If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents trying to make believe that they are fighting, while they dare not show their faces." He again tells the provinces that "the artillery of Versailles does not bombard Paris, but only cannonades it." He tells the Archbishop of Paris that the pretended executions and reprisals (!) attributed to the Versailles troops were all moonshine. He tells Paris that he was only anxious "to free it from the hideous tyrants who oppress it," and that, in fact, the Paris of the Commune was "but a handful of criminals."

The Paris of M. Thiers was not the real Paris of the "vile multitude," but a phantom Paris, the Paris of the *francs-fileurs*, the Paris of the Boulevards, male and female — the rich, the capitalist, the gilded, the idle Paris, now thronging with its lackeys, its blacklegs, its literary *bohème*, and its *cocottes* at Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain; considering the civil war but an agreeable diversion, eyeing the battle going on through telescopes, counting the rounds of cannon, and swearing by their own honour and that of their prostitutes, that the performance was far better got up than it used to be at the Porte St. Martin. The men who fell were really dead; the cries of the wounded were cries in good earnest; and, besides, the whole thing was so intensely historical.

This is the Paris of M. Thiers, as the emigration of Cobienz was the France of M. de Calonne.

## Ambrosio Fornet

### READING: THE PROLETARIAT AND NATIONAL CULTURE (Cuba, 1975)

I  
"There are no people in Havana", observed the learned Countess of Merlin in 1840, "only masters and slaves". Twenty years later, things were not so simple. The mole of history had silently undermined the archaic fabric of colonial society; in the midst of the dualism of slavery a much more complex reality had arisen. Cuba was no longer simply Havana or the region to the west, while, interposed between masters and slaves, there was now an embryonic middle class. The development of communications had meant the beginning of the provinces' emergence from isolation. Havana, meanwhile, was leaving its social dualism behind it as a result of a series of crises and recoveries in the international markets. The ruin of the coffee-plantation owners had been followed by that of the small landowners, unable to hold out against the catastrophe of 1857. Thousands of hitherto opulently wealthy families swelled the ranks of the urban middle class, lending a new physiognomy to this inchoate mass of professional people, officials and white-collar workers. At the same time, the rise of the tobacco industry had created an urban proletariat whose principal nucleus by 1860 was formed by the more than 15,000 workers grouped together in some 500 tobacco workshops in Havana.<sup>1</sup>

II  
Urban transport developed without interruption from the beginning of the 1840s. Very soon Havana and some provincial capitals were linked to their outskirts, and even to nearby towns, by a network of 'omnibuses' or stage-coaches. In 1840, at the beginning of this process, the two extremes of the island were as far apart as foreign ports. The journey from Camaguey to Havana, for example, took two to three weeks, travelling eight to ten hours at a stretch in caravans or carts, on main roads which became practically impassable in the rainy season. Postal communications were a little faster, but became more expensive according to distance. By the 1860s, however, a network of railways and steamships linked the country's major centres, the postal service had reached modern standards, and some 1500 kilometres of telegraph cable, as Zambrana put it, after Shakespeare, allowed "a girdle to be put around the island in forty minutes"<sup>2</sup>. The demolition in 1863 of the ancient walls dividing 'old' from 'new' Havana,

This text was first published in *Casa de las Americas* (Havana), XVI, 93, 1975. It was translated from the Spanish by Malcolm Coad. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

and from the rest of the country, could be taken as a symbol of the era.

This dizzy incorporation into the world of technology produced commotion in intellectual circles. It put into crisis mental schemas which had lasted centuries, and took over the position at the centre of the stage which until then had been monopolised by literature. Zambrana was simply expressing the prevailing opinion when he declared that no romance, novel or "even the most admirable work of imagination" could compare with electricity for poetic content. In 1858, a little after Field made his first attempt to run a cable under the Atlantic — which immediately gave rise in Havana to the idea of a similar means of communication with the United States and, by that route, with Europe — the Liceo turned the event into the theme of its Floral Games: Luaces won the gold medal with his ode *To Ciro Field* and Velez the silver with his *To the Undersea Cable*. Slave society trembled at its contact with the spreading waves of the Industrial Revolution. Technological conquest created the illusion of uninterrupted progress, and did away at a stroke with scores of mental taboos, beginning with those inherent in the slave system. "Progress is the law of humanity", wrote the young editors of *Brisas de Cuba* (Cuban Winds) in 1856, their abstractness of language revealing a very concrete disquiet:

Man betters himself every day, ideas progress rapidly, and since printing and steam have been put in its service, civilisation has grown constantly... The 20th century bends the knee only to science. Gone is the era of decrepit doubt; gone is the era of restriction; today reason is man's sole criterion, and everywhere is unfurled the banner of enlightenment.<sup>3</sup>

It should be remembered that the telegraph and railway networks were only the newest and most spectacular manifestations of a process which had begun at the end of the 18th century. In Cuba itself, the modern age began in 1817 in the western sugar region, when Arango and Parreno introduced the first steam engine into a sugar mill.<sup>4</sup> It continued in 1837 with the Havana-Bejucal railway. Nevertheless, technology was, for want of a better phrase, being grafted onto the slave-based organism as something alien to it. A choice had to be made between technology and slavery. The ruling class began to suspect that to avoid ruin they would have to cast aside their slaves as an encumbrance. After the crisis of 1857, and with a kind of historical fatality after the Northern victory in the North American Civil War, this

1. Ramiro Guerra, *Manual de historia de Cuba*, ch. XXI; Julio La Riverand, *Historia economica de Cuba*, ch. XVIII (Various editions exist of both books).

2. "I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes". This extraordinary exclamation began to seem viable in 1844 with the inauguration of Morse's telegraph, and even more so in 1851 when an underwater cable was laid beneath the English Channel. It became a fact in 1866, when a transatlantic cable was finally put in place. Zambrana used the quotation in 1853, as the epigraph to an article on the establishment of the telegraph in Cuba ("Telegrafos electricos" *Revista de la Habana*, I, p. 8).

3. *Brisas de Cuba*, II, 1 July 1856.

4. A process studied by Moreno Friginals in his admirable *The Sugar Mill*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1973.



suspicion became a certainty. This was the era when Pozos Dulces flourished Reynoso's *Ensayo* (Essay) like a banner, Jorrín was transformed into the agriculturist's benefactor, and Sagarra patiently explained to "the children and rustics" that there is no contradiction between capital and labour. In other words, it was the era of transition between slave-owning and bourgeois capitalism. So it was that the sudden interest in technology, which presupposed a bourgeois mentality in the realm of ideology, meant in the realm of society the revelation of the mass of rural and urban workers as free, and in the economic realm that of the country as a single potential market. In place of chattels it was now necessary to think of wage-labourers; of the national interest in place of local jurisdiction and the neighbourhood. Thinking, moreover, was no longer the sole prerogative of the ruling class, nor the unique expression of the interests linked to the metropolis. An unprecedented political climate had come about in the colony, which altered the verbal exclusivity imposed since time immemorial by peninsular commerce and bureaucracy.

### III.

The execution of Pinto in 1855 closed the cycle of agitation and repression which had begun four years earlier. In 1856, Concha was once again the 'enlightened despot' who authorised mutual aid societies, and honoured the Liceo's cultural rituals with his presence. Between 1859 and 1866, the 'liberals' Serrano and Dulce ruled the island like a pair of diplomats, with the sage objectives of seeking alliances for Spain's revanchist adventures in the Americas and of diverting the sugarocracy's proclivities for annexation. This not only allowed the landowners to organise the reform movement and defend their interests in the press — within the limits set by the censor, of course — but also permitted the embryonic urban proletariat to argue its own claims through similar channels, basically reformist, though these were contained within the ideological framework of the sugarocracy. By 1865, a number of social sectors, such as the commercial bourgeoisie, could count on organs of opinion dedicated to the defense of their specific interests. The commercial bourgeoisie had the rejuvenated *Diario de la Marina* (Navy Daily), which since 1857 had been converted into a powerful limited company. The sugarocracy had the newspaper *El Siglo* (The Century), the voice of reformism, which belonged to another limited company, formed in 1864 with capital provided by Morales Lemus y Aldama's group. The weekly *La Aurora* (The Dawn), founded in October 1865 by Saturnino Martínez and supported by the Havana tobacco workers, spoke for the urban proletariat. Both the sugarocracy and the commercial bourgeoisie assumed the 'defense' of the small farmers, setting things up for the future in a campaign of 'national recovery' which demonstrated the crisis of slavery.

With the new newspapers arose a new journalism. By dealing for the first time with the country's 'internal affairs' from the point of view of the sugar-

5. Jose Antonio Portuondo, *La Aurora y los comienzos de la prensa y de la organización obrera en Cuba*, Havana, Imprenta Nacional de Cuba, 1961. This is an indispensable reference book for everything related to this subject.

ocracy in its conversion to a bourgeoisie, *El Siglo* initiated *criollo* bourgeois journalism: Pozos Dulces has traditionally been considered the first 'modern' journalist. Meanwhile, *La Aurora*, as the organ of the embryonic working class, initiated proletarian journalism, becoming also a vehicle for Cuban social literature. It published the 'moral' poems of Luacés, Juan Maria Reyes's criticism of populism (Reyes was a travelling salesman who denounced the petty-bourgeois origins of the romantic dramas of the period), and the first novel by José de Jesús Márquez, who Portuondo considers "one of the most interesting figures of the early Cuban workers' movement".<sup>5</sup> *La Aurora* stimulated the creation of workers' schools, the attendance of workers at the library of the Friends of the Country Economic Society (SEAP), and, above all, the spreading of Reading in the tobacco workshops, until then the most important initiative by workers in the field of culture.

### IV

In fact, social literature and concern for the cultural advancement of the working class were more a reformist than an exclusively proletarian enterprise. In it participated not only the vanguard of the nascent proletariat, but also the foremost ideologues of the sugarocracy and numerous petty-bourgeois intellectuals. It was Nicolás Azcárate who 'discovered' as a poet the tobacco worker Saturnino Martínez, and who suggested the introduction of Readings among the proletariat. Fornaris, for his part, 'launched' the mechanic Gerónimo Sanz in *Cuba Poética* (Poetic Cuba), and premiered and published in 1864 *La hija del pueblo* (Daughter of the People), the play which inaugurated, together with another first performed in the same year, Alfredo Torroella's *Amor y Pobreza* (Love and Poverty), the populist-orientated social theatre which would be criticised by Reyes in *La Aurora*.

The proletariat as a class was not yet socially or ideologically able to constitute a distinct 'cultural audience' by itself. As a distinct entity, the reformist 'audience' was in fact no more than a fiction deriving from colonial strategy. It only needed Dulce to be replaced by Lersundi, and the Information Council (Junta de Información) to collapse, for this apparently monolithic block to break up completely. Although the social fabric had become more complex, it was heading towards a new dualism, this time of a political nature, between the colonialists and the colonised. Society was dividing into *criollos* and *peninsulares*, as these became, respectively, separatists and integrationists. From 1868 these, together with the post-war autonomists, would be the only sectors of the 'public' able to influence cultural production.

The beginning of the 1860s, however, was the era of the reformist *grande illusion*; the watchword, in both politics and society generally, was coexistence. In society, the crisis of slavery and the birth of the proletariat meant the dramatic reopening for the ideologues of reformism of the question of popular education, which their predecessors had considered theoretically in the 1830s. At that time, Del Monte had been obsessed with the 100,000 uneducated children who, in time, would become '100,000 rebellious proletarians, enemies of the nation's tran-

quility". Now that it seemed even slaves were destined some day to become free citizens — wage labourers, in other words — it was more urgent than ever that the people be drilled in the exercise of its civic duties, an objective which, in the judgement of the reformists, could only be achieved through a long process of education and in a climate of order and peaceful coexistence between classes. At the beginning of the 1860s, Jorrín proposed the formation of mobile groups of teachers to take education to the countryside, and enunciated the goals of his agrarian policy: "To attract and hold here families of white, free, intelligent and temperate settlers."<sup>6</sup> This, *mutatis mutandis*, would also be the reformists' ideal for the urban areas, that is, for the "honest artesans", and the poorest sectors of the population. In the meantime, these should be invited, in Luacés's later formulation, "to work and to harmony", with the objective of immediately neutralising their class vices through appropriate instruction. In other words, the need was to mould a people to the measure of the ruling classes, within a strict hierarchy in which each class would have its 'place', and all would be able to live together in harmony in the best of all possible worlds.<sup>7</sup> In *La Revista del Pueblo* (The People's Review), a short-lived publication founded by Zambrana and his wife in April 1865, the editors declared:

In this epoch of remarkable progress, ignorance among the people would be fatal. It is appropriate, and they are very much in the right when they demand it, that they should receive instruction, that they should be initiated into science and letters, and that such knowledge should be shared with them.

Sudden enlightenment, tinged with paternalism, took hold of the intelligentsia's organs of expression. "God did not create the multifarious and grandiose spectacle of Nature", emphasised Zambrana and his wife, "only to be enjoyed by privileged intelligences."

The ideologues of reformism took pains to endow this class coexistence, at least at the intellectual level, with the democratic aura proper to a movement marching under the banner of Progress. When Azcárate 'discovered' the tobacco-worker-poet Saturnino Martínez, he brought him into his social circle with the same benevolent condescension with which Del Monte had incorporated the slave-poet Manzano into his. And just as Del Monte had held a collection to free Manzano, so Azcárate partially 'freed' Martínez from his status as a worker, obtaining him a post as an attendant in the SEAP library at a salary of 68 pesos per month. Two years

6. Cf. Vidal Morales y Morales, "D. Jose Silverio Jorrín," *Tres biografías*, Havana, Cuadernos de Cultura, 1949, p. 113-196.

7. Furthermore, it made sense to take precautions against any eventuality. Martí quotes a phrase by an English reformist who warned his contemporaries: "We must take steps to teach the barbarians to read, for tomorrow they'll be our masters."

8. The main articles from *La Aurora* can be found, wholly or partly, in J. A. Portuondo, *op. cit.*

9. Quoted in Jose Rivero Muñiz, *La lectura en las tabaquerías* (1942), Havana; P. Fernandez and Co, 1951. See also Jose Rivero Muñiz, *Historia de la nación cubana: VII*, Havana, Cultural SA, 1952, p. 247-98.

later, Martínez would found the weekly *La Aurora*, presenting it as the continuation among the proletariat, of the efforts of reformism. "We came to join ourselves as brothers," he would say, "to this group of workers of the intelligence who show such concern for the advancement of science and literature, and for the diffusion of light among the masses of society."<sup>8</sup> The tribune of the tobacco workshops showed itself to be the democratic offspring of the Guanabacoa Liceo run by Azcárate. Evolutionism seemed to impose itself now with the same persuasive force with which it had revealed itself to the editors of *Brisas de Cuba* in 1856.

We live in a levelling century [wrote the leader-writer of *La Aurora* in December 1865], a century of progress and advance in all branches of human knowledge, in which the arts and industry increasingly diffuse to all the pleasures and goods reserved in other ages for a tiny minority. Knowledge spreads and penetrates everywhere. Science is no longer the patrimony of a select few; the knowledgeable take pains to popularise it and place it within the grasp of all. Today intelligence predominates; today everything is obtained through knowledge.

Three months later, *El Siglo* declared:

We have always believed that ignorance is the principal cause of all the ills which affect, or have affected, suffering humanity. For this reason, and this reason alone, we applaud reading in the workplace, and we encourage the artisans in the concern they show to escape from obscurantism.<sup>9</sup>

If it had remained limited to editorial writers, perhaps coexistence would have led to an interminable round of hymns to Progress, in expectation of the "inevitable" reforms. Not everybody, however, was so optimistic and so patient. The 'machine operator' José de Jesús Márquez, for example, though not among the most radical, preferred to go into the matter a little more deeply. In particular, he proposed the setting-up of co-operative societies, so that workers themselves might be able to organise welfare and recreational facilities. As for intellectual needs, he was to the point: "We believe that schools, newspapers, books, everything necessary for the advancement of peoples, should be available to all". Although not a member of the union (he was a mechanic, and worked on the railways), Márquez helped organise the celebrated Havana Tobacco Workers' Association, founded by Martínez in 1866. A similar impatience could be seen among certain middle-class intellectuals who had decided to close ranks with the tobacco workers, considering them to be the nucleus of a new class. Any form of association between *criollos* in the colony came to be considered subversive, and, logically enough, an alliance between the sugarocracy and the nascent urban proletariat, even one based on the innocuous principles of reformism, with its acceptance of the existing political status quo, was looked upon with disquiet by the colonial bureaucracy. In this case, however, such concern was justified, as there were elements participating in the great reformist enterprise of class concord who rejected this status quo altogether. Among the intellectuals most concerned to raise the cultural level of the workers and contribute to their social progress were the irreproachable Jorrín, Azcárate and Pozos Dulces, to name but a few. However,

there were also young potential separatists, such as Rafael Morales ("Moralitos") and Joaquim Lorenzo Luaces, who were interested not in assuming the mantle of benefactor in order to defend their own class interests, but in serving the 'people', who, sooner or later, would revolt against foreign oppression. Their workerism was therefore always expressed in an anticolonial tone which could not have passed by the lackeys and censors unnoticed.

## V

For the sugarocracy, the illusions of reformism melted away in 1867, with the failure of the Junta de Información. The working class had its Junta de Información in 1866, with Reading in the tobacco workshops. The failure of the Readings demonstrated that there could be no 'progress' for the working class within the colonial status quo, just as there could be none in the country as a whole. The contradiction between colony and metropolis relegated all others to secondary importance. The interests of the metropolis and of the colonial classes directly linked to it were incompatible with those of the *criollo* working class, as they were with the developing sugar bourgeoisie. The majority of the tobacco factory owners opposed Reading both as bosses fearing complications in their labour relations, and as *peninsulares* alarmed by the reformist spirit abroad in the workshops, which they took, or pretended to take, for a hostile political attitude. In this they were at one with their compatriots, the big tobacco exporters. The 1866 economic crisis and North American protectionism, which imposed high tariffs on twisted tobacco in order to encourage the import of the unprocessed product and thus stimulate the development of its own tobacco industry, consolidated the employers' position further, resulting in unemployment in the workshops and justifying greater arbitrariness.<sup>10</sup> The internal political situation provided reaction with further pretexts. From 1865, Spain was at war with Peru and Chile. One of the accusations levelled at reading would be that in some workshops texts were chosen from *La Voz de América* (The Voice of America), the newspaper published in New York by the Chilean Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, in collaboration with the Republican Society of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and which circulated widely in the island.<sup>11</sup> At this time, the simple act of reading *El Siglo* was considered dangerous, and had been prohibited by the bosses in the majority of factories. The forces opposed to Reading, therefore, answered without exception to colonial interests, both internal

10. It was then that the migration of tobacco workers began towards Tampa and Cayo Hueso; which is the same as saying that the hard journey had begun which would lead the proletariat from reformism to separatism, from its role as extra on the stage of history to that of coprotagonist. Twenty-five years later, when he discovered complete, in these Cuban 'nests', the spirit of the Revolution, Martí would speak of the war as inevitable and imminent ("With all and for the good of all", November 1891), adding later, in evocation of days spent in the past with the tobacco workers, that what had been born there "will trip over a blade of grass or a grain of corn, but in Cuba is going to come to completion." (Speech at Tampa and Cayo Hueso, February 1892). Exactly three years later the twist of

and external. The appointment of Lersundi as captain-general of the island in 1866 was a sarcastic reaffirmation of these interests.

## VI

It took almost 80 years for Reading in the tobacco workshop to find its chronicler. Until 1942, when Rivero Muñiz published his unsurpassed study,<sup>12</sup> Reading was no more than yet another of the proletariat's unsung battles, systematically marginalised from our cultural history.

It is commonplace in histories of Cuban literature and culture to discuss *in extenso* the Cuban Academy of Literature (Academia Cubana de Literatura), for example, whose sole achievements were to elect a governing board and draw up some statutes which never reached approval. In 1834, Tacón closed the Academy down, and this, together with the *junta de defensa* (defense council) which published Saco, and cost him exile, converted the Academy into a symbol of *criollo* culture subjugated by colonial despotism. Reading had no Saco to pronounce its 'just defense', and nor is it mentioned in the histories. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that in both its goals and its achievements, Reading was a much more significant cultural development than the frustrated Academy and, as a symbol, has meaning far beyond it. Its prohibition demonstrated not the rancour of one man nor the arbitrariness of an official, but the reactionary nature of the entire colonial apparatus and the class in which it was founded locally.

The proletariat found in Reading — in "the enthusiasm to hear things read", as a editorial writer in *El Siglo* put it — the era's most democratic and effective form of cultural diffusion. Oral transmission, carried out in the workplace itself during the hours of work, was the ideal instrument for satisfying the needs of a class which had grown up demanding books, but which lacked the means, the time and often the educational level necessary to read them. Reading was the first attempt to bring books to the masses for purely educational and recreational reasons. For the ruling class books had always been a luxury item and, in the final analysis, a means of domination and profit; the proletariat made of them an instrument of self-education, using them for the sole purpose of developing itself ideologically and culturally. Rivero Muñiz rightly defined Reading as "one of the most original and educational institutions ever available to the world's proletarians".<sup>13</sup>

Reading first appeared in December 1865 in the tobacco in which was concealed the order to begin the uprising, destined for Juan Gualberto Gomez, was made in a workshop in Cayo Hueso.

11. Cf. Raul Roa, *Aventuras, venturas y desaventuras de un mambi*, Havana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1970, pp. 27-8.

12. *Op. cit.* in note 9.

13. For useful material on this subject, see, as well as the books by Portuondo and Rivera already cited: Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunto cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, 2nd ed., Havana, Dirección de Publicaciones, Universidad de las Villas, 1963, pp. 90-3; Gaspar J. García Gallo, *Biografía del tabaco habano*, 2nd. ed., Havana, Comisión Nacional del Tabaco Habano, 1961, pp. 211-20.

*El Figaro* tobacco workshop, where 300 tobacco twisters worked.<sup>14</sup> An item in *La Aurora* at the beginning of the following year announced:

In the large tobacco factory of El Figaro, the custom has been established, to the highest credit of its workers, of reading selected texts aloud, while each worker contributes a quota of time in order to make good the working hours lost by the reader. Such readings in the workshops, a new development amongst us, and one due entirely to the initiative of the worthy workers of El Figaro, are a gigantic step forward in the march of progress and the general advancement of the artisans.

In January 1866, readings began in the factory belonging to Jaime Partagas, where within three months six works comprising a total of 14 volumes had been read, and rostra and lecturn installed to ease the reader's task — "so they will not faint", as *La Aurora* explained, "and may continue for as long as possible." From there readings sprang up in other workshops in Havana, spreading to neighbouring towns and even to some rural areas, most probably in Pinar del Río and Las Villas. Wherever sedentary group work was carried out, the idea found supporters.

The conflict which arose over the Readings with the majority of owners and the colonial bureaucracy, was a typical manifestation of class struggle in the field of ideology. Nobody opposed Reading in principle; but the owners reserved the right to select and approve the works to be read. *El Siglo* expressed the view that the most appropriate works were those of science and "biographies of useful and good men, honest artisans above all" which would serve as examples to the reformist proletariat. In factories where the owners identified themselves with the cultural aspirations of the workers, it seems there was no conflict over the choice of reading matter. In El Figaro, the Readings began with *Las luchas del siglo* (Struggles of the Century), a book, according to *La Aurora*, "whose doctrines tend to point the people in a direction worthy of the noble aspirations of the working classes". In Partagas's factory, Álvaro Florez Estrada's *Economía Política* (Political Economy) was followed by Manuel Fernández y González's moral and philosophical novel *El rey del mundo* (The King of the World), histories of the United States, the French Revolution, and Spain, and a book entitled *Misterios del juego* (Mysteries of

14. There is an alternative, but insufficiently precise, testimony according to which "it seems to have begun formally in the Viñas factory, in Bejucal, in 1864." (Cf. Gerardo Castellanos, *Motivos de Cayo Hueso*, Havana, Imprenta Ucar García y Cia, 1935, pp. 202-3).

15. Papers considered as 'political' were those which had been granted, through the deposit of a bond, the right to publish news from Spain and official declarations. Officially, therefore, *La Aurora* — for example — was a 'literary' publication, while *El Siglo*, *La Marina* and *La Prensa* were 'political'. Although there had previously been 'political' periodicals published by *criollos*, such as *El Faro Industrial* (The Industrial Beacon), suppressed by Concha in 1851, *El Siglo* was the first to deal with local issues of public interest.

16. Quoted by Vidal Morales y Morales in *Hombres del 68: Rafael Morales y Gonzalez*, 2nd. ed., Havana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1972, p. 76.

the Game). *El Siglo* was also read, as was, naturally, *La Aurora*. There can be little doubt that the readings preferred by the workers were rather different from those imposed by the newspapers through their 'libraries'. Elsewhere, in factories where the owners accepted the Readings only on their own terms, with the intention of bringing them into line with official prescriptions, the *Diario de la Marina* and *La Prensa* were read, together with the satirical weekly *Don Junipero*, published by Victor Patricio Landaluze, and works by authors "of recognised literary and moral aptitude", such as Mariano Torrente, Pascual Riesgo and Virginia Auber, the famous 'Felicia'. One owner in Santiago de las Vegas insisted on Modesto Lafuente's voluminous *Historia de España* (History of Spain) being read, ignoring the soporific effect this was likely to have on its listeners.

The campaign against the Readings was launched in February 1866 by the *Diario de la Marina*, first of all indirectly, and then with a derogatory and menacing tone aimed simultaneously at the reformist workers, *El Siglo* (the most popular political newspaper in the tobacco workshops)<sup>15</sup> and *La Aurora*. Pontificated *La Marina*:

Tobacco workers, tailors and other artisans should not read or be acquainted with anything other than that which concerns their respective labours, for political periodicals and those of demagogic propaganda attempt only to inject among the artisans political passions and party spirit, when the poor man should have no other concern than the peaceful duties through which he maintains his family.<sup>16</sup>

That this represented the official attitude to Reading and to any other attempt to raise the cultural level of the masses was indicated by the growing number of illiterates and the total lack of schools for adults. *El Siglo* took pains to make it clear that it supported the Readings solely for their educational value. A small satirical publication called *El Ajiaco* (Chile Sauce) supported *La Marina*. The situation was complicated by a polemic involving the Readings which took place between *La Marina* and *La Aurora* at the precise moment when these were once again being pilloried by the weekly *Don Junipero*.

In fact, from the legal point of view, *La Aurora* was a living contradiction. To defend working class interests it had to deal with local issues: in other words, enter into 'political' matters, thereby directly violating its legal status as a 'literary' publication. It did this repeatedly by its coverage of issues such as the lack of schools and libraries, its support of the Readings, its opposition to bull and cock fighting, and its demands for the suppression of taxes and tariffs which harmed the workers. In April 1866, *La Marina* denounced these violations of the Print Law (Ley de Imprenta). *La Aurora* responded at the beginning of May in an article signed by José de Jesús Márquez:

Not so long ago, *El Diario de la Marina* took upon itself the role of scourge of the weekly press, attacking it because it includes among its columns articles of interest. Nothing is more natural than that we should concern ourselves with our own failings, rather than those of France or England, which are of no interest to us. We are aware of the intentions of the journal of the Apostadero. It wants publications categorised as political, because they have not deposited the bond demand-

ed by the law, to fill their columns with verses about flowers and butterflies, and articles about dances and fashion, matters which do nothing to enlighten a country. If we may be permitted to speak frankly, we would say that if the libraries were in this journal's charge, they would contain nothing but novels, while books of instruction would be consigned to the flames, in case a single one of their pages should remain.

On the same day that this article appeared in *La Aurora*, Landaluze's first attacks were published in *Don Junípero*. Reaction was rattling its sabres on all sides, with a clear purpose in mind. The four cartoons published by Landaluze under the title "Reading in the Workshops" illustrated *La Marina's* views graphically, and, because of their insulting nature, constituted a real provocation to the working-class. It is to be supposed that in such circumstances, the Readings served to stimulate the tobacco workers' participation in the polemic. Particular events would be approved or disapproved of in whispered conversations or in comments passing from bench to bench, and there would be no shortage of Readers who, pronouncing certain passages with an appropriate impromptu remark, would give such participation the character of a plebiscite. A week later, on the eve of the banning, Landaluze took up the cudgels again with four more drawings in which, not satisfied with merely offering insults and abuse, he also accused the Readings of damaging the economy and public order. These were the times, also, in which Ruiz de León, the editor of *La Marina*, spent his days screaming that there was a 'conspiracy' in Cuba, lead by the reformist newspapers, "against Spain and all things Spanish"<sup>17</sup>, and the *marquistas* carried out massive dismissals of workers in an attempt to absorb the crisis brought about by North American protectionism. All in all, times when *Don Junípero's* quips had to be taken very seriously.

On 14 May 1866, the political governor stepped in, dictating a Public Order decree, later ratified by Lesundi<sup>18</sup>, which prohibited "the distraction of workers in tobacco factories, workshops or any other establishment by the reading of books or periodicals, or by discussions unrelated to the work being carried out by these same workers". The reasons given for this action summarized the paternalistic version of reactionary thinking:

Tolerance of public readings is leading to the conversion of meetings of artisans into political gatherings. This simple and hard-working class in society, which lacks the preparatory instruction necessary to appreciate and distinguish between false and useful, lawful and just theories, easily becomes distracted and mesmerized by exaggerated interpretations of the doctrines it hears. It is also true that the reading of periodicals leads to that of books which contain sophisms and maxims dangerous for the weak intelligence of persons possessing neither

17. Cf. Archivo Nacional, Gobierno Superior Civil, Legislation 678 and 679, Nos. 21996 and 22054 respectively.

18. Cf. Archivo Nacional, Asuntos Políticos, Legislation 54, No. 28.

19. The declaration is reproduced complete in Vidal Morales, *op. cit.* in note 16, pp. 76-8 and in Portuondo, *op. cit.* in note 5, pp. 39-43.

20. Portuondo, *op. cit.* p. 101.

21. Cf. Ambrosio Fornet, "Literatura y mercado en la Cuba colonial", *Casa de las Americas* (Havana), 84, May-June 1974, pp. 48-9.

the criteria nor the study necessary to assess with any precision the notions of writers who, in their attempts to fulfill their mission of instructing the people, in fact wreak great damage on the peace of families.

The solid instruction which leads intelligence to the knowledge of truth is acquired in the first instance in the schools paid for by the local authorities and provided by the government, and in text-books published by authors of recognised literary and moral aptitude, and approved by the competent authorities.

Writings on Christian doctrine, the decrees of good government and authority, lessons in moderate and serious conduct, and writings on the arts and crafts, are books which educate and teach the less privileged classes, creating honest fathers of families and hard-working citizens of use to the country.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in less than six months the first cultural enterprise of the hispano-cuban proletariat failed, strangled by colonialism. On the initiative of Saturnino Martínez, now become a bourgeois, Reading was re-established in 1880, consolidating itself from 1884 until its prohibition again in 1896 as a proletarian institution, at the same time, according to Rivera Muñiz, that anarchist propaganda first appeared, which from then on had an important tribune in the tobacco workshops. Although the reformist proletariat was still numerous, preferred texts at the Readings at this time appear to have been those of the Catalan anarchist José Llunás, Proudhon and Bakunin.

## VII

The significance of Reading when it first appeared can only be fully appreciated if it is placed within the general cultural movement sponsored by the working-class in 1866, and which also included the publication of *La Aurora*. Precisely because of its class nature, this movement immediately evinced a cultural dynamism rarely seen in the colony, and untainted by sectarianism. In *La Aurora*, as Portuondo pointed out, "every new book, every newly performed piece of theatre, every intellectual event" was discussed.<sup>20</sup> Its contributors included the most outstanding intellectuals of the period, among them militant 'workerists' such as Luaces and Torroella. Given its reformist nature, however, this enterprise was bound eventually either to fail or to become an ideological instrument of colonialism. The latter alternative was always likely, due to the numbers and hierarchical preponderance of tobacco workers from 'the peninsular'. The numerous histories of Spain which were read in the Readings were never matched by any of Cuba, such as those by Santacilia or Guiteras, or Humboldt's *Ensayo político* (Political Essay); and it must be assumed that the novels of Fernandez-González, Sué and Ayguals de Izco, which circulated triumphantly at the Readings, never gave way to those of Palma or Villaverde. The same could therefore be said of the Readings as was previously true of the *planillas*<sup>21</sup> and the second stage of *El Plantel*: "Nothing Cuban".

There was no possibility within the political and social framework of the colony that Reading might serve as a channel for spreading national works, or those linked to national culture. While it could be considered otiose and irrelevant to look for such a preoccupation in the first period of the Readings, such is not the case when we return to its post-war

evolution. From 1868 onwards, raising the culture level of the masses could only mean raising their political level also; and this, within the colonial context, could only mean making them Spanish or neutralising them. Divided between reformists and anarchists, the workers could only raise their cultural level to that of the Captaincy-General.

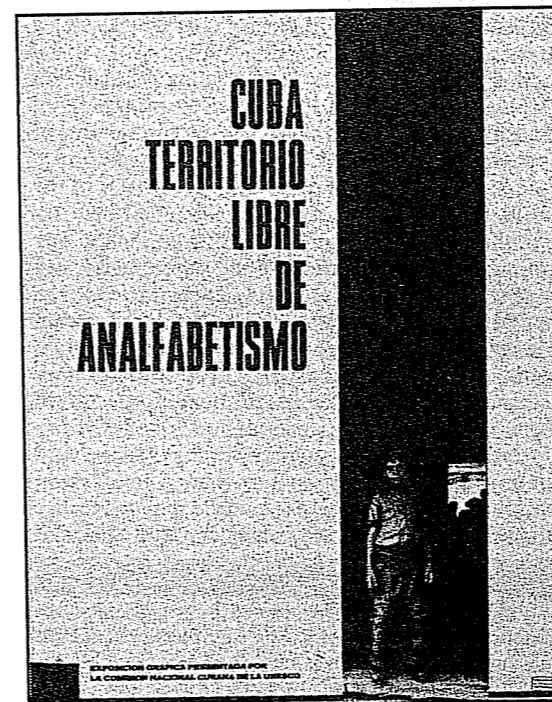
## VIII

But, while frustrated in the colony, Reading did become national through the emigration movement, where it contributed to the spread of *mambisa*<sup>22</sup> ideology and the creation within the workshops of foci of national-revolutionary culture. By the time that pamphlets by Llunás began to circulate in the tobacco workshops of the island, the workers of Cayo Hueso were already accustomed to reading *El Yara* and to hearing talks on the war by Fernando Figueredo. It was for this audience — guided politically by the Cuban Convention (Convención Cubana) and later by the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) — that Gómez would publish *El viejo Eduá* (Old Edua), Figueredo *La toma de Bayamo* (The Taking of Bayamo), and Cruz *La revolución cubana y la raza de color* (The Cuban Revolution and the Coloured Race). It was in this new context that the Readings, or rather the cultural movement initiated by the working class in 1865, took on decisive importance by becoming an efficacious instrument for the formation of revolutionary awareness. In the working class communities of Tampa and Cayo Hueso, cultural activity naturally spread beyond the working class to permeate the whole of social life through schools, lodges and recreational and mutual aid societies. *Mambisa* ideology found supporters in these locations, not only

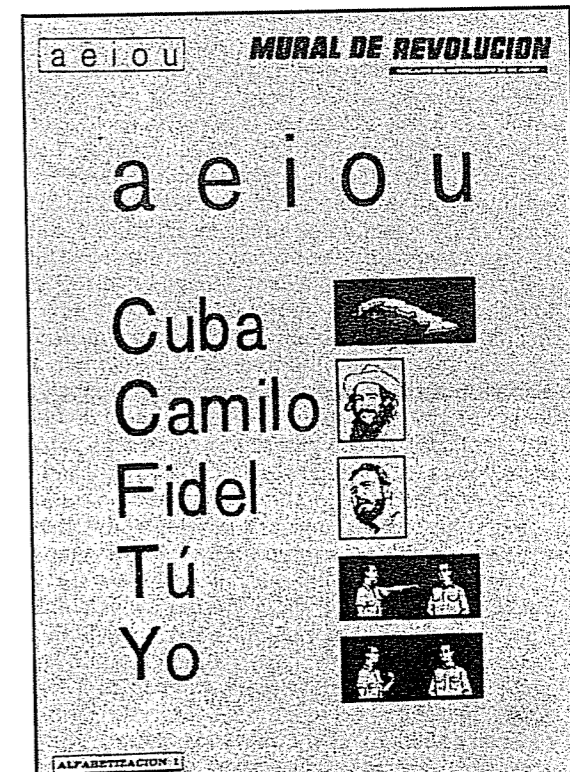
among the mass of workers, but also among professionals, artisans, small merchants, and even among some bourgeois, such as Eduardo Hidalgo Gato. It was to be expected that for this social tinder, already politically mature, the message of Martí and the immediately ensuing formation of the PRC would act as sparks; and that two-thirds of the revolutionary clubs existing among emigrants by mid-1893 were in Tampa and Cayo Hueso, whose workers had by then already contributed 30,000 pesos to the Party's funds.

There is a related fact, however, which is often passed over or studied in isolation. While the workers would form Martí's most enthusiastic and receptive audience, he would at the same time find in the communities they had created the seed of the possible republic: "a cultivated people, with the study bench set beside that for earning its bread". It is not difficult to imagine the impact which such circumstances produced on a man who could conceive of culture in no other way than as social practice. Martí sensed that the Cuban people's long experience of coexistence between those of different social and racial origins — "years of working, reading and hearing each other speak", while sharing a single collective interest — had served as "the continual and constant practice of the potential of republican man". In the San Carlos Club, in Cayo Hueso, where the formation of the Party was proclaimed and the emigrants met together without distinction of class in patriotic, literary and artistic gatherings, he saw the beginnings of the *casas del pueblo* (people's centres), cultural centres which

22. The *Mambisas* were slaves who revolted against the colonial power [Editors' Note].



Cuban poster for an exhibition by the Cuban National Commission of UNESCO, "Cuba: Territory Free from Illiteracy", ca. 1961.



Cuban educational wallposter produced for the literacy campaign, ca. 1960.

would be set up all over the country after liberation. In the Gato factory, where a general from 1868 worked as a labourer, and a renowned intellectual as a Reader<sup>23</sup>, in the workshop where the virtuosi Albertini and Cervantes were enthusiastically applauded, and where *Patria* could be heard read to the last item without pause for breath, Martí felt the profound community of interest between "those of one office and those of another", between those who worked "the generous leaf of tobacco", "the profound leaf of the book", and "the elegant leaf of the page of music". Thus it was that the alliance between manual and intellectual workers, which the idealogues of reformism had sponsored in the early days of *La Aurora* out of pure class interest, was raised to a higher level, as an egalitarian force based on the shared objective of justice. From the cultural experience of the working class Martí drew conclusions which enriched his vision of a democratic culture fit for the new republic. What had begun as the vague aspiration of the colonial proletariat finally became a revolutionary project; the cultural patrimony of the nation.

## Pierre Lavroff

### SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA: ITS ROLE AND FORMS

(France, 1887)

I Contemporary socialism is the historical product of the capitalist system, the result of the conflict of interests between workers and capitalists. From this point of view, it must be explained to the working masses what relations exist between this system and its interests, and between different social phenomena and that which serves as a basis for socialist ideas: On the other hand, when one addresses the most intelligent fraction of the dominant classes, it is essential to show scientifically why socialism is the natural result of current economic conditions, and to what extent it is the inevitable consequence of them. However, at the same time, socialism represents a moral ideal of life in society; it realises the highest possible form that relations based on justice can currently aspire. Thus, it requires a propaganda capable of struggling, in total self-sacrifice, to lead the fraction of humanity tending to put its conviction into practice, or even, simply, to be awakened to a moral life.

The result is that for socialism, as in any other moral conception, where there is a struggle concerning a conflict of interests, or attempt to develop peoples' minds, propaganda is an essential means. These means are all the more complex in that socialism represents both a conflict of interests; a better way of understanding the conditions of a social system and historical progress, and also an invitation to realise a moral ideal. These different aspects of socialism give rise to certain characteristic features of its propaganda.

As a struggle of interests, it provokes, in the first place, a conflict between individuals; then, on top of this, a struggle between individuals on the one hand, and the social system on the other. In its very essence, it is a revolutionary doctrine. On the other hand, as moral propaganda, it tends to restrain the struggle between individuals as much as possible, and the attenuate the misfortune of revolutionary catastrophies. There seems to be an opposition between peaceful propaganda and revolutionary agitation, between propaganda favouring a general harmony to give everyone the chance to develop themselves, and the passionate hatred that one brings to the enemies of socialism, which can lead to acts of

This text was first presented as a speech at the conference of the Society of Russian Workers held in Paris on 15 January 1887, and was published as a pamphlet by Aux Bureaux des "Temps Nouveaux", Paris, 1898. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

terrorism. The "propagandistic" parties are opposed to the "agitator, terrorist, conspiratorial" parties. Both tendencies consider themselves, for the most part in all sincerity, to be militants for socialism. Both, with a great deal of conviction, present their programme as the only true one. Some use all their energies in undermining the success of the propaganda of another faction. Propaganda by *deed* seems to be in opposition to propaganda by *word* (*parole*). History shows us this sad phenomenon – inevitable at all stages in the development of human thought – in purely religious sects as well as in political parties. If we wish to resolve this question occupying us at the moment, we still have to examine it closely, to know if there is a contradiction between these two socialist modes of action.

II I will only deal briefly with propaganda by word as its conditions are self-evident to everyone. Socialism is firstly faced with its co-religionists who want, and must, increase the force of their thinking and activity. It is then faced with possible allies who must be won over. Finally, it has enemies who must be weakened. These three branches of propaganda already present considerable differences.

For those who declare themselves to be socialist, only already accepted principles need to be explained, drawing logical deductions from ideas which are no longer submitted to criticism. All questions which arise or combinations of events which occur must be constantly reconsidered, to determine the relation between each question or event and the problems of socialism. Comrades must be armed with stronger and stronger arguments; their memory and imagination must be enriched with new facts proving ever more clearly the necessity for social revolution. Besides this, the party organisation needs to be vigilant, to protect itself from its enemies, and to appease in the higher interest of the common cause, conflicts between individuals, the cases of accidental separatism.

Propaganda directed at individuals who may become partisans already presents considerable differences. The propagandist no longer finds himself in the presence of admitted socialist principles. Therefore, he relies on the interests, sentiments and convictions of the groups whom he addresses. To the petit bourgeois, he will demonstrate the inevitability of his absorption by the big industrialist, and the interest for him in the rise of a system where this absorption will not take place. To the worker who vaguely understands the source of his chronic misery and his humiliation by his boss, he will explain that the whole present system inevitably leads to this humiliation, and that only the common effort of workers can assure him of his crust of bread and human dignity. In front of a scientific worker, he will develop the necessary link uniting truth in thought to truth in life, showing him the inevitable process of historical development, in which past historical and political forms have prepared for, and created capitalism, and which, now, within the capitalist system, prepares for, and creates, inevitably the socialist system. To a sincere patriot, he will

show how the present order of things leads to the ruin of the great majority of his companions whom he loves so much; that this system demoralises those who dominate as well as those who suffer, and that in the name of his very devotion to his country, he is morally obliged to contribute to the replacement of this system by another which alone, can make possible the material, intellectual and moral amelioration of the masses' situation. It is not important that the propagandist necessarily use the word 'socialist' on all occasions. What is important is to develop ideas in peoples' minds which undermine a belief in the immortality of the present social order and point out means of struggling against this order. It is only on ground prepared in this way that the selection of individuals entering a socialist organisation can occur; from being possible allies they become true comrades.

No particular explanation is needed for polemics with adversaries. One has only to remember that among today's adversaries can be found tomorrow's partisans, thus a rigorous distinction must be established between individuals for whom this evolution is still possible and those who can be written off. In respect to the first group, the polemic must never aim at undermining their influence, but only at pointing out their errors, always leaving open the option of maintaining new relations if the adversary undergoes an evolution. However, even in respect to irreconcilable enemies, the force of the attack must never be identified with violence. Sometimes the latter even weakens the former. Numerous examples can be cited where an overly-violent attack results in inspiring a mistrust in its author and a reaction in favour of those against whom the attack was directed:

As for the question we are studying at the moment, it is even more important to distinguish differences among forms of propaganda which depend on other social conditions which the propagandist must equally take into consideration.

In the current society, socialism is hindered not only by the economic forms and the judicial forms which protect them, but also by many social forms which do not intervene directly in the struggle of labour against capital. In this struggle, however, they are the inevitable allies of the latter, the enemies of socialism and even the necessary enemies of any social progress. These social forms are above all the different limitations in the right to vote in certain constitutional countries; in others, the forms of justice, the way the military service functions, the payment of fees for school education, police organisation, restrictions on the right to hold meetings; finally, in the most monstrous political states – amongst which we must unfortunately class Russia – these social forms include the total absence of any political rights and any independent development for the individual. In some countries, dogmatic belief and the organised church form a considerable obstacle, albeit to a lesser degree than in preceding historical epochs. In order that the struggle of labour against capital can develop with greater chances of success, it is sometimes necessary to destroy some of these obstacles first. To what extent are these difficulties important for the final success of social-

23. Serafin Sánchez and Diego Vicente Tejera, respectively.

ism? To what extent is it important to employ a part of the socialist force to destroy them? These questions can receive very different replies in different countries. In Germany, the workers' party knew how to organise itself fairly strongly before direct persecution began, only giving secondary importance to the obstacles opposing an efficient struggle of labour against capital. It is possible that in England and the USA, the well-established tradition of individual liberty and individual political rights will allow workers' parties to be also organised strongly. However, the situation is not the same in France and Southern Europe where centralised political traditions, even more so than laws, prevent such organisation. The situation is even worse in Russia where police despotism, and the total absence of traditional rights for industrial workers as well as the absence of links between rural communes (which embrace the majority of the working population) prevent almost totally the formation of even a small workers' party.

Thus, in each country socialist propaganda must occupy itself with these secondary difficulties which must be conquered first of all in order to be able to successfully organise a workers' party. In this way, socialist propaganda must give rise to agitation in favour of reforms or political revolutions required for its activity; in this case, not only each State, but also each historically or economically isolated area, presents enormous variations in the basis of this agitation. A police less-well organised in a given area, authorities less vigilant in a given part of the army, the existence of historical traditions in certain areas (e.g. the Cossack tradition in Russia), the coming together of particularly spirited individuals in a given school, etc. can give revolutionary agitation a terrain it normally would lack. Legislation by purely political parties in a given country can also facilitate legal reforms which aid the success of socialist ideas and working-class organisation.

It can be said that, in general, purely socialist and peaceful propaganda by speech or writing as well as political agitation directed against the obstacles opposing this propaganda and workers' organisation, are both far from being uniform everywhere and for all time. While remaining identical in principles and the final goal, socialist propaganda is extremely varied in its forms, according to the individuals to whom it is addressed, and following the need for the struggle of labour against capital to become entangled in the struggle against the restrictions against workers' organisations and the extension of socialist ideas.

### III

I will now deal with the opposition that seemingly exists between propaganda *by word* and propaganda *by deed*, and the conflict between partisans of 'agitation and terror' and the 'propagandists'. One side accuses the other of using methods incompatible with the coming of socialism, considered as the reign of justice; while the other pretends that peaceful propaganda is, in the majority of cases, either impossible or unfruitful; that, in effect, the enemy has all the forces of the State at its disposal, and that only violent methods can usefully combat

them. There seems to be a misunderstanding here.

If propagandists are not preoccupied in their activity with the secondary obstacles which prevent the spreading of socialist ideas and the organisation of the workers' party, their action is inefficient, not because they limit themselves *only* to propaganda, but because their propaganda is *incomplete*. Agitation against written and unwritten judicial restrictions is, as we have seen, essential for socialist propaganda. The duty of the socialist lies as much in the fight against the obstacles preventing his or her action, as in explaining to comrades or possible allies the principles of this action, or in rising up against the supports for capitalism. The propagandist's programme of action must include both these aspects. The struggle against the restrictions preventing the development of socialism must correspond to their strength and their danger. It is only when the programme of struggle is clearly established that the propagandist can conclude that some methods are unsuitable and that others can be tried. Neither a revolt as such, nor terrorism as such can generally be considered incompatible with socialist propaganda; but a given revolt or given terrorist act in a given regime can be harmful or dangerous for the party's success. The degree of usefulness or danger is thus measured in the same way as for peaceful propaganda; it must be known who one has in mind in acting to provoke a revolt or to strike the imagination by terrorist acts. What obstacle does one wish to push aside? Could these actions trouble socialist partisans? Will they not serve to demoralise, provoke a scission in the socialist party, whether already organised, or in the process? In all these cases, propaganda by word and propaganda by deed constitute two branches of one and the same action whose goals are absolutely identical. In certain conditions one excludes the other; in others, they must occur together with a harmonious accord established between them.

But to refuse propaganda by word in the name of any revolutionary action whatsoever appears completely strange to us; in this case there would be no difference between socialist parties and other political parties or even religious sects. If an action is prepared, if it is being accomplished or if it has been accomplished, it is absolutely essential that its meaning be clearly understood for it to exercise an influence in society. It must be interpreted, explained, and commented on. If a plot is prepared against the government in order to replace it with another, the discontent against the present order of things must be spread; sympathy for the forthcoming action must be provoked. If there are victims of revolutionary terrorism, or if one succeeds in saving the victims of government terrorism, it is essential to explain the meaning and importance of the event which has just occurred. No revolt, no attack against the existing order, even if it succeeds, can have a serious importance; no action, even the most striking, can be efficient, if a suitably prepared groundwork does not exist permitting to take advantage, in a given sense, of the revolt, attack or striking action, and if voluntarily or involuntarily sympathetic individuals are not biased in its favour.

All of this can only be the work of propaganda by word or by writing. Propaganda by deed could not and cannot have any social or historical significance, nor even any serious importance from the point of view of agitation, if it did not base itself on propaganda by word. Every 'rebel', every revolutionary terrorist will understand, if he considers the matter, that alongside his action must be another; ideas must be explained and spread, partisans and allies must be attracted; and propaganda and organisation actions undertaken. Propaganda by deed presupposes propaganda by word. They only differ in that they are two functions of the same organism.

The tendency of any given individual to take on one or the other of these functions largely depends on temperament; one can be induced by circumstances to undertake either type of activity. Some believe that these two methods of action require different degrees of preparation, but the link between them leads one to doubt this. I will not go into details on the extent to which individuals must be prepared in order to be able to usefully play their part in the revolutionary socialist movement. In social life the barrier between the preparation period and action period is not perceivable in most cases. If the individual has enough spirit and energy, he *learns* most often through *teaching*; the best method of developing oneself is to work for the development of others. 'I'm not ready yet' is usually only a pretext given by the selfish or the indifferent, although it is true often enough that a lazy mind will invoke the need for practical action as an explanation for a lack of theoretical preparation. This illustrates a lack of desire to develop oneself. The degree of development attained can determine the greater or lesser importance of one's role as a socialist, but every sincere socialist can participate in the movement in some way.

### IV

There exists yet another form of socialist propaganda accessible to all temperaments. Assuming a sincere conviction, it is within the possibility of every socialist and although very often lacking the glamour of impassioned oratory or heroic acts, it is perhaps the most efficient form in everyday life.

Its source is in the varied character of socialism which I mentioned earlier, but above all it is derived from socialism's moral aspect. Also this aspect is insufficiently appreciated by those *exclusively* pre-occupied either with the class struggle or a better way of understanding the true relation between social conditions and historical events. As a tendency towards a more just social order, socialism does not represent only one domain of activity into which its truths have penetrated. Socialism embraces all spheres of its existence. It does not only demand a struggle for workers' interests, and an understanding of the relations between capital and labour and between various social phenomena and the class struggle. It also demands an everyday life conforming to socialist convictions. It demands a form of propaganda by *example*. I think it is necessary to go over this form of propaganda in some detail. The conditions of the present system are effectively

opposed at each instant to a life conforming to socialist convictions, on top of the fact that judicial conditions prevent the spreading of socialist ideas, and police surveillance prevents revolutionary agitation.

It has long been remarked<sup>1</sup> that the most extensive revolutions in the ideas of a society do not come about because the arguments put up against existing forms and beliefs have acquired more force but rather that they come about following an imperceptible modification in mental habits. For centuries the same arguments are repeated, but habits of thinking form an armour which for a long time repelled all attacks directed against falsehood. Then, in a certain epoch, this armour is suddenly broken for no apparent reason. Religious doubt, political liberalism, and workers' socialist propaganda are all more or less striking examples of this. The heroic acts which strike the imagination only prepare the groundwork for these changes. The great majority of people let themselves – and will continue to do so for a long time to come – be guided by habit; arguments are useless against this. Customs are only changed by imitation. For heroic acts, this only extends to individuals in exceptional situations; the real domain for imitation is everyday life. All new doctrines containing practical and moral elements must offer a series of models which can be imitated not by exceptional heroes, but by the average man. These numerous examples incorporate the new doctrine into everyday life, and are, for the most part, the most efficient propagandists for new ideas. Truth carried out in life is much more accessible than truth in thought. Ideas spread by one individual work on a small number of people, those who are the best prepared; the way he lives is less visible, but it works on the masses more intensely. Propaganda made by the example of everyday life is the most powerful auxiliary of words and is often more influential than the most spirited agitation directed against the present sick system.

This happened in the same way with the ascetics and primitive beliefs, and for the spreading of man's technical conquests and the development of aesthetic taste. It was also the same for the religious apostles of earlier periods. The same phenomenon is currently reproduced by socialists who oppose capitalist theory and the enrichment through a system of generalised competition, with the doctrine of the solidarity of all workers. In countries where the socialist movement is supported by a strong organised workers' party, where methodical methods of struggle between opposed interests have already been elaborated, the private life of a socialist can have a lesser importance. It is especially important in countries where socialist ideas are principally defended by convinced members of a class which, because of its interests, can only supply a limited number of members to socialism. This is especially true for Russia, where the majority of socialists do not belong to the working class, and the methodical organisation of a workers' party must wait for a more

1. See for example the "Introduction" of W.R. Lecky in *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865).

or less distant future.

Socialism prepares for the reign of justice, the solidarity of workers, and the elimination of competition. For this, it requires more than arguments against capitalism or a collective struggle against it. It is not only a question of heroic acts in favour of companions in struggle, directed against a powerful enemy; these acts can equally be accomplished by spirited men belonging to reactionary parties. Socialism demands of an individual an everyday life and daily habits filled with aversion and distaste for that which is capitalist in his existence, marked with a feeling of solidarity towards all those who fight for socialist truth. Its adept must assimilate the elementary tendencies and inclinations which are in accord with the new doctrine. As we have already said, an uninterrupted propaganda by example is essential. To devote oneself to this is perhaps more difficult than understanding the inevitable process in which the capitalist order gives birth to the socialist system, and more tedious than practicing heroic terrorist acts.

I will not speak of the artificial organisation of socialist life in communities. They have been founded—for the most part in America—far from the milieu where history has given birth to modern socialism. The Icarians, the Perfectionists, the Russian mystics who have discovered a higher nature in man, and the Israelites who go to Jerusalem, are all no more than hothouse experiments or tendencies foreign to present-day life; they rapidly lose all vitality, or are condemned to failure by their very nature. For the true socialist, there is no question of withdrawing into the desert, far from capitalist society. Socialists must, through the example of their lives, by words and deeds, act and fight to undermine and to replace the capitalist system.

There is no time to examine at the moment what forms propaganda by example can take in the present system; it must be accessible to the socialist, and at the same time, not prevent him from being a force in the struggle that socialism is waging as a political party. I admit that in each country, the current state of affairs provides a certain series of practical rules which form the conditions for a socialist life. I will only mention some general considerations and occupy myself with the importance that a divergence from these rules, a crime against socialist morale, can have for a socialist and the group to which he belongs.

Whoever pretends to be a socialist must remember that, as such, he has ceased to be responsible only to himself—otherwise he would not be a part of any constituted organisation. He belongs to a party which is hated and maligned—and it has always been the case—by all those whose interests are undermined by socialist doctrine. Any action, even if not bad but only imprudent, will serve as an arm for the enemy to direct against socialists in general. It could, on top of this, stop possible members, who although sympathetic, still hesitate to come forward and support the party in its struggle. Means of existence, friendships and personal relations, condescendance towards a comrade who has participated in a lowly or dubious action, intimate family life; if

none of this can the socialist say, 'That's my business and no-one else's'. No, it ceases to be his business alone as soon as he becomes a soldier fighting under the red flag and becomes involved in this struggle which is becoming bigger and bigger, and sharper and sharper. The socialist is a man like everyone else; in his struggle for existence, his social relations, and his intimate life, he is often forced to act in a way other than he would like. But when he decides on such and such an action, he must do so consciously. He is a sentry at a dangerous post which weighs heavily on his steps and each one of his movements, making him examine the risks he runs at every instant. Any man pretending to be a socialist, who supports the direct enemies of socialism, who is linked in friendship with renegades, who lets himself monopolise everything at the expense of others, who through his own actions practices thievery in the name of the common cause, who indulges himself in humiliating debauchery, must understand that by consciously acting in this way, he drags the flag of his party in the mud. The accusations—just or unjust—that he merits fall more heavily on the party than on himself. When solidarity will all those who fight for the truth is proclaimed, the party is inevitably responsible for all acts committed by its proven militants.

Thus, in all these cases, the responsibility weighs less on individuals who can weaken, or be tempted or who, pushed by circumstances, can be compromised, or who under the influence of passion, can be mistaken on the importance of their actions. I repeat; less on individuals, than on the whole of their socialist comrades, for it is they who create a social milieu for those individuals whose socialist morale is lacking. They run less risk of being mistaken, being tempted or weakening; they have the duty of stopping their comrade in his moments of temptation and of supporting him. They must understand that propaganda by example is the most efficient for the masses. Propaganda by example can just as well ruin and demoralise the party as well as elevate and consolidate it. If every militant of the socialist cause was sure that his comrades would not pardon him any act harmful to the strength of the party, if he knew that his intimate friends would turn away from him, if he believed that his dear wife would look down on him with contempt, if he was persuaded that the circle of those fighting seriously for the cause of justice would be closed to him; then, in most cases, he would not decide to carry out his act and the demoralisation produced by such an example would not happen.

If I have discussed propaganda by example at some length, it is because it seems to me that in contemporary socialist literature and in questions brought up by socialist activity, insufficient importance is given to this type of propaganda. But here, once again, some qualifications need to be made. It would be a serious error for the socialist to think that by leading a daily life that, from the socialist viewpoint, was irreproachable, he fulfilled all his duties; or, if he concluded that from then on he could refuse to take part in the struggle against capitalism, as it was easy enough for him to do; or, if he pretended that he could abstain from resisting evil

and wanted to accommodate himself to written and unwritten obstacles. The isolation of the old sage and the Christian ascetic, the satisfaction given by an irreproachable and quiet life aloof from all active struggles, are deformations of the socialist ideal. Socialism does not *only* consist of preparing for the reign of justice through the moral effort of isolated individuals. Never, anywhere, could and will this reign be prepared for by an individual life; non-resistance to evil has never been able to enter the conception of a moral life. The reign of justice must not only be prepared for by *example*, but also explained by impassioned, clear *words*, and conquered by spirited *acts*. The habits of a society are ever-so-slightly modified through daily examples; but by making a better understanding of social problems more widespread, this preparation is given a precise meaning, and finally the victory thus prepared for, must be conquered by the effort of a collective dedication. These three manifestations of socialism warrant the same attention and only their harmony will allow the realisation of the final goal. Propaganda by *example* has perhaps a preponderant influence when it is a question of practically preparing for the triumph; only propaganda by *word* can elaborate the ideas which will give victory a stable and definitive character; but only spirited *action* will make socialism victorious at all times in its fight against its enemies.

## V

Times does not allow me to go into detail on a question which touches all aspects of life, as, I repeat, socialism is a doctrine which embraces all aspects of existence. But I am sure that by reflecting on the results we have arrived at, my audience will draw their own new and wider conclusions. To resume.

The goal of propaganda is to explain the fundamental positions of socialism and its practical applications. The number of its partisans must be increased and linked in an organisation to destroy the obstacles which are opposed to its action and to make its advance quicker and more efficient.

Propaganda by word varies according to the groups to which it is addressed according to the particular conditions of the country where the propagandist acts.

Propaganda by word and propaganda by deed do not only not contradict one another, but, on the contrary, presuppose and regulate one another. The former leads naturally to action, while the latter is necessarily supported by the former. They are two functions of the same organism.

On top of these two forms of collective work, socialists have a third form whose importance is enormous—propaganda by example. For the majority of men, it is the only form in which propaganda by word is realized; only it can modify the habits of thought and life. It produces, in reality, a change in the psychic disposition of society and permits the latter to be influenced by spirited acts of exceptional individuals by preparing a fertile terrain for them.

Only the harmonious co-operation and reciprocal action of these three forms of propaganda can assure socialism's rapid success.

## V.I. Lenin

### PARTY ORGANISATION AND PARTY LITERATURE

(Russia, 1905)

The new conditions for Social-Democratic work in Russia which have arisen since the October revolution have brought the question of party literature to the fore. The distinction between the illegal and the legal press, that melancholy heritage of the epoch of feudal, autocratic Russia, is beginning to disappear. It is not yet dead, by a long way. The hypocritical government of our Prime Minister is still running amuck, so much so that *Izvestia Soveta Rabochikh Deputatov* is printed "illegally"; but apart from bringing disgrace on the government, apart from striking further moral blows at it, nothing comes of the stupid attempts to "prohibit" that which the government is powerless to thwart.

So long as there was a distinction between the illegal and the legal press, the question of the party and non-party press was decided extremely simply and in an extremely false and abnormal way. The entire illegal press was a party press, being published by organisations and run by groups which in one way or another were linked with groups of practical party workers. The entire legal press was non-party—since parties were banned—but it "gravitated" towards one party or another. Unnatural alliances, strange "bed-fellows" and false cover-devices were inevitable. The forced reserve of those who wished to express party views merged with the immature thinking or mental cowardice of those who had not risen to these views and who were not, in effect, party people.

An accursed period of Aesopian language, literary bondage, slavish speech, and ideological serfdom! The proletariat has put an end to this foul atmosphere which stifled everything living and fresh in Russia. But so far the proletariat has won only half freedom for Russia.

The revolution is not yet completed. While tsarism is *no longer* strong enough to defeat the revolution, the revolution is *not yet* strong enough to defeat tsarism. And we are living in times when everywhere and in everything there operates this unnatural combination of open, forthright, direct and consistent party spirit with an underground, covert, "diplomatic" and dodgy "legality". This unnatural combination makes itself felt even in our newspaper: for all Mr. Guchkov's witticisms about Social-Democratic tyranny forbidding the publication of moderate liberal-bourgeois newspapers, the fact remains that *Proletary*, the Central Organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, still

This text was first published in the daily newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, 12, 13 November 1905.

remains outside the locked doors of *autocratic*, police-ridden Russia.

Be that as it may, the half-way revolution compels all of us to set to work at once organising the whole thing on new lines. Today literature, even that published "legally", can be nine-tenths party literature. It must become party literature. In contradistinction to bourgeois customs, to the profit making, commercialised bourgeois press, to bourgeois literary careerism and individualism, "aristocratic anarchism" and drive for profit, the socialist proletariat must put forward the principle of *party literature*, must develop this principle and put it into practice as fully and completely as possible.

What is this principle of party literature? It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or groups: it cannot, in fact, be an individual undertaking, independent of the common cause of the proletariat. Down with non-partisan writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become *part* of the common cause of the proletariat, "a cog and a screw" of one single great Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organised, planned and integrated Social-Democratic Party work.

"All comparisons are lame", says a German proverb. So is my comparison of literature with a cog, of a living movement with a mechanism. And I daresay there will ever be hysterical intellectuals to raise a howl about such a comparison, which degrades, deadens, "bureaucratizes" the free battle of ideas, freedom of criticism, freedom of literary creation, etc., etc. Such outcries, in point of fact, would be nothing more than an expression of bourgeois-intellectual individualism. There is no question that literature is least of all subject to mechanical adjustment or levelling, to the rule of the majority over the minority. There is no question, either, that in this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content. All this is undeniable; but all this simply shows that the literary side of the proletarian party cause cannot be mechanically identified with its other sides. This, however, does not in the least refute the proposition, alien and strange to the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy, that literature must by all means and necessarily become an element of Social-Democratic Party work, inseparably bound up with the other elements. Newspapers must become the organs of the various party organisations, and their writers must by all means become members of these organisations. Publishing and distributing centres, bookshops and reading-rooms, libraries and similar establishments — must all be under party control. The organised socialist proletariat must keep an eye on all this work, supervise it in its entirety, and, from beginning to end, without any exception, infuse into it the life-stream of the living proletarian cause, thereby cutting the ground from under the old, semi-Oblomov, semi-shopkeeper Russian principle: the writer does the writing, the reader does the reading.

We are not suggesting, of course, that this trans-

formation of literary work, which has been defiled by the Asiatic censorship and the European bourgeoisie, can be accomplished all at once. Far be it from us to advocate any kind of standardised system, or a solution by means of a few decrees. Cut-and-dried schemes are least of all applicable here. What is needed is that the whole of our Party, and the entire politically-conscious Social-Democratic proletariat throughout Russia, should become aware of this new problem, specify it clearly and everywhere set about solving it. Emerging from the captivity of the feudal censorship, we have no desire to become, and shall not become, prisoners of bourgeois-shopkeeper literary relations. We want to establish, and we shall establish, a free press, free not simply from the police, but also from capital, from careerism, and what is more, free from bourgeois-anarchist individualism.

These last words may sound paradoxical, or an affront to the reader. What! some intellectual, an ardent champion of liberty, may shout. What, you want to impose collective control on such a delicate, individual matter as literary work! You want workmen to decide questions of science, philosophy, or aesthetics by a majority of votes! You deny the absolute freedom of absolutely individual ideological work!

Calm yourselves, gentlemen! First of all, we are discussing party literature and its subordination to party control. Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions. But every voluntary association (including the party) is also free to expel members who use the name of the party to advocate anti-party views. Freedom of speech and the press must be complete. But then freedom of association must be complete too. I am bound to accord you, in the name of free speech, the full right to shout, lie and write to your heart's content. But you are bound to grant me, in the name of freedom of association, the right to enter into, or withdraw from, association with people advocating this or that view. The party is a voluntary association, which would inevitably break up, first ideologically and then physically, if it did not cleanse itself of people advocating anti-party views. And to define the borderline between party and anti-party there is the party programme, the party's resolutions on tactics and its rules and, lastly, the entire experience of international Social-Democracy, the voluntary international associations of the proletariat, which has constantly brought into its parties individual elements and trends not fully consistent, not completely Marxist and not altogether correct and which, on the other hand, has constantly conducted periodical "cleansings" of its ranks. So it will be with us too, supporters of bourgeois "freedom of criticism", *within* the Party. We are now becoming a mass party all at once, changing abruptly to an open organisation, and it is inevitable that we shall be joined by many who are inconsistent (from the Marxist standpoint), perhaps we shall be joined even by some Christian elements, and even by some mystics. We have sound stomachs and we are rock-like Marxists. We shall digest those inconsistent elements. Freedom of thought and freedom of criticism within the Party will never make us forget about the freedom of organising people into

those voluntary associations known as parties.

Secondly, we must say to you bourgeois individualists that your talk about absolute freedom is sheer hypocrisy. There can be no real and effective "freedom" in a society based on the power of money, in a society in which the masses of working people live in poverty and the handful of rich live like parasites. Are you free in relation to your bourgeois publisher, Mr. Writer, in relation to your bourgeois public, which demands that you provide it with pornography in frames and paintings, and prostitution as a "supplement" to "sacred" scenic art? This absolute freedom is a bourgeois or an anarchist phrase (since, as a world outlook, anarchism is bourgeois philosophy turned inside out). One cannot live in society and be free from society. The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist or actress is simply masked (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money-bag, on corruption, on prostitution.

And we socialists expose this hypocrisy and rip off the false labels, not in order to arrive at a non-class literature and art (that will be possible only in a socialist extraclass society), but to contrast this hypocritically free literature, which is in reality linked to the bourgeoisie, with a really free one that will be *openly* linked to the proletariat.

It will be a free literature, because the idea of socialism and sympathy with the working people, and not greed or careerism, will bring ever new forces to its ranks. It will be a free literature, because it will serve, not some satiated heroine, not the bored "upper ten thousand" suffering from fatty degeneration, but the millions and tens of millions of working people — the flower of the country, its strength and its future. It will be a free literature, enriching the last word in the revolutionary thought of mankind with the experience and living work of the socialist proletariat, bringing about permanent interaction between the experience of the past (scientific socialism, the completion of the development of socialism from its primitive, utopian forms) and the experience of the present (the present struggle of the worker comrades).

To work, then, comrades! We are faced with a new and difficult task. But it is a noble and grateful one — to organise a broad, multiform and varied literature inseparably linked with the Social-Democratic working-class movement. All Social-Democratic literature must become Party literature. Every newspaper journal, publishing house, etc., must immediately set about reorganising its work, leading up to a situation in which it will, in one form or another be integrated into one Party organisation or another. Only then will "Social-Democratic" literature really become worthy of that name, only then will it be able to fulfil its duty and, even within the framework of bourgeois society, break out of bourgeois slavery and merge with the movement of the really advanced and thoroughly revolutionary class.

## Communist International THESIS ON THE ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

(USSR, 1921)

### I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The organization of the Party must be adapted to the conditions and to the goal of its activity. The Communist Party must be the *vanguard*, the *advanced post of the proletariat*, through all the phases of revolutionary class struggle and during the subsequent transition period towards the realization of Socialism, i.e., the first stage of the Communist society.

2. There can be no absolutely infallible and unalterable form of organization for the Communist Parties. The conditions of the proletarian class struggle are subject to changes in a continuous process of evolution, and in accordance with these changes, the organization of the proletarian vanguard must be constantly seeking for the corresponding forms. The peculiar conditions of every individual country likewise determine the special adaptation of the forms of organization of the respective Parties.

But this differentiation has definite limits. Regardless of all peculiarities, the quality of the conditions of the proletarian class struggle in the various countries, and through the various phases of the proletarian revolution, is of fundamental importance to the international Communist movement, creating a common basis for the organization of the Communist Parties in all countries.

Upon this basis, it is necessary to develop the organization of the Communist Parties, but not to seek to establish any new model parties instead of the existing ones and to aim at any absolutely correct form of organization and ideal constitutions.

3. Most Communist Parties, and consequently the Communist International as the united party of the revolutionary proletariat of the world, have this common feature in their conditions of struggle, that they still have to fight against the dominant bourgeoisie. To conquer the bourgeoisie, and to wrest the power from its hands is, for all of them, until further developments, the determining and guiding main goal. *Accordingly, the determining factor in the organizing activity of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries must be the upbuilding of such organizations, as will make the victory of the proletarian revolution over the possessing classes, both possible and secure.*

4. Leadership is a necessary condition for any

This text was adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow 1921.

common action, but most of all, it is indispensable in the greatest fight in the world's history. The organization of the Communist Party is the organization of Communist leadership in the proletarian revolution.

To be a good leader, the Party itself must have good leadership. Accordingly, the principal task of our organizational work must be—education, organization and training of efficient Communist Parties under capable directing organs to the leading place in the proletarian revolutionary movement.

5. The leadership in the revolutionary class struggle presupposes the organic combination of the greatest possible striking force and of the greatest adaptability on the part of the Communist Party and its leading organs to the everchanging conditions of the struggle. Furthermore, successful leadership requires, absolutely, the closest association with the proletarian masses. Without such association, the leadership will not lead the masses, but at best, will follow behind the masses.

The organic unity in the Communist Party organization must be attained through democratic centralization.

## II. ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIZATION

6. Democratic centralization in the Communist Party organization must be a real synthesis, a *fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy*. This fusion can be achieved only on the basis of constant common activity, constant common struggle of the entire party organization. Centralization in the Communist Party organization, does not mean formal and mechanical centralization, but a centralization of Communist activities, that is to say, the formation of a strong leadership, ready for war and at the same time capable of adaptability. A formal or mechanical centralization is the centralization of the 'power' in the hands of an industrial bureaucracy, dominating over the rest of the membership, or over the masses of the revolutionary proletariat standing outside the organization. Only the enemies of the Communists can assert that the Communist Party, conducting the proletarian class struggle and centralizing the Communist leadership, is trying to rule over the revolutionary proletariat. Such an assertion is a lie. Neither is any rivalry for power, nor any contest for supremacy within the Party at all compatible with the fundamental principles of democratic centralism adopted by the Communist International.

In the organization of the old, non-revolutionary labor movement, there has developed an all-pervading dualism of the same nature as that of the bourgeois state, namely, the dualism between the bureaucracy and the 'people.' Under this baneful influence of bourgeois environment, there has developed a separation of functions, a substitution of barren, formal democracy for the living association of common endeavor and the splitting up of the organization into active functionaries and passive masses. Even the revolutionary labor movement inevitably inherits this tendency to dualism and formalism to a certain extent from the bourgeois environment.

The Communist Party must, fundamentally, overcome these contrasts by systematic and persevering political and organizing work and by constant

improvement and revision.

7. In transforming a socialist mass party into a Communist Party, the Party must not confine itself to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of its central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged. Centralization should not merely exist on paper, but be actually carried out, and this is possible of achievement only when the members at large will feel this authority as a fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise, it will appear to the masses as a bureaucracy within the Party and, therefore, likely to stimulate opposition to all centralization, to all leadership, to all stringent discipline. Anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy.

Merely formal democracy in the organization cannot remove either bureaucratic or anarchical tendencies, which have found fertile soil on the basis of just that democracy. Therefore, the centralization of the organization, i.e. the aim to create a strong leadership, cannot be successful if its achievement is sought on the basis of formal democracy. The necessary preliminary conditions are the development and maintenance of living associations and mutual relations within the Party between the directing organs and members, as well as between the Party and the masses of the proletariat outside the Party.

## III. ON THE DUTIES OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY

8. The Communist Party must be a training school for revolutionary Marxism. The organic ties between the different parts of the organization and the membership become joined through the daily common work in the Party activities.

Regular participation, on the part of most of the members in the daily work of the parties, is lacking even today in lawful Communist Parties. That is the chief fault of these parties, forming the basis of constant insecurity in their development.

9. In the first stages of its Communist transformation, every workmen's party is in danger of being content with having accepted a Communist program, with having substituted the old doctrine in its propaganda by Communist teaching, and having replaced the official belonging to the hostile camp by Communist officials. The acceptance of the Communist program is only the expression of the will to become a Communist. If the Communist activity is lacking, and the passivity of the mass members still remains, then the Party does not fulfil even the least part of the pledge it had taken upon itself in accepting the Communist program. *For the first condition of an earnest carrying out of the program is the participation of all the members in the constant daily work of the Party.*

The art of Communist organization lies in the ability of making a use of each and every one for the proletarian class struggle; of distributing the Party work amongst all the Party members and of constantly attracting, through its members, ever wider masses of the proletariat to the revolutionary movement. Further, it must hold the direction of the whole movement in its hands not by virtue of its might, but by its authority, energy, greater experience, greater

all-round knowledge and capabilities.

10. A Communist Party must strive to have only really active members, and to demand from every rank and file Party worker, that he should place his whole strength and time, in so far as he can himself dispose of it under existing conditions, at the disposal of his Party and devote his best forces to these services.

Membership in the Communist Party entails naturally, besides Communist convictions, formal registration, first as a candidate, then as a member; likewise, the regular payment of the established fees, the subscription to the Party paper, etc. But the most important is the participation of each member in the daily work of the Party.

11. For the purpose of carrying out the Party work, every member, must as a rule, be also a member of a working smaller group, a committee, a commission, a broad group, fraction or nucleus. Only in this way can the Party work be properly distributed, directed and carried on.

Attendance at the general meeting of the members of the local organization, of course, goes without saying; it is not wise to try, under conditions of legal existence, to replace these periodical meetings under lawful conditions by meetings of local representatives. All the members must be bound to attend these meetings regularly. But that is in no way sufficient. The very preparation of these meetings presupposes work in smaller groups or through comrades detailed for the purpose, effectively utilizing as well as the preparations of the general workers' meetings, demonstrations and mass action of the working class. The numerous tasks connected with these activities, can be carefully studied only in smaller groups, and carried out intensively. Without such a constant daily work of the entire membership, divided among the great mass of smaller groups of workers, even the most laborious endeavors to take part in the class struggle of the proletariat will lead only to weak and futile attempts to influence these struggles, but not to the necessary consolidation of all the vital revolutionary forces of the proletariat into a single united capable Communist Party.

12. Communist nuclei must be formed for the daily work in the different branches of the Party activities; for timely agitation, for Party study, for newspaper work, for the distribution of literary matter, for information service, for constant service, etc.

The Communist nuclei are the kernel groups for the daily Communist work in the factories and workshops, in the trade unions, in the proletarian associations, in military units, etc.; whenever there are at least several members or candidates for membership in the Communist Party. If there are a greater number of Party members in the same factory or in the same union, etc., then the nucleus is enlarged into a fraction and its work is directed to the kernel group.

Should it be necessary to form a wider opposition fraction or to take part in an existing one, then the Communists should try to take the leadership in it through a special nucleus. Whether a Communist nucleus is to come out in the open, as far as its own surroundings are concerned, or even before the

general public, will depend on the special conditions of the case after a serious study of the dangers and the advantages thereof.

13. The introduction of general obligatory work in the Party and the organization of these small working groups is an especially difficult task for Communist mass parties. It cannot be carried out all at once; it demands unwearied perseverance, mature consideration and much energy.

It is especially important that *this new form of organization* should be carried out from the very beginning with care and mature consideration. It would be an easy matter to divide all the members in each organization, according to a formal scheme, into small nuclei and groups and to call these latter at once to the general daily Party work. Such a beginning would be worse than no beginning at all; it would only call forth discontent and aversion among the Party members towards these important innovations.

It is recommended that the Party should take counsel with several capable organizers who are also convinced and inspired communists, and thoroughly acquainted with the state of the movement in the various centres of the country, and work out a detailed foundation for the introduction of these innovations. After that trained organizers or organizing committees must take up the work on the spot, elect the first leaders of the groups and conduct the first steps of the work. All the organizations, working groups, nuclei and individual members must then receive concrete, precisely defined tasks presented in such a way as to at once appear to them to be useful, desirable and capable of execution. Wherever it may be necessary they must be shown by practical demonstrations in what way these tasks are to be carried out. They must be warned, at the same time, of the false steps especially to be avoided.

14. This work of re-organization must be carried out in practice step by step. In the beginning too many nuclei or groups of workers should not be formed in the local organization. It must first be proved in small cases that the nuclei, formed in separated important factories and trade unions, are functioning properly and that the necessary groups of workers have been formed also in the other chief branches of the Party activities and have, in some degree, become consolidated (for instance, in the information, communication, women's movement, or agitation department, newspaper work, unemployment movement, etc.). Before the new organization apparatus will have acquired a certain practice, the old frames of the organization should not be heedlessly broken up. At the same time this fundamental task of the Communist organization work must be carried out everywhere with the greatest energy. This places great demands not only on a legalized Party, but also on every un-legalized Party.

*Until widespread network of Communist nuclei, fractions and groups of workers will be at work at all central points of the proletarian class struggle, until every member of the Party will be doing his share of the daily revolutionary work and this will have become natural and habitual for the members, the Party can allow itself no rest in its strenuous labors for the carrying out of this task.*

15. This fundamental organizational task im-



poses upon the leading Party organs the obligation of constantly directing and exercising a systematic influence over the Party work. This requires manifold exertion on the part of those comrades who are active in the leadership of the organization of the Party. Those in charge of Communist activity must not only see to it that comrades—men and women—should be engaged in Party work in general, they must help and direct such work systematically and with practical knowledge of the business with a precise orientation in regard to special conditions. They must also endeavor to find out any mistake committed in their own activities on the basis of experience, constantly improving the methods of work and not forgetting for a moment the object of the struggle.

16. Our whole Party work, consists either of direct struggles on theoretical or practical grounds or of preparation for the struggle. The specialization of this work has been very defective up to now. There are quite important branches in which the activity of the Party has been only occasional. For the lawful parties have done little in the matter of combating against secret service men. The instructing of our Party comrades has been carried on as a rule, only casually, as a secondary matter and so superficially that the greater part of the most important resolutions of the Party, even the Party program and the resolutions of the Communist International have remained unknown to the large strata of the membership. The instruction work must be carried on methodically and unceasingly through the whole system of the Party organization in all the working committees of the Parties in order to obtain an ever-higher degree of specialization.

17. To the duties of the Communist activity belongs also that of submitting reports. This is the duty of all the organizations and organs of the Party as well as every individual member. There must be general reports made covering short periods of time. Special reports must be made on the work of special committees of the party. It is essential to make the work of reporting so systematic that its should become an established procedure as the best tradition of the Communist movement.

18. The Party must hand in its quarterly report to the leading body of the Communist International. Each organization in the Party has to hand in its report to the next leading committee (for instance, monthly report of the local branches to the corresponding Party committee).

Each nucleus, fraction and group of workers must send its report to the Party organ under whose leadership it is placed. The individual members must hand in their reports to the nucleus or group of workers, (respectively to the leader) to which he belongs, and on the carrying out of some special charge to the Party organ from which the order was received.

The report must always be made on the first opportunity. It is to be made by word of mouth, unless the Party or the person who had given the order, demands written report. The reports must be concise and to the point. The receiver of the report is responsible for having such communication as cannot be published without harm kept in safe custody and that important reports be sent in without delay to the

corresponding Party organ.

19. All these reports must naturally be limited to the account of what the reporter has done himself. They must contain also information on such circumstances which may have come to light during the course of the work and which have a certain significance for our struggle, particularly such considerations as may give rise to a modification or improvement of our future work; also proposals for improvement, necessity for which may have made itself felt during the work, must be included in the report.

In all Communist nuclei, fractions and groups of workers, all reports, both those which have been handed into them and those that they have to send, must be thoroughly discussed. Such discussions must become a regular habit.

*Care must be taken in the nuclei and groups of workers that individual Party members or groups of members be regularly charged with observing and reporting on hostile organizations, especially with regard to the petty-bourgeois workers' organizations and chiefly the organization of the "socialist" parties.*

#### IV. ON PROPAGANDA AND AGITATION

20. Our chief general duty to the open revolutionary struggle is to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation. This work and its organization is still, in the main, being conducted in the old formal manner, by means of casual speeches at the mass meetings and without special care for the concrete revolutionary substance of the speeches and writings.

Communist propaganda and agitation must be made to take root in the very midst of the workers, out of their common interests and aspirations, and especially out of their common struggle.

The most important point to remember is—that *Communist propaganda must be of a revolutionary character*. Therefore, the Communist watchword (slogans) and the whole Communist attitude towards concrete questions must receive our special attention and consideration.

In order to achieve that correct attitude, not only the professional propagandists and agitators, but also all other Party members must be carefully instructed.

21. The principal forms of Communist propaganda are:

- (i) Individual verbal propaganda,
- (ii) Participation in the industrial and political labor movement.
- (iii) Propaganda through the Party Press and distribution of literature.

Every member of a legal and illegal Party is to participate regularly in one or the other of these forms of propaganda.

Individual propaganda must take the form of systematic house to house canvassing by special groups of workers. Not a single house within the area of Party influence must be omitted from this canvassing. In larger towns a special organized outdoor campaign with posters and distribution of leaflets usually produce satisfactory results. In addition, the fraction should carry on a regular personal agitation in the workshops accompanied by a distribution of literature.

In countries whose population contains national minorities, it is the duty of the Party to devote the

necessary attention to propaganda and agitation among the proletarian strata of these minorities. *The propaganda and agitation must, of course, be conducted in the languages of the respective national minorities, for which purpose the party must create the necessary special organs.*

22. In those capitalist countries where a large majority of the proletariat has not yet reached revolutionary consciousness, the Communist agitation must be constantly on the lookout for new forms of propaganda in order to meet these backward workers half-way and thus facilitate their entry into the revolutionary ranks. The Communist propaganda with its watchwords (slogans) must bring out the budding, unconscious, incomplete, vacillating and semi-bourgeois revolutionary tendencies which are struggling for supremacy with the bourgeois traditions and conceptions in the minds of the workers.

At the same time, Communist propaganda must not rest content with the limited and confused demands or aspirations of the proletarian masses. These demands and expectations contain revolutionary germs and are a means of bringing the proletariat under the influence of Communist propaganda.

23. Communist agitation among the proletarian masses must be conducted in such a way that our Communist organization appears as the courageous, intelligent, energetic and everfaithful leader of their own labor movement.

In order to achieve this, the Communists must take part in all the elementary struggles and movements of the workers, and must defend the workers' cause in all conflicts between them and the capitalists over hours and conditions of labor, wages, etc. The Communists must also pay great attention to the concrete questions of working class life. They must help the workers to come to a right understanding of these questions. They must draw their attention to the most flagrant abuses and must help them to formulate their demands in a practical and concise form. In this way they will awaken in the workers the spirit of solidarity, the consciousness of community of interests among all the workers of the country as a united working class, which in its turn is a section of the world army of proletarians.

It is only through an every day performance of such elementary duties and participation in all the struggles of the proletariat that the Communist Party can develop into a real Communist Party. It is only by adopting such methods that it will be distinguished from the propagandists of the hackneyed, so-called pure socialist propaganda, consisting of recruiting new members and talking about reforms and the use of parliamentary possibilities or rather impossibilities. The self-sacrificing and conscious participation of all the Party members in the daily struggles and controversies of the exploited with the exploiters is essentially necessary not only for the conquest, but in a still higher degree for the carrying out of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is only through leading the working masses in the petty warfare against the onslaughts of capitalism that the Communist Party will be able to become the vanguard of the working class, acquiring the capacity for systematic leadership of the proletariat in its struggle for supremacy over the bourgeoisie.

24. Communists must be mobilized in full force,

especially in times of strikes, lockouts, and other mass dismissals of workers in order to take part in the workers' movement.

It would be a great mistake for Communists to treat with contempt the present struggles of workers for slight improvements in their working conditions, even to maintain a passive attitude to them on the plea of the Communist program, and the need of armed revolutionary struggle for final aims. No matter how small and modest the demands of the workers may be, for which they are ready and willing to fight today with the capitalist, the Communists must never make the smallness of the demands an excuse, at the same time, for non-participation in the struggle. Our agitational activity should not lay itself bare to the accusation of stirring up and inciting the workers to nonsensical strikes and other inconsiderate actions. *The Communists must try to acquire the reputation among the struggling masses of being courageous and an effective participator in their struggles.*

25. The Communist cells (or fractions) within the trade union movement have proved themselves in practice rather helpless before some of the most ordinary questions of everyday life. It is easy, but not fruitful, to keep on preaching the general principles of Communism and then fall into the negative attitude of commonplace syndicalism when faced with concrete questions. Such practices only play into the hands of the Yellow Amsterdam International.

Communists should, on the contrary, be guided in their actions by a careful study of every aspect of the question.

For instance, instead of contenting themselves with resisting theoretically and on principle all working agreements (over wages and working conditions), they should rather take the lead in the struggle over the specific nature of the tariffs (wage agreements) recommended by the Amsterdam leaders. It is, of course, necessary to condemn and resist any kind of impediment to the revolutionary preparedness of the proletariat and it is a well-known fact that it is the aim of the capitalists and their Amsterdam myrmidons to tie the hand of the workers by all manners of working agreements. Therefore, it behoves the Communist to open the eyes of the workers to the nature of the aims. This the Communists can best attain by advocating agreements which would not hamper the workers.

The same should be done in connection with the unemployment, sickness and other benefits of the trade union organizations. The creation of fighting funds and the granting of strike pay are measures which in themselves are to be commended.

Therefore the opposition on principle against such activities would be ill-advised. But Communists should point out to the workers that the manner or collection of these funds and their use, as advocated by the Amsterdam leaders, is against all the interests of the working class. In connection with the sickness benefit etc., Communists should insist on the abolition of the contributory system, and of all binding conditions in connection with all volunteer funds. If some of the trade union members are still anxious to secure sickness benefit by paying contributions, it would not do for us to simply prohibit such payments for fear of not being understood by them. It will be necessary to win over such workers from their small bourgeois

conceptions by an intensive personal propaganda.

26. In the struggle against Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois trade union leaders, as well as against the leaders of various labor parties, one cannot hope to achieve much by persuasion. The struggle against them should be conducted in the most energetic fashion and, the best way to do this is, by depriving them of their following, showing up to the workers the true character of these treacherous socialist leaders who are only playing into the hands of capitalism. The Communists should endeavor to unmask these so-called leaders, and subsequently, attack them in the most energetic fashion.

It is by no means sufficient to call Amsterdam leaders (i.e. leaders of the reformist trade unions) yellow. Their yellowness must be proved by continual, and practical illustrations. Their activities in the trade unions, in the International Labor Bureau of the League of Nations, in the bourgeois ministries and administration, their treacherous speeches at conferences and parliaments, the exhortations contained in many of their written messages and in the Press, and above all, their vacillations and hesitating attitude in all struggles even for the most modest rise in wages, offer constant opportunities for exposing the treacherous behavior of the Amsterdam leaders in simpleworded speeches and resolutions.

The fraction must conduct their practical vanguard movement in a systematic fashion. The Communists must not at all allow the excuses of the minor trade union officials—who, notwithstanding good intentions, often take refuge, through sheer weakness, behind statutes, union decisions and instructions from their superiors to hamper their march forward. On the contrary, they must insist on getting satisfaction from the minor officials in the matter of removal of all real or imaginary obstacles, put in the way of the workers by the bureaucratic machine.

27. The fractions must carefully prepare the participation of the Communists in conferences and meetings of the trade union organizations. For instance, they must elaborate proposals, select lecturers and counsels and put up candidates for elections, capable, experienced and energetic comrades. The Communist organizations must, through their fractions, also make careful preparations in connection with all workers' meetings, election meetings, demonstrations, political festivals and such like arranged by the hostile organizations. *Wherever Communists convene their own worker's meetings, they must arrange to have considerable groups of Communists distributed among the audience and they must make all the preparations for the assurance of satisfactory propaganda result.*

28. Communists must also learn how to draw unorganized and backward workers permanently into the ranks of Party. With the help of our fractions, we must induce the workers to join the trade unions and to read our Party organs. Other organizations, as for instance educational boards, study circles, sporting clubs, dramatic societies, co-operative societies, consumer's associations, war victims' organizations, etc., may be used as intermediaries between us and the workers. Where the Communist Party is working illegally, such workers' associations may be formed

outside the Party through the initiative of Party members and with the consent, and under the control, of the leading Party organs (unions of sympathizers).

Communist youth and women's organizations may also be helpful in rousing the interests of many politically indifferent proletarians, and in drawing them eventually inside the Communist Party through the intermediary of their educational courses, reading circles, excursions, festivals, sunday rambles, etc.; distributing of leaflets, increasing the circulation of the Party organ, etc. Through participation in the general movement, the workers will free themselves from their small bourgeois inclinations.

29. In order to win the semi-proletarian sections of the workers, as sympathizers of the revolutionary proletariat, the Communists must make use of their special antagonism to the land-owners, the capitalists and the capitalist state in order to win those intermediary groups from their mistrust of the proletariat. This may require prolonged negotiations with them, or intelligent sympathy with their needs, free help and advice in any difficulties, also opportunities to improve their education, etc., all of which will give them confidence in the Communist movement. The Communists must also endeavor to counteract the pernicious influence of hostile organizations which occupy authoritative positions in the respective districts, or may have influence over the petty-bourgeois working peasants, over those who work in the home industries and other semi-proletarian classes. These are known by the exploited, from their own bitter experience, to be the representatives and embodiment of the entire criminal capitalist system, and must be unmasked. All every day occurrences, which bring the state bureaucracy into conflict with the ideals of petty-bourgeois democracy and jurisdiction, must be made use of in a judicious and energetic manner in the course of Communist agitation. Each local country organization must carefully apportion, among its members, the duties of house to house canvassing in order to spread Communist propaganda in all the villages, farmsteads and isolated dwellings in their district.

30. The methods of propaganda in the armies and navies of capitalist states must be adaptable to the peculiar conditions in each country. Antimilitarist agitation of a pacifist nature is extremely detrimental and only assists the bourgeoisie in its efforts to disarm the proletariat. The proletariat rejects on principle, and combats with the utmost energy, every kind of military institution of the bourgeois state, and of the bourgeois class in general. Nevertheless, it utilizes these institutions (army, rifle-clubs, citizens' guard organization, etc.) for the purpose of giving the workers military training for the revolutionary battles to come. Intensive agitation must therefore be directed, not against the military training of the youth and workers. Every possibility of providing the workers with weapons, should most eagerly be taken advantage of.

The class antagonisms revealing themselves as they do in the materially favored positions of the officers, as against the bad treatment and social insecurity of life of the common soldiers, must be made very clear to the soldiers. Besides, the agitation must bring home the fact to the rank and file that its

future is inextricably bound up with the fate of the exploited classes. In a more advanced period of incipient revolutionary fermentation, agitation for the democratic election of all commanders by the privates and sailors and for the formation of soldiers' councils may prove very advantageous in undermining the foundations of capitalist rule.

The closest attention and the greatest care are always required when agitating the picked troops used by the bourgeoisie in the class war, and especially against its volunteer bands.

Moreover the social composition and corrupt conduct of these troops and bands make it possible; every favorable moment for agitation should be made use of for creating disruption. Wherever it possesses a distinct bourgeois class character, as for example in the officer corps, it must be unmasked before the entire population and made so despicable and repulsive, that they will be disrupted from within by virtue of their very isolation.

## V. THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

31. For the Communist Party, there can be no period in which its Party organization cannot exercise political activity. For the purpose of utilizing every political and economic situation, as well as the changes in these situations, organizational strategy and tactics must be developed. No matter how weak the Party may be, it can nevertheless take advantage of exciting political events or of extensive strikes affecting the entire economic system by radical propaganda systematically and efficiently organized. Once a Party has decided to thus make use of a particular situation, it must concentrate the energy of all its members and Party in this campaign.

Furthermore, all the connections which the Party possesses through the work of its nuclei and its workers' groups, must be used for organizing mass meetings in the centers of political importance and following up a strike. The speakers for the Party must do their utmost to convince the audience that only Communism can bring the struggle to a successful conclusion. Special commissions must prepare these meetings very thoroughly. If the Party cannot, for some reasons, hold meetings of its own, suitable comrades should address the strikers at the general meetings organized by the strikers or any other sections of the struggling proletariat.

Wherever there is a possibility of inducing the majority, or a large part of any meeting, to support our demand, these must be well-formulated and properly argued in motions and resolutions being passed, attempts must be made to have similar resolutions or motions adopted in ever-increasing numbers, at any rate supported by strong minorities at all the meetings held on the same question at the same place or in other localities. In this way we shall be able to consolidate the working masses in the movement, put them under our moral influence, and have them recognize our leadership.

After all such meetings the committees, which participated in the organizational preparations and utilized its opportunities, must hold a conference to make a report to be submitted to the leading com-

mittees of the Party and draw the proper conclusion from the experience or possible mistakes, made for the future. In accordance with each particular situation, the practical demands of the workers involved, must be made public by means of posters and handbills or leaflets distributed among the workers proving to them by means of their own demands how the Communist policies are in agreement with and applicable to the situation. Specially organized groups are required for the proper distribution of posters, the choice of suitable spots, as well as the proper time for such pasting. The distributing of handbills should be carried out in and before the factories and in the halls where the workers concerned want to gather, also at important points in the town, employment offices and stations. Such distribution of leaflets should be accompanied by a attractive discussions and slogans, readily permeating all the ranks of the working masses. Detailed leaflets should, if possible, be distributed only in halls, factories, dwellings or other places where proper attention to the printed matter may be expected.

Such propaganda must be supported by parallel activity at all the trade unions and factory meetings held during the conflict and at such meetings, whether organized by our comrades or only favored by us, suitable speakers and debators must seize the opportunity of convincing the masses of our point of view. Our Party newspapers must place, at the disposal of such a special movement, greater part of their space as well as their best arguments. In fact, the active party organizations must, for the time being, be made to serve the general purpose of such a movement whereby our comrades may work with unabated energy.

32. Demonstrations require very mobile and self-sacrificing leadership closely intent upon the aim of a particular action, and able to discern, at any given moment, whether a demonstration has reached its highest possible effectiveness, or whether during that particular situation, a further intensification is possible by inducing an extension of the movement into an action of the masses by means of demonstrations, strikes and eventually general strikes. The demonstrations, in favor of peace during the war, have taught us that even after dispersal of such demonstrations, a really proletarian fighting Party must neither deviate, nor stand still, no matter how small or illegal it may be, if the question at issue is of real importance, and is bound to become of ever greater interest for the large masses. Street demonstrations attain greatest effectiveness when their organization is based on the large factories. When efficient preparations by our nuclei and groups, by means of verbal and handbill propaganda, has succeeded in bringing about a certain unity of thought and action in a particular situation, the managing committee must call the confidential Party members in the factories and the leaders of the nuclei and groups to a conference, to discuss and fix the time and business of the meeting on the day planned, as well as the determination of slogans, the prospects of intensification and the moment of cessation and dispersal of the demonstration. The backbone of the demonstration must be formed by a well-instructed and experienced group of diligent officials,

mingling among the masses from the moment of departure from the factories up to the time of the dispersal of demonstration. Responsible Party workers must be systematically distributed among the masses, for the purpose of enabling the officials to maintain active contact with each other and keeping them provided with the requisite political instructions. Such a mobile, politically organized leadership of a demonstration permits most effectively of constant renewal and eventual intensification into greater mass actions.

33. Communist Parties already possessing internal firmness, a tried corps of officials and a considerable number of adherents among the masses, must exert every effort to completely overcome the influence of the treacherous socialist leaders of the working class by means of extensive campaign, and to rally the majority of the working masses to the Communist banner. Campaigns must be organized in various ways, depending upon whether the situation favors actual fighting, in which case they become active and put themselves at the head of the proletarian movement, or whether it is a period of temporary stagnation.

The make-up of the Party is also one of the determining factors for selection of the organizational methods for such actions.

For example, the methods of publishing a so-called "open letter" was used in order to win over the socially decisive sections of the proletariat in Germany to a greater extent than had been possible in other countries. In order to unmask the treacherous socialist leaders, the Communist Party of Germany addressed itself to the other mass organizations of the proletariat at a moment of increasing desolation and intensification of class conflicts, for the purpose of demanding from them, before the eyes of the proletariat, whether they, with their alleged powerful organizations, were prepared to take up the struggle in co-operation with the Communist Party, against the obvious destitution of the proletariat and for the slightest demands even for a pitiful piece of bread.

Wherever the Communist Party initiates a similar campaign, it must make complete organizational preparations for the purpose of making such an action reach among the broad masses of the working class.

All the factory groups and trade union officials of the Party must bring the demands made by the Party, representing the embodiment of the most vital demands of the proletariat to a discussion at their next factory and trade union meetings, as well as at all public meetings, after having thoroughly prepared for such meetings. For the purpose of taking advantage of the temper of the masses, leaflets, handbills and posters must be distributed everywhere and effectively at all places where our nuclei or groups intend to make an attempt to influence the masses to support our demands. Our Party Press must engage in constant elucidation of the problems of the movement during the entire period of such a campaign, by means of short, or detailed daily articles, treating the various phases of the question from every possible point of view. The organization must continually supply the Press with the material for such articles and pay close attention so that the editors do not let up in their exertions for the

furtherance of the Party Campaign. The parliamentary groups and municipal representatives of the Party must also work systematically for the promotion of such struggles. They must bring the movement into discussion according to the direction of the Party leadership of the various parliamentary bodies by means of resolutions or motions. These representatives must consider themselves, as conscious members of the struggling masses, their exponents in the camp of the class enemy, and as the responsible officials and Party workers.

In case the united, organizationally consolidated activities of all the forces of the Party succeed, within a few weeks, in including the adoption of large and ever increasing numbers of resolutions supporting our demands, it will be the serious organizational task of our Party to consolidate the masses thus shown to be in favor of our demands. In the event of the movement having assumed a particular trade union character, it must be attempted, above all, to increase our organizational influence in the trade unions.

To this end, our groups in the trade unions must proceed to well-prepared direct action against the local trade union leaders in order either to overcome their influence, or else to compel them to wage an organized struggle on the basis of the demand of our Party. Wherever factory councils, industrial committees or similar institutions exist, our groups must exert influence through plenary meetings of these industrial committees or factory councils also to decide in favor of supporting the struggle. If a number of local organizations have thus been influenced to support the movement for the basic living interests of the proletariat under Communist leadership, they must be called together to general conferences, which should also be attended by the special delegates of the factory meetings at which favorable resolutions were adopted.

## VI. THE NEW LEADERSHIP

The new leadership consolidated under Communist influence in this manner, gains new power by means of such concentration of the active groups of the organized workers, and this power must be utilized to give an impetus to the leadership of the socialist parties and trade unions or else to fully unmask it.

In those industrial regions where our Party possesses its best organizations and has obtained the greatest support for its demands, they must succeed by means of organized pressure on the local trade unions and industrial councils, in uniting all the evident economic isolated struggles in these regions as well as the developing movement of other groups, into one co-ordinated struggle.

This movement must then draw up elementary demands entirely apart from the particular craft interests, and then attempt to obtain the fulfilment of these demands by utilizing the united forces of all organizations in the district. In such movement the Communist Party will then prove to be the leader of the proletarians prepared for struggle, whereas the trade union bureaucracy and the socialist party who would oppose such a united, organized struggle, would then be exposed in their true colors, not only politically, but also from a practical organizational

point of view.

34. During acute political and economic crisis causing, as they do, new movements, the Communist Party should attempt to gain control of the masses. It may be better to forego any specific demands and rather appeal directly to the members of the socialist parties and the trade unions pointing out how distress and oppression have driven them into the unavoidable fights with their employers in spite of the attempts of their bureaucratic leaders to avoid a decisive struggle. The organs of the Party, particularly the daily newspapers, must emphasize day by day, that the Communists are ready to take the lead in the impending and actual struggle of the distressed workers, that their fighting organization is ready to lend a helping hand, wherever possible, to all the oppressed in the given acute situation. It must be pointed out daily that without these struggles there is no possibility of increasing tolerable living conditions for the workers in spite of the efforts of the old organizations to avoid and to obstruct these struggles. The Communist fractions, within the trade unions and industrial organizations, must lay stress continually upon the self-sacrificing readiness of the Communists and make it clear to their fellow workers that the fight is not to be avoided. The main task, however, is to unify and consolidate all the struggles and movements arising out of the situation. The various nuclei and fractions of the industries and crafts which have been drawn into the struggles must not only maintain the closest ties among themselves, but also assume the leadership of all the movements that may break out, through the district committees as well as through the central committees, furnishing promptly such officials and responsible workers as will be able to lead a movement, hand in hand, with those engaged in the struggle, to broaden and deepen that struggle and make it widespread. It is the main duty of the organization, everywhere, to point out and emphasize the common character of all the various struggles, in order to foster the idea of the general solution of the question by political means, if necessary. As the struggles become more intensified and general in character, it becomes necessary to create uniform organs for the leadership of the struggles. Wherever the bureaucratic strike leaders have failed, the Communists must come in at once and ensure a determined organization of action—the common preliminary organization—which can be achieved under capable militant leadership, by persistent advocacy at the meetings of the fractions and industrial councils as well as mass meetings of the industries concerned.

When the movement becomes widespread, and owing to the onslaughts of the employers' organizations and government interference, it assumes a political character, preliminary propaganda and organization work must be started for the elections of workers' councils which may become possible and even necessary.

It is here that all Party organs should emphasize the idea that only by *forging their own weapons of the struggle can the working class achieve its own emancipation*. In this propaganda not the slightest consideration should be shown to the trade union

bureaucracy or to the old socialist parties.

35. The Communist Parties which have already grown strong and particularly the big mass parties, must be equipped for mass action. All political demonstrations and economic mass movements, as well as local actions must always tend to organize the experiences of those movements in order to bring about a close union with the wide masses. The experience gained by all great movements must be discussed at broad conferences of the leading officials and responsible Party workers, with the trusted (trade union) representatives of large and middle industries and in this manner the network of communication will be constantly increased and strengthened and the trusted representatives of industries will become increasingly permeated with the fighting spirit. The ties of mutual confidence between the leading officials and responsible Party workers, with the shop delegates, are the best guarantee that there will be no premature political mass action, in keeping with the circumstances and the actual strength of the Party.

Without building closest ties between the Party organizations and the proletarian masses employed in the big mass actions, a really revolutionary movement cannot be developed. The untimely collapse of the undoubtedly revolutionary upheaval in Italy last year, which found its strong expression in the seizing of factories, was certainly due, to a great extent, to the treachery of the trade unionist bureaucracy, unreliability of the political party leaders, but partly also to the total lack of intimacies of organization between the Party and the industries through politically informed shop delegates interested in the welfare of the Party. Also the English coal-miners' strike of the present year (1921) has undoubtedly suffered through this lack to an extraordinary degree.

## VII. ON THE PARTY PRESS

36. The Communist Press must be developed by the Party with indefatigable energy. No paper may be recognized as a Communist organ if it does not submit to the directions of the Party.

The Party must pay more attention to having good papers than to having many of them. Every Communist Party must have a good, and if possible, daily central organ.

37. A Communist newspaper must never be a capitalist undertaking as are the bourgeois, frequently also the socialist papers. Our paper must be independent of all the capitalist credit institutions. A skilful organization of the advertisements, which render possible the existence of our paper for lawful mass parties, must never lead to its being dependent on the large advertisers. On the contrary its attitude on all proletarian social questions will create the greater respect for it in all our mass Parties.

Our papers must not serve for the satisfaction of the desire for sensation or as a pastime for the general public. They must not yield to the criticism of the petty-bourgeois writers or journalist experts in the striving to become "respectable."

38. *The Communist paper must in the first place take care of the interests of the oppressed and fighting workers*. It must be our best agitator and the leading propagator of the proletarian revolution.

It will be the object of our paper to collect all the valuable experience from the activity of the Party members and to demonstrate the same to our comrades as a guide for the continual revision and improvement of Communist working methods; in this way it will be the best organizer of our revolutionary work.

It is only by this all-embracing organizational work of the Communist paper and particularly our principal paper, that with this definite object in view, we will be able to establish democratic centralism and lead to the efficient distribution of work in the Communist Party, thus enable it to perform its historic mission.

39. The Communist paper must strive to become a *Communist undertaking*, i.e., it must be a proletarian fighting organization, a working community of the revolutionary workers, of all writers who regularly contribute to the paper, editors, type-setters, printers, and distributors, those who collect local material and discuss the same in the paper, those who are daily active in propagating it, etc. A number of practical measures are required to turn the paper into a real fighting organ and a strong working community of the Communists.

A Communist should be in closest connection with his paper when he has to work and make sacrifices for it. It is his daily weapon which must be newly hardened and sharpened every day in order to be fit for use. Heavy material and financial sacrifice will continually be required for the existence of the Communist paper. The means for its development and inner improvement will constantly have to be supplied from the ranks of Party members, until it will have reached a position of such firm organization and such a wide circulation among a legal mass Party, that it will itself become a strong support of the Communist movement.

It is not sufficient to be an active canvasser and propagator for the paper; it is necessary to be contributor to it as well.

Every occurrence of any social or economic interest happening in the workshop—from an accident to a general workers' meeting, from the ill-treatment of an apprentice to the financial report of the concern—must be immediately reported to the paper. The trade union fraction must communicate all important decisions and resolutions of its meetings and secretariats, as well as any characteristic actions of our enemies. Public life in the street, and at the meetings, will often give an opportunity to the attentive Party member to exercise social criticism on details which, published in our paper, will demonstrate, even to indifferent readers, how already we follow the daily needs of life.

Such communications from the life of workers and working-class organizations must be handled by the board of editors with particular care and affection; they must be used as short notices that will help to convey the feeling of an intimate connection existing between our paper and workers' lives; or they may be used as practical examples from the daily life of workers that help to explain the doctrine of Communism. Wherever possible, the board of editors should have fixed hours at a convenient time of the day, when they would be ready to see any worker coming

to them and listen to his wishes, or complain on the troubles of life, which they sought to note and use for the enlightenment of the Party.

Under the capitalist system, it will, of course, be impossible for our papers to become a perfect Communist workers' community. However, even under most difficult conditions it might be possible to obtain a certain success in the organization of such a revolutionary paper. This has been proved by the *Pravda* of our Russian comrades during the period of 1912-13. It actually represented a permanent and active organization of the conscious revolutionary workers of the most important Russian centres. The comrades used their collective forces for editing, publishing, distributing the paper, and many of them doing that alongside with their work and sparing the money required from their earnings. The newspaper in its turn furnished them with the best things they desired, with what they needed for the moment and what they can still use today in their work and struggle. Such a newspaper should really and truly be called by the Party members and by other revolutionary workers, "our newspaper."

40. The proper element for the militant Communist Press is direct participation in the campaigns conducted by the Party. If the activity of the Party at a given time happens to be concentrated upon a definite campaign, it is the duty of the organ to place all its departments, not the editorial pages alone, at the service of this particular campaign. The editorial board must draw material and sources to feed this campaign, which must be incorporated throughout the paper both in substance and in form.

41. The matter of canvassing subscriptions for "Our newspaper" must be made into a system. The first thing is to make use of every occasion stirring up workers and of every situation in which the political and social consciousness of the worker has been aroused by some special occurrence. Thus, following each big strike movement or lockout, during which the paper openly and energetically defended the interests of the workers, a canvassing activity should be organized and carried on among the participants. Subscription lists and subscription orders for the paper should be distributed, not only in the industries where the Communists are engaged and among the trade union fractions of those industries that had taken part in the strikes, but also whenever possible, subscription orders should be distributed from house to house by special groups or workers doing propaganda for the paper.

Likewise following each election campaign that aroused the workers, special groups, appointed for the purpose, should visit the houses of workers carrying on systematic propaganda for the workers' newspaper.

At times of latent political and economic crises, manifesting themselves in the rise of prices, unemployment and other hardships affecting great numbers of workers, all possible efforts should be exerted to win over the professionally organized workers of the various industries and organize them into working groups for carrying on systematic house to house newspaper propaganda. Experience has shown that the most appropriate time for canvassing

work is the last week of each month. Any local group, that would allow even one of these last weeks of the month to pass by without making use of it for propaganda work for the newspaper, will be committing a grave omission with regard to the spread of the Communist movement. The working group conducting propaganda for the newspaper must not leave out any public meeting or any demonstration without being there at the opening, during the intervals, and at the close with the subscription list for the paper. The same duties are imposed upon every trade union fraction at each separate meeting of the union, as well as upon the group and fraction at shop meetings.

42. Every Party member must constantly defend our paper against all its opponents and carry on energetic campaign against the capitalist Press. He must expose and brand-mark the venality, the falsehoods, the suppression of information and all the double-dealings of the Press.

The social-democratic and independent Press must be overcome by constant and aggressive criticism, without falling into petty factional polemizing, but by persistent unmasking of their treacherous attitude in veiling the most flagrant class conflicts day by day. The trade union and other fractions must seek by organized means to wean away the members of trade unions and other workers' organizations from the misleading and crippling influence of these social-democratic papers. Also, the canvassing by means of house to house campaign for our Press, notably among industrial workers, must be judiciously directed against the social-democratic Press.

### VIII. ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY ORGANISM

43. The Party organization, spreading out and fortifying itself, must not be organized upon a scheme of mere geographical divisions, but in accordance with the real economic, political and transport conditions of the given district. The center of gravity is to be placed in the main cities, and the centers of large industries.

In the building up of a new Party, there usually manifests itself a tendency to have the Party organization spread out at once all over the country. Thus, disregarding the fact that the number of workers at the disposal of the Party is very limited, these few workers are scattered in all directions. This weakens the recruiting ability and the growth of the Party. In such cases we saw an extensive system of Party offices springing up, but the Party itself did not succeed in gaining a foothold even in the most important industrial cities.

44. In order to get the Party activity centralized to the highest possible degree, it is not advisable to have the Party leadership divided into an hierarchy with a number of groups, subordinate to one another. The thing to be aimed at is that every large city, forming an economic, political or transportation center, should spread out and form a net of organizations within a wide area of the surroundings of the given locality and the economic political districts adjoining it. The Party committee of the large center should form the head of the general body of the Party and conduct the organizational activity of the district,

directing its policy in close connection with the membership of the locality.

The organizers of such a district, elected by the district conference and confirmed by the Central Committee of the Party, are obliged to take active part in the Party life of the local organization. The Party committee of the district must be constantly reinforced by members from among the Party workers of the place, so that there should be close relationship between that committee and the large masses of the district. As the organization keeps developing, efforts should be made to the effect that leading committee of the district should, at the same time, be the leading political body of the place. Thus the Party committee of the district, together with the Central Committee, should play the part of the real leading organ in the general Party organization.

The boundary lines of the Party districts are not naturally limited by the area of the place. The determining factor should be that the district committee be in a position to direct the activities of all the local organizations, within the district, in a uniform manner. As soon as this becomes impossible the district must be divided and new Party districts formed.

It is also necessary, in the large countries, to have certain intermediate organizations serving as connecting links between the Central Committee and the local. Under certain conditions it may be advisable to give to some of these intermediary organizations, as for example, an organization in a large city with a strong membership, leading part, but as a general rule this should be avoided as leading to decentralization.

45. The large intermediary organizations are formed out of local Party organizations: country groups or of small cities and of districts, of the various parts of the large city.

Any local Party organization that has grown to such an extent that it is existing as legal organization and it can no longer conduct general meetings of all its membership, must be divided.

In any Party organization the members must be grouped for daily Party activities. In large organizations it may be advisable to combine various groups into collective bodies. As rule such members should be included in one group at their place of work or elsewhere and have occasion to meet one another in their daily activity. The object of such a collective group is to distribute Party activity among the various small or working groups, to receive reports from various officials and to train candidates for membership.

46. The Party as a whole is to be under the guidance of the Communist International. The instructions and resolutions of the Executive of the International, on methods affecting the affiliated parties, are to be directed firstly, either (1) to their Central Committee of the Party. (2) through this Committee to some special committee or (3) to the members of the Party at large.

The instructions and resolutions of the International are binding upon the Party, and naturally also upon every Party member.

47. The Central Committee of the Party is elected at a Party Congress and is responsible to it. The Central Committee selects out of its own midst a

smaller body consisting of two sub-committees for political activity. Both these sub-committees are responsible for the political and current work of the Party. These sub-committees or bureaus arrange for the regular joint sessions of the Central Committee of the Party where decisions of immediate importance are to be passed. In order to study the general and political situation and gain a clear idea of the state of affairs in the Party, it is necessary to have various localities represented on the Central Committee whenever decisions are to be passed affecting the life of the entire Party. For the same reason differences of opinion regarding tactics should not be suppressed by the Central Committee if they are of a serious nature. On the contrary, these opinions should get representation upon the Central Committee. But the smaller bureau (Polit-Bureau) should be conducted along uniform lines, and in order to carry on a firm and sure policy, it must be able to rely upon its own authority as well as upon a considerable majority of the Central Committee.

Carried on such a basis, the Central Committee of the Party, especially in cases of legal parties, will be able in the shortest time, to form a firm foundation for discipline requiring the unconditional confidence of the Party membership and at the same time do away with manifesting vacillations and deviations that make their appearance. Such abnormalities in the Party may be removed before reaching the stage where they should have to be brought up before a Party Congress for a decision.

48. Every leading Party committee must have its work divided among its members in order to achieve efficiency in the various branches of work. This may necessitate the formation of various special committees, as for example, committees for propaganda, for editorial work, for the trade union campaign, for communications, etc. Every special committee is subordinate either to the Central Committee, or to the District Committee.

The control over the activity, as well as composition of all committees, should be in the hands of the given district committees, and, in the last instance, in the hands of the Party Central Committee. It may become advisable from time to time to change the occupation and office of those people attached for various Party work such as, editors, organizers, propagandists, etc. provided that this does not interfere too much with the Party work. The editors and propagandists must participate in the regular Party work in one of the Party groups.

49. The Central Committee of the Party, as also the Communist International, is empowered at any time to demand complete reports from all Communist organizations, from their organs and individual members. The representatives of the Central Committee and comrades authorized by it, are to be admitted to all meetings and sessions with a deciding voice. The Central Committee of the Party must always have, at its disposal, plenipotentiaries (i.e., Commissars to instruct and inform the leading organs of the various districts and regions not only by means of their circulars and letters, but also by direct and verbal and responsible agencies on the questions of politics and organizations).

Every organization and every branch of the

Party, as well as every individual member, has the right of communicating his respective wishes, suggestions, remarks or complaints directly to the Central Committee of the Party or to the International at any time.

50. The instructions and decisions of the leading party organs are obligatory for the subordinate organizations and for the individual members. The responsibilities of the leading organs and their duty to prevent either delinquency or abuse of their leading position, can only partly be determined in a formal manner. The less their formal responsibility (as for instance, in unlegalized Parties), the greater the obligation upon them to study the opinion of the Party members, to obtain regular and solid information, and to form their own decisions only after mature and thorough deliberation.

51. *The Party members are obliged to act always as disciplined members of a militant organization in all their activities.* Should differences of opinion occur as to the proper mode of action, this should be determined, as far as possible; by previous discussions inside the Party organization, and the action should be according to the decision thus arrived at. Even if the decision of the organization or of the Party committee should appear faulty in the opinion of the rest of the members, these comrades in all their public activity should never lose sight of the fact that it is the worst form of undisciplined conduct and greatest military error to hinder or to break entirely the unity of the common front.

It is the supreme duty of every Party member to defend the Communist Party, and above all, the Communist International, against all the enemies of Communism. He who forgets, on the contrary, and publicly assails the Party or the Communist International, is a bad Communist.

52. The statutes of the Party must be drawn in such a manner as not to become a hindrance but rather a helping force, to the leading Party organs in the Communist development of the general Party organizations and in the continuous improvement of the Party activity. The decisions of the Communist International must be promptly carried out by the affiliated Parties even in the case when corresponding alterations in the existing statutes and Party decisions can be adopted only at a later date.

## IX. LEGAL AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

53. The party must be so organized that it shall always be in a position to adapt itself quickly to all the changes that may occur in the conditions of the struggles. The Communist Party must develop into a militant organization capable of avoiding a fight in the open against overwhelming forces of the enemy, concentrated upon a given point, but on the other hand, the very concentration of the enemy must be so utilized as to attack him on the spot where he least suspects it. It would be the greatest mistake for the Party organization to stake everything upon rebellion and street-fighting or only upon conditions of severe repression. *Communists perfect their preliminary revolutionary work in every situation on a basis of preparedness*, for it is frequently next to impossible to foresee the changeable wave of stormy and calm periods and even in cases it might be possible, this

foresight cannot be made use of in many cases for reorganization, because the change, as a rule, comes quickly and frequently quite suddenly.

54. The legal Communist Parties of the capitalist countries usually fail to grasp all the importance of the task before the Party to be properly prepared for the armed struggle, or the illegal fight in general. Communist organizations often commit the error of depending on a permanent legal basis for their existence and of conducting their work according to the needs of the legal task.

On the other hand, illegal parties often fail to make use of all the possibilities of legal activities towards the building up of a Party organization which would have constant intercourse with the revolutionary masses. Underground organizations which ignore these vital truths run the risks of becoming merely groups of conspirators wasting their labors in futile tasks.

Both these tendencies are erroneous. Every legal Communist organization must know how to insure for itself complete preparedness for an underground existence, and above all for revolutionary outbreaks. Every illegal Communist organization must, on the other hand, make the fullest use of the possibilities offered by the legal labor movement in order to become, by means of intensive Party activity, the organized and real leader of the great revolutionary masses.

55. Both among legalized and underground Party circles, there is a tendency for the unlegalized Communist organizational activity to evolve into the establishment and maintenance of a purely military organization isolated from the rest of the party organization and activity. This is absolutely erroneous. On the contrary, during the pre-revolutionary period, the formation of our militant organizations must be mainly accomplished through the general work of the Communist Party. *The entire Party must be developed into a militant organization for the revolution.*

Isolated revolutionary military organizations, prematurely created in a pre-revolutionary period, are apt to show tendencies towards dissolution because of the lack of direct and useful Party work.

56. It is of course imperative for an illegal party to protect its members and Party organs from being found out by the authorities, and to avoid every possibility of facilitating such discovery by registration, careless collection, by contribution and injudicious distribution of revolutionary material. For these reasons, it cannot use frank organizational methods to the same extent as the legal Party. It can nevertheless, through practice, acquire more and more proficiency in this matter.

On the other hand, a legal mass Party must be fully prepared for illegal work and periods of struggle. It must never relax its preparations for any eventualities (viz. it must have safe hiding places for duplicates of members' files and must, in most cases, destroy correspondence, put important documents into safe keeping and must provide conspirative training for its messengers).

It is assumed, in the circles of the legal as well as the illegal Parties, that the illegal organizations must

be in the nature of a rather exclusive, entirely military institution, occupying within the Party a position of splendid isolation. This assumption is quite erroneous. The formation of our fighting organization in the pre-revolutionary period must depend principally on the general Communist Party work. The entire Party must be made into a fighting organization for the revolution.

57. Therefore, our general Party work must be apportioned in a manner which would ensure, already in a pre-revolutionary period, the foundation and consolidation of a fighting organization, commensurate with the needs of the revolution. It is of the greatest importance that the directing body of the Communist Party should be guided, in its entire activity, by the revolutionary requirements and that it should endeavor, as far as possible, to gain a clear idea of what these are likely to be. This is naturally not an easy matter, but that should not be a reason for leaving out of consideration this very important point of Communist organizational leadership.

Even the best organized Party would be faced with very difficult and complicated tasks if it had to undergo great functional changes in a period of open revolutionary risings. It is quite possible that our political Party will be called upon to mobilize, in a few days, its forces for the revolutionary struggle. Probably it will have to mobilize, in addition to the Party forces, their reserves, the sympathizing organizations, viz., the unorganized revolutionary masses. The formation of a regular Red Army is as yet out of the question. We must conquer without a previously organized army through the masses under the leadership of the Party. For this reason even the most determined effort would not succeed should our Party not be well-prepared and organized for such an eventuality.

58. One has probably seen that the revolutionary central directive bodies have proved unable to cope with revolutionary situations. The proletariat has generally been able to achieve great revolutionary organization as far as minor tasks are concerned, but there has nearly always been disorder, confusion and chaos at headquarters. Sometimes there has been a lack of even the most elementary "apportioning" of work. The intelligence department is often so badly organized that it does more harm than good. There is no reliance on postal and other communications. All secret postal and transport arrangements, secret quarters and printing works are generally at the mercy of lucky or unlucky circumstances and afford fine opportunities for the "agent provocateurs" of the enemy forces.

These defects cannot be remedied unless the Party organizes a special branch in its administration for this particular work. The military intelligence service requires practice and special training and knowledge. The same may be said of the secret work directed against the political police. It is only through long practice that the satisfactory secret department can be created. For all this specialized revolutionary work, every legal Communist Party must make preparations, no matter how small. In most cases such a secret apparatus may be created by means of perfectly legal activity.

For instance it is quite possible to establish secret postal and transport communications by a code system through the judiciously arranged distribution of legal leaflets and through correspondence in the press.

59. The Communist organizer must look upon every member of the Party and every revolutionary worker as a prospective soldier in the future revolutionary army. For this reason he must allot him a place which will fit him for his future role. His present activity must take the form of useful service, necessary for present Party work, and not mere drilling, which the practical worker of today rejects. One must also not forget that this kind of activity is, for every Communist, the best preparation for the exigencies of the final struggle.

## Danielle Tartakowsky

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE TIME OF ITS PEDAGOGICAL ILLUSIONS (January 1921- November/December 1922) (France, 1977)

#### I. THE LEADING GROUP AND REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARDS

The transformation of the old type of European parliamentary party, reformist in deed and lightly coloured with a revolutionary tint, into a new type of party, truly communist, is an extraordinarily difficult thing. It is surely in France that this difficulty appears the most distinctly. Lenin<sup>1</sup>

Let us not be lulled by our victory at Tours. It is only a first step on the difficult road of revolutionary action. Minorities always prove to be more active than majorities. Let us not forget that. It remains for us to *turn our communist majority into a majority of communists.* Paul Vaillant-Couturier<sup>2</sup>

The party of a new type, tendentially capable of assuming the hegemony of the proletariat by breaking the traditional hegemonic organisational forms of the big bourgeoisie whose effects extended into the workers' movement, could only be constituted (and moreover, developed) by means of a revolutionary crisis. Thus the question of the State, and its class nature were at the heart of the debates of the Constituent Congress of the Communist International (March 1921) whose objective was to organise the revolutionary movement through a theoretical and practical rupture with the conception of the working class party developed by the Second International.

Such a rupture was in no way, however, the result of any subjectivism. If it occurred in Germany

1. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume XXVII, p.203 (Russian edition), quoted by J. Rochet, *Lenine et le mouvement zimmerwaldien en France*, Paris, Bureau d'éditions, 1934.

2. "La propagande par l'écrit", *L'Humanité*, 13 January 1921. [Emphasis added]

This text was first written as a chapter in the author's doctoral thesis *Ecoles et éditions communistes: Essai sur la formation des cadres du PCF 1921-1933*, 2 volumes, Université de Paris VIII, 1977, and was published, in part, as *Les premiers communistes français: Formation des cadres et bolshevisation*, Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1980. Reprinted by permission of the author. The copious footnotes have been substantially edited for publication here. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

and Italy, it was because Communist parties were born out of a crisis which touched the whole social formation, including the State apparatuses. Struggles were undertaken in areas which the dominant ideology did not consider political and for objectives which aimed at assuring, through a new political practice, the hegemony of the proletariat (taking State power, workers' councils). In the course of these struggles, cadres arose, who through their theoretical and practical interventions, became the directing cores of the German and Italian Communist parties (Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartakists, Gramsci and the *Ordine nuovo*). The construction of a communist organisation thus supposed using these communist nuclei to win over of the majority of the Italian Socialist Party or the German Independent Social-Democratic Party and combat the spontaneist and ultra-leftist ideas of groups whose revolutionary potential could be useful. These two fronts were of unequal strategic interest. The existence of a revolutionary crisis meant that the gestation of a leading group had preceded the creation of parties in the strict sense of the word. Because parties could not at all develop without Communist cores bringing them into contact with the broad masses, the struggle against 'infantile disorders' was, for them, a priority task.

The situation in France was completely different; emerging victorious from the War, harrassed but never threatened in its hegemonic forms, the bourgeoisie remained master of the political and ideological terrain, containing the working class through a solid State apparatus. If there was a real crisis in 1919-20, it was limited to the workers' movement only. The struggles which developed could only be, consequently, based in certain sectors. They were confined to areas foreign to so-called 'normal' political life. These were, firstly, strikes, whose scale the bourgeoisie hoped to limit because of the peace conditions and the hopes they carried. Secondly, there was the defense of Soviet Russia. Although these areas were considered decisive by the Communist International, by their very exteriority they could not seriously threaten a State which remained relatively strong; so strong, in fact, that the revolutionary vanguards carried the imprint of a still-dominant ideology into their very divisions.

In the days following the Constituent Congress of the Communist International (where France was represented by the Zimmerwaldian left), it was the revolutionary vanguards, in effect, which structured themselves in response to the International's appeal, at the risk of becoming bogged down because of their diversity. The *Vie Ouvrière* group, animated

3. This propaganda penetrated France clandestinely. See A. Kriegel, *Aux origines de communisme français*, Paris, La Haye, Mouton, 1964, chapter I of Volume 2, "La precarité des liaisons Paris-Moscow"; J. Humbert-Droz, *Mémoires*, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1969, Volume 1, pp331ff. The creation of printing houses in Western countries made liaisons less uncertain from 1920 on. The texts re-published were borrowed from the monthly *Internationale communiste*, created in April 1919, and then *La Correspondance internationale* which appeared in September 1921.

4. The Librairie du Travail was related to the

by Monatte, brought together the Zimmerwaldian trade unionists, decimated by the rallying of Merheim and Dumoulin to the confederal majority (April 1919); the skeleton Communist Party of the Péricat regrouped the anarchist trade unionists (May 1919); while the Committee for Joining the Third International was born in May 1919 on the ruins of the CRRI, illustrating the radicalisation of the extreme left of the SFIO [French Section of the Workers' International]. Souvarine took charge of its secretariat; the *Clarté* movement (May 1919) undertook at first to bring together revolutionary intellectuals, liberal pacifists and socialists on a humanist programme, but soon evolved towards the defence of Soviet Russia. Lastly, the National Federation of Socialist-Communist Youth was born in 1920 after an early scission of the Socialist Youth, divided by the Soviet experiment.

It was by means of these various organisations that the International impregnated France with its propaganda.<sup>3</sup> The Librairie de l'Humanité, the Librairie du Travail<sup>4</sup>, the publishers Editions Clarté, and the Bibliothèque Communiste<sup>5</sup> edited or re-edited texts translated from Russian and first published in Switzerland or Russia, without, however, offering the same image of the Soviet experience.

All of them put forward the achievements of bolchevism. The image of Lenin as statesman came before any other. Of the four texts of Lenin published in Geneva during the War, only the *Letter to American Workers*, which outlined the reasons behind the Brest-Litovsk agreement and the nature of the State under construction, was published in 1918. One had to wait for Lenin the statesman to triumph before Lenin, the theoretician of the new type of party, could make himself heard, and then still only in limited circles.

The publishing houses born out of the war or from the direct support of the Russian revolution, published a number of works by Lenin, Bukharin and Trotsky, outlining the principles of the new regime. As for the Librairie de l'Humanité, it only broached the new regime through government documents (*The Constitution of the RSFSR, The Economic Work of the Republic of Soviets*). When it was a question of defending the new regime, differences were pronounced. Some published or simply distributed the *Letter to American Workers*, as well as a number of texts denouncing the policy of the Allies vis-a-vis Soviet Russia. Others contributed to the collective defence effort by editing the parliamentary speeches of Cachin, Lafont, and Mayeras which criticised the policy of the French government towards the new State. When it came to

publications of *La Vie Ouvrière* and the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations. It was founded by Hasfield in 1918. See M.-C. Bardouillet, *La Librairie du Travail*, Paris, Maspero, 1977.

5. The Librairie communiste was founded by Souvarine; it published the works of the Bibliothèque communiste which was presented as a complement to the *Bulletin communiste*. Until issue 50, the *Bulletin* was the official organ of the Committee for Joining the Third International. [Librairie in French means bookshop, and not library; bibliothèque, in this sense means library, or collection of books - Translator's note.]

the Bolshevik party, and even more so, the International, these divergences were even more pronounced. Considering that what was happening in Russia was strictly Russian and had no effect whatsoever outside its frontiers, the Librairie de l'Humanité did not publish any of the texts relevant to the party, or any of the manifestos of the International. When it came to broaching these problems, the Librairie did so by giving the floor to the traditional cadres of the Socialist movement in France, namely intellectuals. Thus, a professor agrégé from the Law Faculty had the task of reporting on the Second Congress of the Communist International. It was the task of Mathiez [the historian of the French Revolution and rehabilitator of Robespierre] to supply an overall interpretation of Bolshevism; an interpretation, no doubt, strictly Jacobin.

The Librairie de l'Humanité did not publish Lenin. While, in keeping with its past, it published, or re-published, certain theoretical writings of leaders of the Second International like Kautsky and Otto Bauer; it also devoted a number of its publications to the Socialist Party, neither whose existence nor practice was questioned. Its published works were often no more than the simple replay of the parliamentary speeches of the Socialist representatives.

In opposition to these cadres inherited from the past, the other publishing houses tried to propose new ones. All of them glorified the Soviet adventure by giving the floor to first-hand witnesses like Pascal, Sadoul or Marchand, who had ranked themselves among its faithful supporters, or to pacifist intellectuals like Barbusse. The conjuncture brought together these men from the revolutionary and pacifist vanguards, some of whom were new to politics, and from their outpost they spoke with a prestige in keeping with the experience they had been through. It was a post too far, however, from the French lines for them to pretend to anything but a limited intervention; they were simply witnesses.

It is when one went beyond simple observation that divergences emerged even within these vanguards, which unlike the Librairie de l'Humanité, devoted a dominant place to the texts of the International. The Librairie du Travail treated the role of trade unions in the Russian Revolution (this study also is also a reflection on the attitude of French trade unions during the War) and published works treating its old theoretical positions, but closed its doors to intellectual pacifists as well as to the Committee for Joining the Third International, with whom it engaged in polemics.

The Editions Clarté and the Bibliothèque Communiste presented a wider kinship and both went along with the International's positions. The Bibliothèque Communiste was, however, the only one to distribute the essential theoretical texts and those relevant to the new type of party (63% of its publications). Even so, it limited itself to reprinting, for the most part, the publications of the International on this subject.

6. Etienne Balibar, *La Dictature du prolétariat*, Paris, Maspero 1976 p.83. (published in English as *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* by New Left Books, 1977.)

United in their willingness to defend Soviet Russia, revolutionary vanguards thus offered a piecemeal, reductive and doubly contradictory image of Bolshevism. Contradictory, because in each of these publishing houses, there co-existed French and Russian texts whose compatibility was far from being evident. But even more contradictory, was the fact that instead of criticising and questioning themselves in the light of Soviet experience on the necessity of linking their own practice to that of others, they gave, on the contrary, an interpretation of Soviet experience which remained within the image of their own, limited practices.

If the International was pleased that some of these vanguards participated in its Second Congress, they were less than satisfied with other aspects. Because the French vanguards were constituted outside of a crisis of the State apparatus, and were, consequently, lacking influence on the hegemonic organisation which continued to mark them with its imprint, the International endeavoured to obtain the participation, then the winning-over, of the Social-Democrat organisation, which was, however, the furthest from its positions. Through the nature of the State apparatus, the links it maintained with it, and its mass instruments, the SFIO was, more than in any other country, the indispensable cog in the construction of a new type of party.

According to Etienne Balibar,

A political party of the working class is inevitably caught up in the workings of a contradiction . . . On the one hand, it represents the proletariat's access to a political autonomy, the form in which the proletariat can direct its own class struggle from its own social base, on its own ideological positions, by freeing itself from the hold of the dominant bourgeois ideology . . . But, at the same time, because the class struggle of the proletariat does not unfold outside existing social relations, to give this struggle all its political dimensions, throughout all social practices, the party of the working class must insert itself into the workings of the bourgeois State 'machine'; or more precisely, into the workings of the ideological apparatus of the political State.<sup>6</sup>

In 1920, the winning over of the SFIO was indispensable for this 'insertion'. Balibar continues, 'One can insert oneself into a machine either like a cog or like a grain of sand which jams it'.

If this really was what was at stake at the Congress of Tours [1920], then it must be said that the SFIO, because of its characteristics which precisely made its winning-over determinant after Tours, it could only but be fitted into the state 'machine' like a cog. However, because it was a question of advancing both with and against the SFIO, 'right-wing opportunism' was the principal danger in France, unlike Italy or Germany. To fight it, however, the International did not depend on Communist cores comparable to the German or Italian vanguards.

## II. THE PROPAGANDISTS: THE SFIC [French Section of the Communist International] CADRES

Before the War, propaganda was the keyword of the SFIO which made Parliament and the press its preferred means of expression. The transformation which it underwent before the War and which lead it

to question the efficiency of propaganda linked to struggles were not such that they challenged its primacy and the cadres who were issued from it.

Unlike the German Social-Democratic party, which was endowed with a cadres' school from 1906, with some 200 students taught by Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, Heinrich Cunow and Franz Mehring, the SFIO was never concerned with training its own cadres, who were largely recruited from what Gramsci called 'traditional intellectuals'. In 1914, 43 of its 103 parliamentary representatives were lawyers, teachers, journalists and doctors. Because of their training, and lacking any crisis which would overthrow their old ideology by confronting them with a new type of cadre, they claimed, even after the War, to be 'beacons'. In a speech given to revolutionary Socialist students on 18 March 1919, Marcel Cachin could thus declare:

After the horrifying cataclysm we have just suffered, victory will be as difficult for the conquerer as for the conquered. The popular masses must therefore be educated to prepare for the day when theory will give way to strong, practical action to put an end to the shameful system under which we live. Socialist students, this task is allotted to you.<sup>7</sup>

Such declarations were not isolated. They nourished pedagogical illusions which the new party born at Tours did nothing to challenge.

Its executive committee, meeting in the days following the Congress of Tours set up four committees. Three of these were to carry out its internal reorganisations: Finance, Archives and Rules and Regulations. Only the fourth, on propaganda, had the task of assuring the link between the party and the masses. The young party gave it all the more importance in that it placed all its confidence in the weapons preserved from the scission, which were the only ones it had. If it lost most of the SFIO parliamentary representatives, it was able to save the essential part of the Social-Democratic press; *l'Humanité*, *La Voix paysanne* and the party's regional newspapers continued to be read. Through their print-run and distribution, they were the only newspapers to materialise a mass base which the party had to win and consolidate. These means of expression, as well as the party executive, remained in the hands of cadres coming from the SFIO. The executive committee of the SFIC, elected by the Congress of Marseille in December 1921, had 23 journalists, doctors, and teachers, and one worker. Propaganda remained, as in the past, essentially the domain of intellectuals. From 1921 to 1922, the Librairie de l'Humanité published 26 French pamphlets whose authors were as follows: 7 parliamentarians, 8 intellectuals (lawyers, teachers, 'major intellectuals'), 4 'witnesses' to the Russian Revolution.

7. Archives of the Prefecture of Police, temporary files I, Cachin Dossier.

8. Rappoport, *L'Humanité*, 8 February 1922.

9. *La Revue communiste*, 1, March 1920.

10. Rappoport directed the *Bulletin* with Ker and Lioriot in the absence of Souvarine who was a delegate to the Communist International.

11. Dunois, "A propos de l'Etat et la Revolution", *Bulletin communiste*, 36-7, 1 September 1921.

tion, and 2 republications of Socialist 'classics'. A single text came from the French Communist Party (PCF) as a collective entity; the report from the 2nd Party Congress.

Most of the courses given at Rappoport's Marxist-Communist school, and at the Propagandist's School on more political objectives (which we will return to) were still provided by intellectuals. University criteria prevailed in the choice of teachers, of whom only 'majority-wing traitors to marxism' were eliminated, 'without hesitating to address themselves to important scientists of good faith'.<sup>8</sup> Teachers were paid. These same intellectuals edited the majority of the basic articles and conference plans destined to supply material and standardise the regional newspapers, via the *Bulletin de la presse de province*, created in 1921. Via these various means of expression which sometimes were their personal property, and which in the best of cases were only formally submitted to party control; these media could only but amplify the ideology of intellectuals.

As an example we need only consider the founding principles of two of these newspapers which a report of the International called, 'the two great supply ships of ideas and precious party information.' Their titles alone already indicate a will to renovate: '*La Revue communiste*' and the '*Bulletin communiste*'.

'One of the principal tasks of the newspaper will be to make an in-depth study of the causes of the collapse of the Second International and ways for humanity to avoid returning to a similar disaster,' said the editorial of the first issue of *La Revue Communiste*.<sup>9</sup> As for the *Bulletin communiste*, it saw its task as fighting the theoretical under-development of the workers' movement, responsible in its opinion, for the failure of 1914. It attacked Social-Democratic leaders whose interest lay in 'governing a blind mass, all the more weak in their personal undertakings that they were less apt to form their own judgements'.<sup>10</sup> [On the contrary,] 'the ideal of the International is that all or nearly all militants can accede to dictatorial [sic] functions and responsibilities . . . the more useful men there are in the party, and by that I mean well-informed militants, the less there will be so-called indispensable men', wrote Dunois who, after deploring that 'doctrinal communism has less appeal [in France] than communism in movement', continues, 'to act, one must know, and to know is to have understood . . . The incomparable strength of the Bolshevik Party before the November Revolution had nothing to do with the number of its members - relatively weak as it was - but rather with their intellectual quality'.<sup>11</sup> The *Bulletin communiste*, for its part, devoted numerous articles to these problems, for which Germany remained the obligatory reference.

For a party which had, in spite of all, lost part of its cadres, the question was to train those who were going to take their place, and it was naturally in terms of propagandists that it was posed. During the administrative Congress of March 1921, Frossard complained that the party had only been able to keep three propaganda delegates. The Seine Federation,

dominant in the new party, was the first to react; it set up in January 1921 a propaganda school (the project, however, was prior to the scission). Dominated by the personality of Rappoport, who directed since March 1919, a 'Marxist-Communist' School, the propagandists' school was an organ of the Seine Federation. Unlike later party schools, this school was neither central, nor national, and reproduced within the very structures of the party, the major role of Paris in cultural matters. Directed by a Study Council and submitted to the control of the Propaganda Commission which the Federal Council of the Seine had elected in March 1921, it was the expression of the Seine Federation fraction within the party and sought to increase its influence.

It was addressed to militants (or 'future militants' as Rappoport called them) chosen by Communist sections in the Paris area. With a capacity for 150 students, it received 107 during its first year, and *L'Humanité* of 27 January 1921 published the list of their names. Rappoport said to them, 'While you don't have much available leisure, knowledge or instruction because you belong to the exploited class . . . you will have the possibility of having a general view of the development of human society.'<sup>12</sup>

Was this just rhetoric? Jacques Girault's work for the bibliographical dictionary of the workers' movement (which he has kindly let us use) allows us to clarify the profession of thirteen of these students: five were employees and eight were workers. These figures however cannot be considered globally representative of the school in 1921; we can only conclude that there was a presence of workers, but not a predominance. The bolchevisation policy implemented later could, in effect, explain why they floated to the top of the party's political activity more easily than others.

The school, thus constituted, gave itself the task of

bringing the socialist 'word' to the proletarian mass, leading them to 'understand' the causes of their misery and the real 'significance' of world events. The role of the propagandist is to unceasingly refute the 'argumentation' of opponents. The goal of the Propagandist's School is to create a framework of educated orators and enlightened administrators to form the solid armature of the party.<sup>13</sup>

The Seine Federation responded very well to this expectation; 23 of its 107 students (21%) occupied responsibilities to varying degrees, sometimes for long periods (although obviously the School cannot be entirely credited for this!). They were to be the 'pivotal militants' who assured a certain continuity in the organisation's life, over and beyond its crises. Ten of these students ran for election, in particular in the legislative elections in 1928, and four others were elected, although only two became future trade union officials. In its selection of cadres, it was thus natural that the Seine Federation sought out propagandists. In the words of the Communist historian Paul Louis:

12. The Propagandist's School, *Le socialisme*, Course No. 3.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *L'Humanité*, 28 January 1922.

Those who will be admitted to follow courses, are going to disseminate the widespread knowledge given to them throughout our groups . . . The School, set up by the Seine Federation will function throughout the country through them. The number of men who will pull the working class out of its stagnation and doubt will thus be multiplied, convincing it of the necessity for action, showing them the material and moral superiority of communism over capitalism, and opposing the subjections of the present to the unlimited liberty of tomorrow."<sup>14</sup>

The cadres trained by the School had to make ignorance recede by extending, at the same time, the frontiers of the party.

As these pedagogical illusions were omnipresent, in the last analysis, they thus lead back to a certain conception of the party, and of politics.

### III. PEDAGOGY AND POLITICS

#### The International: For a New Form of Propaganda

Without any illusion as to the possibility of cadres being trained by these schools, the International endeavoured to at least fight the ideology they conveyed, which remained dominant in the SFIC. In order to oppose this ideology with another, it continued its own propaganda effort, but amplifying it.

Having remained the party's property, the Librairie de l'Humanité published 55 new works in 1921 and 1922, but now foreign authors dominated, with Soviet works occupying the principal place.

Centering on the issues of the international Communist movement, and particularly, the role of the party, the majority of these works (11 out of 19) sought to combat right opportunism which was denounced up until July 1930 by the International as the principal danger inside the SFIC. In addition to four texts on the relations between the International and its French section (three of which came from Trotsky), the theoretical works published gave special attention to the question of the State, seen as the touchstone to separate revolutionaries from reformists. Due to Trotsky's responsibility for French affairs (which he assumed in the enlarged Executive from June 1921) and the links he forged with the *Vie Ouvrière* group during the War, he was the principal author among the Russian texts published (7 out of 19) and was the one of the most quoted in the *Bulletin communiste*. As early as 1920, a French author wrote a 160-page biography on him, whereas the first biographies of Lenin did not appear in French until 1922, and were written by Gorki and Zinoviev.

Preoccupied by the offensive which seriously called it into question, the French Party took comfort in its positions and chose to attack left opportunism which it felt less directly threatened by. Republished in 1920 by the Bibliothèque communiste, *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* was one of the works which, although not directly concerning the SFIC – or perhaps, precisely, because of this – was the most widely distributed.

After Soviet works, came German works (five; three of which were by Marx and Engels). Germany,

which conserved its importance in this respect, was no longer however, the leading Germany of the Second International; it was a country in struggle. Beyond that, it was perhaps already no longer the same 'marxism' being distributed. It was in 1912 that texts by Marx and Engels were last published in France: *Wages, Price and Profit* (Edition Giard) and *Utopian and Scientific Socialism* (Editions de la SFIO). Between 1912 and 1920 none of the texts by the founders of marxism were published, either by these publishers, or by the vanguard publishers previously mentioned. In the *Programme for Communists* which entered France clandestinely in 1920, Bukharin affirmed, 'When we call ourselves Communists, we return thus to the former name of the revolutionary party headed by Karl Marx'. But apart from this connection, Marx did not seem to be the object of any combat which warranted his publication or republication. He became only so in the days following the scission:

Marx became the common denominator, which had not really been the case before the war. The Russian Revolution and the Communist scission brought together all those supporting the idea that violent Revolution was either undesirable or not yet 'ready'. In both cases, they were in a position to accept the materialist interpretation of history, and on a simplistic level, the marxist conception of socialist action such as it appeared in the last works of Kautsky. Even for the right wing of the party . . . Marx was called upon for a better analysis of the situation.<sup>15</sup>

Reference to Marx from then on became one of the obligatory conditions of combat. Rappoport and Dunois, who remained in the SFIC, was opposed by Compère-Morel of the SFIO. It re-published *The Communist Manifesto*, last published in France in 1901. The SFIC could not abandon this weapon to their rivals. Although the *Bulletin communiste* only published two texts of Marx and Engels during this period (1920-22), it multiplied the number of articles affirming the fidelity of bolchevism to marxism and clarified its relations with traditional French working-class forms of organisation. For its part, the Librairie de l'Humanité republished Lafargue and Jaurès. In his *Précis de communisme*, Rappoport even attempted a kind of synthesis. In the face of *The Communist Manifesto*, the Librairie de l'Humanité republished the *Inaugural Address*, which by demonstrating the need for an international organisation, took on a polemical character against the marxism of the SFIO. Finally, so as not to abandon the *Manifesto* to the SFIO, it republished it itself in 1922, adding to it the classic work on the struggle against revisionism, *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

In his preface Dunois wrote,

Some of the Lassallien ideas against which Marx rose up against in 1875 with this biting critique, are only of historical importance today. But taken as a whole, these ideas have not ceased – too often successfully, alas – to compete in the mind of the working masses with revolutionary and anti-statist conceptions of marxism.

15. T. Judt, *La reconstruction du Parti socialiste 1921-26*, Paris, Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1976, pp 77-8.

16. *L'Humanité*, 21 February 1921.

Against the traditional Marx of the publishers Rieder and Costes (which republished between 1921 and 1922 the *Manifesto*, but also *The Poverty of Philosophy*), now stood a more 'political' Marx, that of the publications of the SFIO and SFIC, which corresponded to the stakes. Only Marx's texts bearing on the organisation of the working class and the workers' movement were chosen.

We, in turn, would be nourishing pedagogical illusions, to imagine that such changes could profoundly affect the propaganda emanating directly from the SFIC.

#### The SFIC: Economism and Pedagogism

'True marxism', wrote Paul Vaillant-Couturier, 'must not be bookish, but in contact with reality.'<sup>16</sup> Because no social revolution had produced in France a theoretical revolution, he concluded from this basic principle a sociologism or vulgar scientism: 'The doctrine must be completed through documentation, instead of commentary . . . to make realistic propaganda with facts and figures'. Could it have been otherwise? Could one imagine that cadres, whose practice had not come to be transformed, could hold a discourse radically different from their past discourses? They were not in the least impregnated with the new ideas they spread. The courses they taught and the pamphlets they wrote fully attest to this.

We have examined 114 courses and lectures given in 1921 and 1922. They can be divided up as follows: history and theory, 59 (about 50%); the party, 18; economy, 7; the Russian Revolution and Russia, 7; concrete analyses of the international situation, 5; natural sciences, 5; war, 3; geography, 3; the workers' movement abroad, 3; social questions, 2; peasantry, 2. It was the intensity of class struggles in France, what Engels called their 'transparency', which explains such a preponderance of history. The French workers' movement had used history, from the 19th century, as its preferred access to theory. This remained the case. This was not without repercussions on what history was spread. Thus, the Librairie de l'Humanité was more interested in the history of the Revolution (by Jaurès, Dommanget) than that of the socialist movement which it only approached through its predecessors (Paul Louis). The Communist schools, for their part, approached the following themes: the history of socialist thought, 33 (Rappoport, Louis, Ker, Dunois); the history of workers (from the Middle Ages to 19th century), 12 (Ker, Ripert); the history of peoples, 8 (Travaux); the history of the Commune, 3 (Ker, Louis); the French Revolution, 2 (Labrousse, Treint); and the history of wars of national defense, 1 (Labrousse). Because it needed to be immediately demonstrative, the history taught was limited to the working class and the workers' movement, preferring the high points in the history of the popular masses.

Beyond the question of history, this was not without consequences; even on the apprehension one could have over what was unfolding in Soviet Russia. Ernest Labrousse, who taught at the Marxist-Communist School, outlines today why he supported the Russian Revolution and joined the SFIC:



I had been seduced by the Soviet Revolution; it evoked schoolboy reminiscences, the French Revolution . . . The Third International demanded that we be socialists, ie that we be faithful to ourselves. There was no question of a profound reform of the party. The party had to become the party again, and that argument prevailed. The problem of the constitution of a leninian [sic] party was only posed in a very secondary way. It was more the question of a return to a party, and not the construction of a new type of party; a restoration more than a revolution. Support for Tours and the Russian Revolution meant being faithful to its former image. Rare were those, who before 1914, had not passed through the essentially republican stage, with its fidelity to the French Revolution and the republican sentiment. This was a source of difficulties; France was living through its historical memories and an experience in process. This was an obstacle to the construction of a new type of party. Leninism was implanted onto a foundation of republican origin in which morals counted more than the economy, popularisation and the wide implantation of socialist ideas. There was a preformation of sympathy due to the tremendous impact of the French Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

If this "preformation of sympathy" was partly responsible for the importance of the support for the Russian Revolution and the new party, it also encouraged the reduction of the new to the known or what was thought to be known. Because it was only in light of the past that the present was clarified, the courses taught the Russian Revolution, the contributions of Lenin, the International and the new type of party by smoothing them out to fit in with the past.

Thus the Russian Revolution was analysed in terms of the Decembrists:

If we wish to understand the history of the Russian Revolution, we must begin our research not in October 1917 . . . not in August 1903 . . . but much further back and begin by the study and by an understanding of the great Decembrist movement.<sup>18</sup>

More frequently, the French Revolution was the reference point for an approach. In an article entitled "October 1917, Year I of the Universal Socialist Republic: Further than '89", Ernest Labrousse insisted on the role of the peasantry in this "social revolution" (and not socialist). In Russia, as in the France of 1793, dictatorship proved to be the historical means for democracy, the means of assuring liberty.

Ernest Labrousse relates:

This image, which I had developed on my own, was accepted by the central organ of the party. I was an inexperienced young man without authority at *L'Humanité*, but was the only historian of the Revolution. It was the longest article in the commemorative issue. These positions did not shock anyone . . . Many people like myself were dominated by the idea that there were certain fundamental resemblances between the Russian and French Revolutions. Elsewhere, I had used this

17. Interview, 16 December 1973.

18. Rappoport, Marxist-Communist School, "La théorie marxiste et la Révolution russe".

19. Interview cited above (note 17).

20. Treint, Marxist-Communist School, Notebook No. 9, "Les Jacobins et la Révolution française".

21. Rappoport, *ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

argument during the electoral campaign to explain the dissolution of parliament in using the example of the Convention and the Commune. Cachin said that won't work, but the revolutionary trade-unionists next to him did not agree. The evocation of the French Revolution always provoked a stir in the audience.<sup>19</sup>

This double reference to Russian history and the French Revolution also served to teach about the new type of party.

Rappoport assimilated the Bolchevik Party to the Decembrists and the Narodniki, whereas Treint assimilated them to the Jacobins who were,

in terms of organisation and propaganda, Bolcheviks before their time . . . They had the character of a great party, highly centralised and corresponding, from the point of view of the bourgeois revolution, to what our party is from the point of view of the social revolution . . . They unconsciously applied the principles, put forward in our time by Lenin, concerning the Communist Party . . . Because these people were revolutionaries, they *instinctively* realised what were the conditions that a party of political and social action must realise, which today are expressed as doctrine.<sup>20</sup>

This demonstration, in passing, permitted the copying of the revolution cast in the mould of bourgeois revolutions; the proletariat was forever organised in pre-existing forms, already constructed by the bourgeoisie for its own revolution.

In the same way, Lenin was already present in Marx. Rappoport explained *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* uniquely in terms of marxism as he strived to analyse the Russian Revolution: "To oppose Marx, the realism of Marx, to a reality which has been going on for years, is absurd. What is marxism? It is a theory based on the facts, on a reality, for deducing a method of action."<sup>21</sup>

He argued:

One must distinguish between taking power and the organisation of the new regime . . . In taking power, it is not a question of the development of the productive forces . . . whether on a practical or tactical point of view. One of the bases of marxism is that the revolution must be made by the proletariat. In Russia, the proletariat was on the side of Bolchevism. The other basis is the idea of dictatorship; the proletariat must have the possibility of seizing political power. This is also the case for Bolchevism.<sup>22</sup>

Wanting too much to defend the revolution against its opponents, on this basis Rappoport obscured the particularity of the Leninist analysis which enabled one to declare whether a situation was revolutionary. In particular, the theory of the weakest link in the chain disappeared; a theory which was not admitted in the marxism of the Second International, whose spokesman in the SFIC was still Rappoport.

History does not have a simple pedagogical value. If it is presented as being directly explanatory. If one only rarely escapes from long discourses on its origins, and if analogies and comparisons take the place of analysis and explanation, then the time of history and that of practice become identical. Linear, homogenous and reversible, it is without crisis or rupture. Such a conception excludes all analysis of a conjuncture, and it not without effect on the reading of marxism itself. It is sometimes concluded that from

the workers' movement interest in history they took up historical materialism, or what they thought to be such, and beyond that, marxism. A majority of the courses explicitly claimed to be inspired by marxism and marxism alone. Thus it was how Rappoport explained the creation of the Marxist-Communist School:

It was in the midst of the war ruins, both material and moral, that friends from the North, militarily and socialistically [sic] devastated, sought me out with a proposal - it was at the beginning of 1918 - to found a marxist school. They said to me: "We are victims of reformism and electoralism; we must return to the doctrine of class struggle and to marxism."<sup>23</sup>

To avoid a return to past errors, the question was to restore this "revolutionary doctrine" of marxism, whose self-proclaimed protectors in France, after the death of Lafargue, were Rappoport and Paul Louis. But what marxism are we talking about? If Lenin was already contained in Marx, then Marx himself was already in Plato, at least according to French socialism. This is what emerged from the courses on the history of socialist thought, given by Rappoport and Louis in 1921 and 1922 at the propagandists' school. This history developed without conflicts through a logical process in which Plato was the point of departure and Marx the outcome. "If you now glance back" wrote Rappoport, "if you retrace the road we have taken together from Antiquity to Karl Marx, Engels, Lassalle, you will see that the socialist evolution has followed the same direction as human thought . . . it has passed from utopia to science, from dreams to reality."<sup>24</sup> References to Auguste Comte were not by chance. It was, in effect, with Saint-Simon, "who was the precursor of Marx, the co-founder of positivism with Auguste Comte,"<sup>25</sup> that Rappoport began scientific socialism. Did not Saint-Simon consider that "social transformation must come from the very guts of historical reality"?<sup>26</sup> Were not the Saint-Simonians, "marxists before their time, practising marxists, marxist organisers of production"?<sup>27</sup>

Lenin wrote: "The doctrine of Marx is the legitimate successor of all the best that humanity created in the 19th century: German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism."<sup>28</sup>

The Party spread, in fact, a decomposed, reduced marxism, leveling out its French component; class struggle and its history. The publishing catalogue of the Librairie socialiste and of L'Humanité bore witness to this "decomposition of marxism" (Sorel): Italian works mixed with Guesdist pamphlets, and dialectical materialism was strangely

23. *L'Humanité*, 8 February 1922.

24. Brochure No.10.

25. Course No.7.

26. Course No.5.

27. Course No.7.

28. Lenin "Les trois sources et les trois parties constitutives du marxisme", *Collected Works*, Volume XIX, p13.

29. Rappoport, Marxist-Communist School, Notebook No.2, *Capital*. The course broached the following points; value, commodities, the law of value, and capitalist accumulation.

absent. Economic works only had a minor role and historical materialism, reduced to a second-rate evolutionism or determinism was dominant.

In the words of Ernest Labrousse:

In the law faculties, it was considered at the time that there were two marxisms; economic marxism and sociological marxism. The first was considered dead. The labor value was a fantasy; industrial concentration had not yet uprooted the artisans; agriculture maintained its old forms; the working class was not constituted according to the Marxist schema; and the importance of the middle classes remained considerable. "In the burial ground of dead theories", declared a professor at the University of Aix, "marxism occupies a prime place". Sociological marxism, on the other hand, was victorious: the role of collective forces was admitted. Aulard wrote the history of political parties, i.e. political currents; and Mathiez finished his studies on the high cost of living which elucidated the role of collective movements, and the importance of revolutions in history.

This "decomposition of marxism" and the absence of "dialectical materialism" which is the other side of the coin, was as much characteristic of the texts of Marx published before the War as the courses organised in the schools between 1921 and 1922.

Political economy painfully limped along. Courses in political economy only appeared on the programme of the propagandist's school in 1922. They were taught by Laurat. Rappoport admitted that he had some problems in trying to introduce an explanation of *Capital* and had to prematurely interrupt the linear study he had undertaken on capitalist accumulation.

Rappoport declared at the time:

I realised that if I extended the explanation too much, you would not follow it perhaps with the same interest, as the theories are too abstract . . . with a little patience you would have seen . . . that the *Manifesto* itself is only the practical conclusion, the political conclusion of the analysis in *Capital*. However, all the circumstances must be taken into account, and I, too, am forced to be opportunist, a pedagogical opportunist. . . I am therefore forced to abridge.<sup>29</sup>

The situation was scarcely better when it was a question of applying marxist principles of political economy to the current situation. The four conferences which attempted an approach to the economic conjuncture were limited to a strictly technical analysis.

If political economy was a poor relative, dialectical materialism remained totally absent. Although no course in itself was devoted to philosophy, Rappoport attempted an approach to "Marx's method". "The dialectic", he wrote, "is the idea of evolution ending up in a revolution", and he added that just credit should be given to Hegel, "from whom Marx borrowed his philosophical terminology".

His hegelianism was only the surface, however. In the courses devoted to *Capital*, he developed his concept of the "dialectical method". It

can be considered as the conciliation of the descriptive method, which examines the facts "such as they exist", and the historical method, which considers the facts not

only in their constant, unchanging form but in their living form. Marx considered the economic and social life of a country as a natural science whose laws were not determined by our desires . . . as facts which have a character of necessity which imposes itself. However . . . economic laws are distinguished from natural laws by their living historical character, always in transformation. According to Marx, each social form must be considered in its genesis, its development and its passage to a superior form of society.<sup>30</sup>

This analogy between the social sciences and the natural sciences can be also found in the five courses that Professor Albert Mary devoted to the comparison between biology and sociology. Based on many references from Comte, Darwin and Fabre, and comparisons with the animal world (where beavers and bees had, of course, an important part), he pointed out that we must consider "human events like things"; things endowed with life and obeying, like every living thing, the natural laws of evolution and determinism. "No phenomenon of social life, whether it be habitual and relatively durable, or transitory and cataclysmic, can avoid this principle of individual determinism". The same principles underlay his analysis of the causes of revolutions:

In the collective organisations of humanity, there most often exists neither preservation of individual values, nor equivalent of consumption in respect to equal activities. The utilitarian ranking of social functions is only made to be trampled on; and ideological ranking, which seems to have the force of law, leads to an inequality of individual life. Compensation is over-abundant on one side and is deficient on the other; an over-abundance on the side of the improperly termed leaders; a deficiency on the side of the working categories. Plethora and misery. Plethora has the effect of a hypertrophy, and this - as all physiologists know - coincides with a hypofunctioning. The material expansion of the privileged classes coincides with the development of their functional incapacity, a phenomenon of which I have already pointed out another aspect in connection with biological and social parasitism.

The most curious aspect is this: functional regression produces a proportionate decrease in the inhibiting influence that the hypertrophied organ exercises on the other organs. These become thus capable of reconstituting the whole organism. Thus, revolutions break out. Prepared for by the physiological insufficiency of a decadent class, they show us another class reconstituting all the pieces of society, complete with differentiations plus or less analogue to those of the bygone society.<sup>31</sup>

Bordering on caricature, the example nevertheless shows the scientism, evolutionism, and determinism inherited from French philosophy of the 19th century, which impregnated all the courses at the time. If theory is only a reading of what is, if it is resumed as history, then "what is" can be - in the last analysis - determined by its past. Thus, "modern

30. *Ibid.*

31. Marxist-Communist School, Course No. 10, "The Division of Labour and Centralisation".

32. Propagandist Course, No. 1, "The History of Socialist Thought".

33. Marxist-Communist School, Notebook No. 8, "Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder".

34. Rappoport, *ibid.*

socialism considers the socialist ideal as the outcome of the historical evolution of the current social, economic, political and moral forces which have also acted in the course of past centuries and which act currently, by developing themselves, towards communist achievements.<sup>32</sup> Marxism appears to have been reduced to historical materialism, but in fact, it was no more than a historical determinism. When applied to the analysis of the present, it gave way to economism.

Nothing ever existed which was not precisely determined, and therefore readable and teachable. "The true way to judge a revolutionary tactic" wrote Rappoport, "is to see if this tactic corresponds to the general economic situation, to the degree of development of the productive forces."<sup>33</sup>

The effect of this development of the productive forces was to eliminate, throughout Europe the middle classes, and in particular in France, the peasantry. More than the manifestation of "the leading role of the working class", it was the massive expropriation of those who were the only ones ever designated by the place they occupied in production, without being given the slightest autonomy, even relative, which would have made possible a revolution - if one dared to call it that. "If the middle class, the class of small landowner, truly could live quietly in relative well-being, there would be no hope for humanity to escape from the current social hell", wrote Rappoport.<sup>34</sup>

Nourished by such principles, the courses reduced the social formation solely to the mode of production, to the two antagonistic classes of Volume One of *Capital* (whose understanding, moreover, was essentially limited). Their analysis rendered useless, because inoperative, the Leninist concept of alliance.

In this perspective, the Party could not be defined as the organiser of struggles. Instead, it was a party, which, being in a relation of transparency with the real while all the others were in a relation of opacity, could make best understood what was unfolding. To lead the political struggle, was above all, to understand (through the correct reading of 'what is'), and then, to teach. The political struggle was thus reduced to a struggle of an idea which alone permitted the transformation of things.

The pedagogical conceptions of the party were only therefore the counterpoint of its economism; they substituted (or at least superimposed) the fundamental contradictions of the French social formation for the dominant division between "educators" and "educated". They prevented ideology (even if it was dominant) from being understood as a material practice and therefore organised. The party (which was only seen as the one who knows) was only faced with individuals/subjects (who did not yet know), and as the only difference between the party and the masses was the degree of knowledge, it was by extending the frontiers that knowledge was increased.

It was not at all surprising then, that the propagandists' school, which alone was addressed to future "cadres", gave propaganda an important place and devoted the first of its three series of courses to the training of speakers. Fernand Corcos and

Georges Pioch were responsible for this course. The first section dealt with how to "become a speaker"; to this end, students learnt "the qualities required for public speaking", "the form and content of speeches", "oratory styles" etc. A second section then analysed the relations between "audiences and the speaker"; it insisted on the need to adapt their language to the specificity of the audience they were addressing, a specificity whose features were formed by "climate, race, nationality, tradition and culture". An expert on this subject, Pioch affirmed, "the usefulness of mixing a little feeling and even poetry with doctrine, to take into account the mainly emotional part of the audience, namely women". In 1921, his courses even included, "a parallel between the style of a Jaurès, and that of a Lenin, with an outline of speeches where these two styles could be mixed together".

The left wing of the Party was sometimes shocked by such concepts. Paul Vaillant-Couturier wrote in *l'Humanité*: "It should be understood, once and for all, that to make a propagandist, eloquence is not indispensable; what is indispensable, is knowledge of the facts".<sup>35</sup> However, in his reflection, even he preferred the means of propaganda over its content.

Numerous courses insisted on the role of propaganda in maintaining or overthrowing bourgeois domination. Rappoport analysed the causes for the triumph of the Russian Revolution thus: "The dominant classes were weak as they did not have this system of scholarly education . . . these priests, scientists and writers who chloroform the popular mind. The intellectuals were on the side of the people".<sup>36</sup>

In the courses he gave on the "role of the press in capitalist society", Paul Louis came back to the same idea. He stressed the growing importance of the press and declared:

Our task is to form attitudes particular to this country . . . The big obstacle to the distribution of socialist ideas is not only the egotism of the bourgeoisie and the inertia and apathy of the working masses, but the press. As long as the capitalist press surpasses ours, it will be difficult to win over millions of supporters in this country".<sup>37</sup>

Thus the State was reduced to those apparatuses in France which were most obvious. These could be conquered, and not destroyed.

Because it was a question of opposing the domination of one propaganda with another, one right with another, the party, in turn, was reduced to its practices which had the effect of State apparatuses in the working class. The Propagandist's School devoted the second part of its programme to "socialist", "trade-union", "municipal" and "co-operative" organisation. In the pamphlet announcing the programme for 1921, we read that the course on

35. *l'Humanité*, 12 January 1921.

36. Marxist-Communist School, Notebook No. 4, "La théorie marxiste et la Révolution russe".

37. Marxist-Communist School, Notebook No. 5.

38. M. Geffer, "Lenine et la perspective historique". *Recherches internationales*, 62, First Quarter 1969.

39. *Ibid.*

"socialist organisation" was to be modified in accordance with the changes in Party statutes to be brought about by the next administrative congress. This tells us a lot about the technicist conception of organisation (and thus the party) presiding over the elaboration of these courses which limited themselves to the analysis of the traditional practices of the workers' movement, and did not lead to any reflection on the articulation of these practices between them, i.e. the party.

Analysing the practice of the Mencheviks, the Soviet historian, M. Geffer wrote that, "by pretending to teach the revolution, they did not see the necessity of learning from it".<sup>38</sup> The whole attitude of the Second International could be characterised as such; the SFIO, although it became the SFIC, continued to present itself as the educator of the masses without ever questioning its capacity (other than quantitative) to play the role of "history teacher"<sup>39</sup> which it pretended to be. More than the content of its propaganda, it was this aspect that the International was soon to attack.

### The Question Of A United Front: A Revelation

The defeats suffered by the workers' movement in 1921 compelled the International to re-think the relationship that its principal sections had with the masses. Meeting from 22 June to 12 July 1921, its Third Congress noted the wavering in the proletarian struggle for power. Observing that none of the Communist Parties that had been formed had succeeded in providing "effective leadership for the bulk of the working class in the revolutionary struggle", it questioned itself on how to do this at a time where in every European country, State power appeared to have been strengthened and where the Second International and the Centrist International (sometimes called the Second and a Half International, formed in February 1921 by German and French independents) successfully reorganised their influence over large fractions of the European working class.

Criticising the "ultra-leftism" of those sections which had rashly launched onto "the offensive" leading the workers' movement to defeat (particularly, in Germany), it also attacked the "wait-and-see" policy prevailing in other sections, particularly in France. In 1920, the International requested the SFIO to transform its traditional practices to make them more revolutionary and proletarian. The SFIO had to block off right opportunism by committing itself to a real trade union policy in developing actions in areas like the army and the colonies, which up until then had been left wide open, and which had a strategic importance due to the role of French imperialism. Two years later, nothing had been done. The SFIC provided no initiative or leadership whatsoever for the efforts undertaken in these domains; its activities aimed at the masses and the State apparatus remained essentially the work of legislators and propagandists. Many survivals from the past helped maintain uncertainty in the vanguards issued from trade-unionism and the anti-militarist struggle. Because they refused to enter the

ranks of the SFIC, the latter isolated itself from the working masses who persisted in seeing the trade union as their preferred form of organisation.

This objective situation was in response to the fact that the SFIC kept some of its former traits. It undoubtedly affirmed itself as the best supporter of Soviet Russia, but it took in ideas without re-thinking them. A text attributed to Zinoviev by a police report maintained that, "the Bolchevism of the French worker is above all in words and gestures and without serious roots, as it is based above all on a discontent for the government and a platonic love for Moscow". No doubt a somewhat hasty judgement, but not totally devoid of truth.

Soviet Russia was not enough, by its existence, to eliminate the opposition between reformists and revolutionaries which took the place of the currents that traditionally rubbed shoulders in the French workers' movement. They remained highly visible as much in the reformist current as in the revolutionary current in the process of formation: the SFIC reserved a non-negligible part of its propaganda for the peasantry, but effectively abandoned to the Librairie du Travail the monopoly of all actions aimed at the working class, by which it contributed to the maintenance of a strictly trade-union character. Conscious of the real relations of force, the Communist International maintained this division of labour: it confided to the Librairie du Travail alone, until 1925 at least, the documents of the ISR [International Red Trade Union]; and to the publishing house of the Communist Youth (Editions de *L'avant-garde*) the works of an anti-militarist character.

The Third Congress of the International asserted the need to end this situation; it saw in "the fusion of the revolutionary trade union group with the overall Communist organisation . . . one of the conditions for serious struggle by the French proletariat", and questioned the ways to accelerate its realisation.

Adopted on 9 July, these theses on tactics re-affirmed that the most important current problem was

winning dominant influence in the working class . . . Communist parties only become unitary factors for the proletariat in struggling for its interests . . . Even the smallest parties must not limit themselves simply to propaganda and agitation. They must constitute, in all the mass organisations of the proletariat, a vanguard which shows the backward, hesitant masses, by encouraging them to struggle for their basic needs, how the fight should be led, and in doing so, revealing the treachery of all non-Communist parties. It is only by knowing how to place themselves at the forefront of the proletariat in all its struggles that Communist parties can effectively win over the large proletarian masses in the struggle for dictatorship.<sup>40</sup>

The Communist International thus requested its sections to substitute a political relationship for the pedagogical relations that the parties of the

40. Theses on tactics from *Manifestes, theses et résolutions de l'Internationale communiste*, Bibliothèque communiste, p.99.

41. Executive committee, 17 January 1922.

Second International maintained with the masses which had led them to establish propaganda as the dominant practice. As a "party of action", the party of the new type had to be less concerned with convincing individuals and more with winning over the working class; a class which it could only teach through mass practices and organisations in which it was historically constituted, and in which reformist organisations were well established. Conscious of their importance, the Third Congress consequently requested the sections of the International to establish their influence over reformist unions and, with mass support, exert pressure on other parties, so they could engage in a common struggle. It thus paved the way for the theses on the united front which were to be adopted in December 1921.

To propose, in our turn, pedagogical relations between the International and its sections would be only to imagine that a slogan could make new practices of struggle surge forth just because it called for them. This slogan only "penetrated" to the extent that it was a response to a problem already posed by the social formation concerned; a possible solution to an already open crisis. The degree of "understanding" that a party could have could not pass the limits of the objective facts it has to confront. Because the theses on the united front had the value of self-criticism for the German Communist Party, they could attempt to transform their practice. Because the French crisis remained restricted to the workers' movement, the French Communist Party could only have, on the contrary, a reductive vision. Whether it congratulated or lamented itself, it reduced the question of unity to that of an organic unity. Interpreting the united front in strictly organisational or ideological terms, it could thus declare it "inapplicable where it affects the agreement with dissident officials and confederal majorities".<sup>41</sup> The conference of federal secretaries held at the end of January 1922 approved this assessment of the executive committee. Beaten during the debate on this issue during the enlarged executive of February, the federal secretaries belatedly rallied to the united front theses, but saw itself disavowed by the national council in April. Crystallised by this problem, the different tendencies confronted one another at the Congress of Paris in October. There were two opposing motions: one favourable to the united front, calling for compromise between the centre and the left (Frossard, Souvarine), and one hostile to it, from the right (Renoult, Dondicol).

For want of being able to create the objective conditions for a broad united front policy, the International could at least pretend that the theoretical validity of its theses were accepted. Consequently, it attacked right opportunism which was revealed by the 1921-22 crisis, and in particular, its underlying practices. The opposition could only express itself through the channel of the SFIC's still preferred means of expression: the parliament and the press. In the absence of any national election, it was the press, although theoretically under the control of the executive committee of the Party, which became the principal instrument of the opposition's fight against the International. A report by the International in

1922 was already worried about the state of the French Communist press. It attacked "journalists who only stick in the words communism, revolution in their articles. . . . We need convinced militants who write to sow the seeds of the communist idea in ground which is already prepared to make them germinate".<sup>42</sup> Regretting that none of the organs of the press were under the effective control of the executive committee, that "the French comrades have little or no experience of thinking collectively, their journals and newspapers only express the personal thinking of their authors", the report continued:

I fear that the overly-pronounced independence of publishing could officially encourage the possibility of everyone confining themselves to their own house and forgetting the pressing need to create a communist mental attitude in party members who must become the vanguard of the French proletariat. I would not be surprised if a Rappoport current was formed around the *Revue communiste*, a Souvarine tendency around the *Bulletin*, a Cachin tendency around *L'Huma* [sic], or a Frossard group around the dubious *Journal du peuple*. The executive committee must be the only tendency, and it should set the tone for newspapers and magazines; if it is indispensable to discipline party members, it is no less indispensable to discipline the thinking of its militants.<sup>43</sup>

The debate on the united front confirmed the worst predictions. The press crystallised the oppositions to the greatest benefit of the right and extreme right tendencies within the Party. Due to the importance of its numerous press organs, the latter managed to make itself heard well beyond the limits warranted by its real importance in the party. On the other hand, the press was closed to the left current which supported the International's positions, but had no arm other than the *Bulletin communiste*, which had a print run of 5000 at a time when the Party had 53,000 members.

One of the concerns of the Fourth Congress of the International (November 1922) was to tackle the omnipotence of those within the SFIC who continued practices inherited from the past.

## Adalbert Fogarasi THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS (Hungary, 1921)

The aim of the following discussion is exclusively practical: it will serve as a starting point of an international exchange of ideas on the ways and means of the communist press. To deal successfully with the most pressing practical tasks, however, it seems necessary to establish the viewpoint from which they can be comprehended in their total relationship to the communist movement.

### I. CAPITALIST AND COMMUNIST PRESS

To understand the character of the communist press—to enable it to realize its true character—we must observe it in opposition to the capitalist press. While this opposition is generally thought of in terms of a bourgeois versus a proletarian press, we shall intentionally employ different terms since there is a capitalist press written in by so-called proletarians for real proletarians; and, in addition, the communist press is not simply identical with the proletarian.

The character of the capitalist press gives rise to the following questions:

1. for whom is it written?
2. how is it written?
3. by whom is it written?

1. The capitalist press is an ideological weapon in the class struggle, employed by the ruling class in oppressing the proletariat. In its application it is manifoldly different from other instruments of the oppressive apparatus: it does not belong to the immediately brutal system of force, but serves the same ends by indirect means. On first glance the ideological function of the capitalist press is simply the strengthening of the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie—a function actually fulfilled by the communist press.

The press (by which we mean primarily the daily press) of financial and industrial capital is not written for top financiers but for broad sectors of the population. In the major capitalist countries the 'trustification' of the press indeed makes possible the publication of papers intended for a definite class, or segment of a class. But even in such cases the main tendency of the capitalist press clearly emerges: to dominate the ideology of the ensemble of classes. Through its extensive powers and clever speculation on the needs of those sectors still unconscious of their class situation,

42. Institut Maurice Thorez, Item 80, typed report, "Perspectives et tâches du PCF". This extremely rich report is neither signed nor dated but it is certainly earlier than February 1922. It was probably written by Kolarov in January 1922.

43. *Ibid.*

This text was originally published in *Kommunismus* (Vienna), II, 25-26, 15 July 1921. It was translated into English by Paul Breines and published in *Radical America* (Cambridge, Mass.), III, 3, May-June 1969, where it was prefaced by a brief article by the translator. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

the financial and industrial capitalist press draws extensive portions of the petit-bourgeoisie, peasantry, and even the proletariat into its readership. *Matin* (the French paper), for example, proudly points to the considerable number of proletarians—mostly office-workers, craftsmen, female employees, servants, etc.—who belong to its circle of readers.

2. (How the capitalist press is written) clearly expresses its character. It cannot carry out its ideological domination of the vacillating and propertyless classes in a positive sense; open apologies for capitalism would result in a rapid loss of a readers. It thus strives to achieve the following: to prevent the reading masses from realizing the ideology which corresponds to their interests. Put more simply: to keep the reader in a state of ignorance. In performing this negative function the capitalist press takes account of the state of consciousness and the psychological needs of the mass of a readers: it achieves the systematic advancement of ignorance in the form of communicating an abundance of knowledge and information. A more brutal form of this same effort is the suppression of the communist press, either partially through censorship, or entirely by prohibiting (or variously obstructing) publication, which because it is so blatant only intensifies the desire for knowledge among readers with even a partially developed consciousness. The capitalist press employs craftier and more effective means: it seeks to satisfy fully the reader's hunger for knowledge not only in order to perpetuate his ignorance as a lack of knowledge, information and ability to orient himself, but to mold the whole mentality of the reader into this form of ignorance.

The deepest, consciously-unconsciously pursued aim of the capitalist press is not that of producing false convictions in the reader by lies and distortions, although this is the charge most frequently made by the communists. What the capitalist press seeks is to shape the structure of the reader's consciousness in such a way that he will be perpetually unable to distinguish between true and false, to relate causes and effects, to place individual facts in their total context, to rationally integrate new knowledge into his perspective. When this aim is achieved, the reader's brain can be molded like soft wax.

In this process the reader's consciousness must be held in a state of continuous insecurity, perplexity, dizzying chaos; and the entire mechanism of the capitalist press is actually engaged in bringing about such a condition. Its refusal to make the mass of transmitted facts coherent, its pulverization of the social world into an incomprehensible, whirling jumble, do not so much meet the reader's needs and the state of his consciousness—which, linked to the natural monism of man's understanding, tends toward a rounding out and unifying of his perception of the world—as prevent the development of any critical control.

Diverting attention and awakening new 'intellectual' needs is another important component in this context. To avoid the danger that in following the movement of events, half-proletarian, petit-bourgeois sectors, office personnel, lesser bureaucrats, and rural and uneducated proletarian masses may become conscious of their real class interests, the consciousness

of the readership is *de-politicized*. The sensationalist press, with its cops-and-robbers tales, its reports of crimes and adventure, works systematically in the service of such diversion. Here too it is often claimed that the reader's needs are simply being met: yet this is identical to the case of luxury and colonial goods in which the production of good also produces the needs in order to meet them. The far-reaching influence of the capitalist on the socialist press is clearly revealed in the American socialist newspapers and in the otherwise excellent (English) *Daily Herald*. The latter, at the time of a recent miners' strike, printed on its first page lengthy crime reports and a story of suicide attempt by an army officer's wife.

The anarchic state of consciousness achieved by these means is not only a most appropriate soil for the nourishment of a trusting acceptance of the bloodiest lies—which otherwise would be seen through by simple common-sense reflection—but it also helps to paralyze the impact of that minimum of genuine news which the capitalist press is forced to transmit. This minimum is not the result of ethical hesitations in the face of total falsification, but of the control exerted by the communist and, in certain instances, the oppositional and foreign press. For the credibility granted the press by the naive reader is the condition of its effectiveness, just as credit is the condition of contemporary capitalist production and must, to a certain degree, be covered.

Certainly the more farsighted representatives of the capitalist press are aware of the fact that the truth is a more powerful weapon of class-struggle, far more appropriate to the nature of human consciousness than lies. They are thus aware that their own work is constantly threatened by the very nature of human consciousness itself. Out of this perception there arises from within the capitalist press apparatus a practical, though often grotesquely sentimental yearning for—objectivity. Thus *Matin* recently proclaimed: 'If only the "Associated Press" would for once not send us such completely contradictory reports!' These occasional wishes do not portend a return to the realm of truth.

3. The structure of the capitalist press apparatus requires personnel of a specific type: it needs specialists, namely, journalists. It is not the latter who have produced the capitalist press, but the other way round. Within the capitalist press there arises the same reification, the same alienation of the individual from his labor, which Marx dissected in the capitalist labor process as a whole. Just as capitalist production transforms the workers into simple accoutrements of the products of their labor, into mere things, so the press transforms the journalists. What Marx called the 'economic character masks of persons' is at work here all the more terribly as the whole process unfolds itself in the mental sphere, where the annihilation of every human value—the essence of the capitalist system—appears in involuted form. In this context the importance of the moral indignation which a few honest intellectuals feel over the venality and amorality of the journalists becomes clear. Incapable of distinguishing cause from effect, they believe the whole spiritual corruption of the age is the work of journalists. Under these circumstances Kirkegaard's disparate but serious proposal for the shooting of all

journalists would be of no practical value. Capitalism's impersonal mechanism would merely select replacements from the 'reserve army of journalists'.

The journalist is a specialist with unique qualifications. These do not consist in special knowledge in a specific, substantive realm of human intelligence and ability, but in the ability to write about anything. Under the journalist's pen theories, facts, opinions, counter-opinions, and news are transformed into an undifferentiated mass of printed matter—that is, into means of ideological domination of the consciousness of the masses. The laws of reification insure that the journalist himself, as a simple personification of journalism, follows the laws, carries out his functions mechanically and unconsciously. Under his pen every intelligible structure is remade *into a commodity*; he not only does not notice this during his work, but is not even in position to notice it.

This specialist in writing stands outside the real social developments; he sees a material force in his formal ability to write. Just as the bureaucracy occasionally raises itself to autonomous power, or as the officer corps can periodically wrench power from the capitalist class, so—according to its narrow caste-consciousness—can journalism acquire a modest independent power. In its view the expression becomes the essence, the means a goal. At the end of the process, journalism stands as an independent power—next to others.

A thorough analysis of the capitalist press on the basis of historical materialist teachings on society and consciousness does not belong to the borders of this discussion. But it has been necessary to characterize the capitalist press because the above-mentioned features are of fundamental meaning for the creation of an effective communist press.

## II. CHARACTER AND TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS

1. The communist press is an ideological organ of revolutionary class struggle. Its tasks follow from: a) the general conditions of revolutionary class struggle and communist strategy and tactics; and, b) the specific conditions related to its particular character as one organ of struggle among others. We shall focus on the latter element and assume the former is well known to readers of this journal.

The fundamental axiom of the communist press is to awaken the communist consciousness of its readers. To reach this goal it must alter not only the content of the reader's consciousness but—like the capitalist press—the form of this consciousness, its inner structure.

Up to now the communist press has differentiated itself from the capitalist press only in terms of content, through the propagation of communist principles. In its organization, structure, and numerous specific aspects it remains under the determining influence of the capitalist press.

The reform of the communist press means liberating it from the residue of this influence; all specific practical innovations are valuable only when they serve this larger goal.

The difference between the capitalist and communist press lies deeper than is generally assumed.

While the capitalist press is forced to pursue its aims indirectly and underhandedly, the communist press can work openly towards its goal—the awakening of the communist consciousness of the masses. In sharpest contrast to the capitalist press, which seeks to preserve and promote ignorance, the communist press stands on the only ground prescribed by its ideological position: the communist press is the historical agent of truth. Since it is only for the proletariat that social-theoretical truth and (class) ideology converge—the antagonisms within bourgeois ideology compel it toward self-dissolution—the foundation of the communist press must also be *absolutely uncompromising and untrammelled truthfulness*.

We do not want to be misunderstood. Truthfulness does not mean that the communists should dangle their secrets—if they have them—under the noses of the government and the bourgeoisie. Truthfulness is also not an end in itself, as it is for the moralists, but a means to the end of awakening communist consciousness. We do not deny that at present the proletariat's consciousness, including a part of the communist proletariat and many communist intellectuals, is such that truths which do not appear beneficial to the momentary state of communist revolution can create difficulties. But this only leads back to the demand that the inner structure of consciousness, the mode of thinking itself must be reformed. For what are the possible difficulties other than the result of an inadequate critical sense in estimating the importance of political and economic developments? We shall make absolutely no progress if we come out with the ugly and ungilded truths only after the proletariat is mature enough to take it. In this context, the historically unique openness with which the Russian communist politicians speak and write about the economic and political crisis in Soviet Russia is a remarkable, and prudent politics.

Truthfulness in the transmission of facts themselves and communist, that is, historically-critically true evaluations of the facts are the condition of the liberation of consciousness from the ideology diffused by the capitalist press.

To fully grasp the opposition between the capitalist and communist press, however, the standpoint of *totality* must be advanced. In relating the concept of truth to that of totality the critical reflection is carried out which goes beyond the naive-original meanings of the expressions 'truth' and 'truthfulness' used above. Here the naive concept of truth (in basic factual and news material) is insufficient: the criteria of truth do not lie in individual facts but in the totality, of communist theory and *praxis*. To develop consciousness of this totality, to present information, insights, and news in a coherent context in which every aspect relates to all others, so that the most trivial news preserves its meaning through its links to the basic truths of communism and serves the continuous rejuvenation of these truths—that is the task! Hence the inevitable 'pendantry' and 'doctrinaire didacticism' which some well-meaning writers object to in the communist press. If the capitalist press wants to scatter the reader's interest in all directions—its symbolic heading is 'miscellany'; its symbolic sign, the question mark placed after the most insane news—the communist press must concentrate the reader's

interest on the fundamental problems of class struggle; it must give coherence in form and content to the most diverse elements, linking them within the unified communist perspective. Obviously, this must not be done at the cost of living prose, which incidentally is not identical with an impressionistic chaos of colors.

From this it follows that the individual parts and columns in communist papers must be far more closely related than before. The largely unorganized news service must be organized and the individual news items themselves put into relationship with political and ideological articles. It will not suffice to follow the model of the capitalist press and throw together without commentary a chaotic mass of news taken partly from communist sources, partly from capitalist and official agencies. The worst aspects of this approach are found in the American socialist press, but also in the *Daily Herald* and even the communist paper, *Humanité*. Brief commentary, always oriented to the communist standpoint is a fundamental requirement of the communist press, as it represents one of the most important propagandistic methods of education.

Another fundamental and previously neglected task of the communist press must be mentioned here: the unmasking of the capitalist press. The reader's consciousness is most rapidly liberated from the influence of the capitalist press when its deceitfulness is revealed to him. This unmasking is of the highest importance. For example: when we give constant and concrete evidence that the social democratic press, in its agitation against Soviet Russia, makes use of reports from the worst capitalist papers and news-agencies, the case is one hundred times more visible to the reading masses than when we offer general moral criticism in editorials. One thinks of the enormous agitational effect of the *Daily Herald's* revelations of the falsified *Pravda* issue in which the English secret police has its hand. Another example: Chicherin is daily compelled to deny a plethora of false reports on Soviet Russia. So long as the reader's consciousness remains uncritical, the denials are in effect Sisyphean labors. If the communist press succeeded through proof and clear analyses of these reports, in shaking the reader's faith to the core, the time would soon come when denials would be unnecessary. The capitalist press speculates on the reader's ignorance, on his inability to read a paper critically. We must base our work on the reader's need for the truth and on the awakening of his critical faculties. All of this is of the greatest importance not only regarding the communist reader, which leads to a question we have had to hold aside: For whom is the communist press written?

2. The doctrinaire conception, according to which the communist press is written only for communist, must be opposed. On the contrary: the press is one of our most effective weapons in winning over the vacillating masses—if we handle the weapon properly. As concerns essays on politics and political economy—the latter are too often neglected in favor of party politics—the masses to be won are only those whose interests rationally lead them to the communist camp as soon as the subjective conditions (ideological maturity) are present. Regarding the unmasking of the capitalist news reports, another important goal

presents itself: shaking the faith in the capitalist press of the petit-bourgeoisie, especially its intelligentsia which is so important in forming public opinion. The correct strategy includes not only grouping one's own forces but weakening as much as possible the 'morale' of the enemy before the decisive clash. We must thus work to create a moral-psychological atmosphere which will contribute to the decomposition of the capitalist order. It must continually be emphasized that the communist position is more promising than the capitalist because the truth and harmony with the fundamental character of human consciousness are natural needs for the former.

But the question, For whom is the communist press written?, is far from resolved *even within the Communist Party* since the communist readers, in terms of preparation, maturity and needs, form a heterogeneous group. Lately the demand is often heard that writing be such that all readers can understand everything, which is not identical with the demand for clearer, simpler, more understandable writing. In and for itself this is quite valid but regarding the whole communist literature it is a utopia. In this context, the necessary structure which arises in the communist movement itself also appears in the press. For example, specific financial and personal factors make possible the erection of various organs and these have to complement each other. Clearly articles which aim at developing communist theory cannot be written in a form that is accessible to all readers. But does it follow that such articles should not, therefore, be printed, that we should have no ideological workshops? Not at all. What follows is only that the various tasks of the communist press should not be confused or tossed into one pot. Here reader and writer, through objective and unbiased cooperation can overcome the difficulties. Getting the readers to work with the press is a crucial means in this regard. The reports written by workers on events in the plants which are published in *Ordine Nuovo* ("The New Order", the Italian communist paper edited by Antonio Gramsci) represent a successful effort at transcending the untenable distance between communist reader and writer, or at least occasionally reversing the roles.

3. There remains the most difficult question, the one which is the condition of all conceivable reforms: By whom should the communist press be written?

The capitalist press is written by journalists. The issue is whether the communist press should be written by communist journalists. To this question there is but one answer: there are no communist journalists, or at least there should be none. The journalist as specialist corresponds, as mentioned earlier, to the capitalist social order and when the communist movement adopts unaltered the institution of journalism, it thereby adopts a piece of capitalist ideology.

As one among many means used by the Communist Party in leading the class struggle, the press is not autonomous but integrated with the others. Therefore the journalist as writing specialist has no place in the movement. The communist press must be written not by journalists who are also party members, but by party members who can write. Only in this way can the danger be avoided that journalism

will rise, in the communist movement as in capitalist society, to an independent and isolated power. Any careful reader of the communist press can see that this danger is not an empty one. Too often the technique of writing predominates over the object; too often stylistic variations on communist slogans are substituted for a genuine Marxist standpoint and knowledge.

Naturally the communist movement cannot develop without a division of labor and it is indispensable that particularly qualified party members specialize in press activity. This does not mean that they should be specialists, like the functionaries of the capitalist press. It would be valuable to require all communist editors and writers to engage in party work outside and in addition to their special press work, as is often the case in provincial papers. The danger of journalistic reification arises most often in the large central organs where the division of labor is naturally more advanced.

Similar perspectives hold for the division of labor within the press itself. In this area today complete anarchy reigns. The communist press has such meager forces at its disposal that talk of planned selection, utilization, education and control is utopian. Nevertheless the principles must be established according to which reforms are to be oriented. Much can be done in the way of preparation work. It is, for example, a pressing necessity to raise the level of intelligence and imagination of communist press writers. Only on the basis of the depth of his own education will an editor be able to take a genuine Marxist position on all major questions. Particularly needed is education and training in economics. Generalities about capitalist exploitation, profiteering, speculation, etc., can always be repeated, but no concrete work is thereby accomplished. Communist writers must appropriate and control real knowledge of these circumstances. Without strict discipline in this regard no progress can be expected.

We are well aware that much that has been said in this essay is self-evident to any thoughtful comrade. But here the saying that evident truths must be repeated not only until they are recognized, but until they are followed, is applicable. The practical application of these perspectives leads to a host of innovations which will be discussed in a future essay.

## Workers' Life

### THE WORKER CORRESPONDENT

(UK, 1928)

#### I. IMPORTANCE OF WORKER CORRESPONDENTS

Worker correspondents are much more than news writers. They are the nerves of the working-class movement. They not only send news of local happenings to be published in the workers' press; their reports serve as a guide and check in shaping the day-to-day policy of a workers' party.

When, for instance, the Communist Party organises a campaign over the country — an anti-war campaign, a Lenin week campaign, a textile campaign — the worker correspondents send news to the Communist press of how the campaign is going to their localities, and from their accounts one is able to tell how strongly the workers feel upon these things. Similarly, with the activities of other bodies — an industrial peace campaign by the T.U.C., a new Unemployment Act which puts heavier burdens on the unemployed workers, an Old Age Pensions Act — the flow of reports from all over the country enables us to gauge the attitude of the workers as a whole.

As far as the workers' press is concerned, without worker correspondents there can be no workers' press. The more worker correspondents, the better the press. Wherever two or three or more workers are gathered together there is room for a worker correspondent. In every mine, mill, factory, depot, workshop, village, T.U. branch, and Communist Party group there should be a worker who will write to the workers' press about everything that crops up.

#### II. THE WORKERS' PRESS

The workers' press is a mirror reflecting the life and struggle of the workers in their fight to overthrow capitalism; it is the worker correspondents who throw the image on to the mirror.

The capitalist press gives news — but it gives it from the capitalist, the employers' point of view. The workers' press gives news — but it gives it from the workers' point of view. That is a very great difference. It is not the only difference, however.

The capitalist press "dopes" its news — suppresses important facts, twists remarks to mean something they do not mean, inserts misleading headings, says such and such a thing is true when the press simply hopes it is true. This habit of "doping" is so ingrained that it is not confined to stories about the

working-class movement. Any worker who has witnessed an unusual incident and then seen a report of it in the capitalist press will realise this.

The workers' press does not need to use these methods. The truth is good enough, and sometimes much more startling than "doped" stories.

A third difference between the workers' press and the capitalist press is in the kind of news presented. The workers' press gives news of the workers' struggle; the capitalist press gives any "news" that will draw the attention of the workers away from the struggle. While *Workers' Life* for instance, will give as its main item an impending attack on railway workers, the capitalist press will devote its columns to a murder in a railway carriage. Where *Workers' Life* has a paragraph about some piece of tyranny in a textile mill, the capitalist press will have a paragraph about some royal visit to Bradford.

There are thus three main lines of difference:

1. The point of view (working-class viewpoint against capitalist-class viewpoint).
2. The method of treatment (straightforward news against "doped" news).
3. The kind of news (working-class struggle against anything but working-class struggle).

### III. WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

The kind of news that the workers' press needs from its worker correspondents is any news having a bearing on the working-class struggle. Nothing that happens to the worker is unimportant. An accident in a factory, a local election, a sweating employer, a witty remark during a discussion, activities in the local Labour movement, a victimisation, an unemployed demonstration or a Board of Guardians scandal, a propaganda campaign, a wage reduction threat, bad conditions at a local workshop, as well as strikes and lockouts, present and impending; all these, however unimportant they may seem, are of interest to other workers fighting against the same things in other places.

If there can be one kind of news more important than another, it is news from the factory, mill, depot, mine, workshop and field. It is there, where the workers earn wages for himself and profits for his employer, that the robbery of the working class takes place; it is there that the class struggle is sharpest; and it is there that the most vital and valuable news will be obtained.

### IV. GETTING THE NEWS

The worker correspondent needs no special attribute or apparatus. He is an ordinary worker, going about his work in the usual way. He requires to do only this: to keep his eyes and ears wide open, to ask himself of anything he sees or hears, "Will it be useful for other workers to know about this?" And if he thinks it will be useful, he should jot it down and send it along to the workers' press.

The worker correspondent attending a branch or group or any other meeting may hear somebody casually remark, "So-and-So has got the sack." He will promptly see the possibility of an item in this, and will ask, "Why did he get the sack?" Suppose the answer is, "For cheeking the foreman." He will then

follow up with, "Why did he cheek the foreman?" "What sort of a foreman was he?" "What do the other chaps say about it?" It might be necessary to go and have a talk with somebody else who was on the job at the time, in order to get the full facts, for the full facts are essential.

Having got his story the worker correspondent will take pen and paper and, just as if he were talking to his mates or writing a letter to his brother, he will write a letter to the workers' press.

### V. THE REGULAR WORKER CORRESPONDENT

Some worker correspondents will like to extend their activities, to be a sort of local reporter for the workers' press, to become known as one who will "get things in the paper". They will find that not only is this work interesting, but they will get to know a tremendous amount about what is going on. They will find that instead of having to chase after an item of news, the news will come to them. They will find dozens and dozens of items that need publicity, but which have not received publicity because the workers concerned have not had the self-confidence to write, or do not know where to write, or cannot undertake what is to them the laborious task of writing things down. Often people prefer to make a long journey rather than write. On a recent afternoon a worker came to the *Workers' Life* office to tell of a very bad case of victimisation. He was provided at the office with pen and paper, and asked to write his story down. This request brought to his face an expression of pained surprise. "But I've walked all the way from Romford because I couldn't write it down", he said. Had this worker known of a worker correspondent at Romford he would have saved himself a long journey.

Often someone buying the *Workers' Life* will begin telling the seller of a grievance he knows about or mention an affair that needs exposing; but because neither buyer nor seller feels competent to write (a pure delusion by the way, which will be dealt with later) nothing is done. Now, if the seller of the paper were able to refer the buyer to the local worker correspondent and fix up for the two to have a talk, the difficulty would be removed.

In many cases, of course, it would not be advisable for a particular comrade to let himself become known as the one who sends local news to the *Workers' Life*, but it can nearly always be fixed so that everybody knows that there is someone who does this, though they cannot exactly say who out of a dozen or so might be responsible. In other cases it might be an advantage to insert the name of the local worker correspondent in *Workers' Life* in, say, the local notices place. This applies, of course, to comrades who are very active in getting and sending reports to *Workers' Life*.

*At the same time it might be emphasised that even if you only write once or twice a year about things in which you are directly concerned, you are still a worker correspondent.*

### VI. WHAT HAPPENS TO WORKER CORRESPONDENTS' LETTERS

It may be of use to worker correspondents to know what happens to their letters when they reach the offices of *Workers' Life*. All the letters that come by post are sorted into different trays. There are circulars from various societies and organisations, some of which are written up into paragraphs, and others left alone. There are letters asking for advice or information; these are put into the "reply" basket to be dealt with later. There are abusive letters and post-cards (invariably anonymous), and harmless epistles of which neither head nor tail can be made; these are put into a large basket *under* the table. Finally, and most important, there are the letters from worker correspondents; these are sorted under various heads: Party Life, Workers' Letters, Industrial News, Labour Party News, and Mining News.

First the Party Life and Workers' Letters are taken and sub-edited and sent to the printers. This is done on Monday. Letters have to be carefully scrutinised for inaccuracies and exaggerations (which are usually apparent in a careful reading of the letter), as well as for "fake" letters. In many letters also a vital fact is omitted—the name of a trade union involved, the name of a place, the date and so on. Usually these letters have to be put aside for further enquiry, and sometimes they cannot be used at all. If the story is important a wire is sent to the worker correspondent asking for further information.

After the Party News and Workers' Letters have been dealt with, the Industrial and Miners' news items are taken in hand and dealt with in the same way.

By Monday night there is usually enough material from worker correspondents to fill the space available. But on Tuesday comes a further series of letters; everything has to be gone over again, cut down to a shorter length, and those items in Tuesday's post that can possibly afford to wait are put into the "Next Week" basket.

By Tuesday night the "copy", as it is called, has been set into type by the printers, proofs are sent to the editorial department, and the different items are arranged in the various columns and under their appropriate sections. Sometimes the items for a particular column are a little too long to fit, so they have to be cut, and one or two may have to be left out altogether.

So each page is "made up", and as important late news comes in, less important items have to be cut down or held over to make room.

By Wednesday noon the paper is finished.

### VII. HOW TO WRITE

The biggest mistake a worker can make is to imagine that there is an art in writing. You do not need either a "flair" for writing or a training. It is simply a matter of talking with your pen instead of with your tongue. Write as you would speak to a group of workers. If you feel like being humorous, be humorous. Write whichever way comes easiest to you. You will find short sentences the best. Don't worry about spelling.

Every news letter should answer six questions: *What, where, when, who, why, how*. If you cannot write a connected letter just set down the above six

questions and answer them. For example:

*What?* Strike.

*Where?* Maitland's cotton mill, Blackburn.

*When?* Saturday.

*Who?* Weavers

*Why?* Victimisation of a member of mill committee for refusing to pay a fine.

*How?* Rest of mill committee went to see manager. He refused to take back victimised weaver. All weavers in the shed immediately stopped work, went to other sheds and brought out weavers. Strike expected to extend through whole mill.

Having managed that it will be easy to fill in further details.

As long as you answer these questions, whether it is in a hundred words or a thousand words, you have a complete story, and the hundred-word story will almost invariably be better than the thousand-word story. Be brief. The shorter, the sharper. The longer, the duller.

Consider: there are thirty columns in the ordinary issue of *Workers' Life* of which, on an average, ten are available for letters from worker correspondents. There are 800 words to a column, which means that worker correspondents all over the country can between them occupy 8,000 words per week. Since *Workers' Life* receives each week at least 50 workers' letters which are "good" for publication, it means that to get them all in each letter should average about 160 words. Up to 400 words is a good length; 250 words is the best. And it is not often that the six questions — *what, where, when, who, why, how* — cannot be answered in 250 words.

Compare the story as you wrote it with the story as it appears in *Workers' Life*, and see how it has been "pruned". If you think it has been badly pruned, write and say so. You will usually find that the chief pruning occurs in the comments. It is a sound principle to let the news point its own moral. If it does not, one or two short phrases here and there or at the end, will serve to drive the lesson home. Don't let comment clutter up a news story.

### TECHNICAL POINTS

Write on one side of the paper only.

Where a typewriter is used, triple spacing is best.

If stories are written in longhand, leave a space between each line.

Leave an inch margin.

Number each page.

Make your paragraphs as short as possible.

Write two or three lines of heading to show what the story is about.

See that your story reaches *Workers' Life* by Monday morning. If the matter is important, Tuesday morning will do.

Where something happens too late for *Workers' Life* to receive it on Tuesday morning send a press telegram—60 or 80 words (according to the time of day) can be sent for 1s. Press telegrams should be addressed simply to "Workers' Life, London". *Workers' Life* cannot guarantee to refund the cost of a press telegram in every case, but will do so whenever a telegram is justified.

News letters can be sent in a halfpenny stamped

envelope as long as it is news for publication and contains no other message to the editor. The envelope should not be stuck down, and should have *News for Press* written in the top left-hand corner.

There is no need to send full name and address after the first few occasions, provided a pen-name is used that will serve for identification.

Having written a news letter to *Workers' Life*, see that the paper is distributed among the workers concerned.

### VIII. WORKER CORRESPONDENTS AS PROPAGANDISTS

A worker correspondent's task is not simply to write plain news. His news should be presented in such a way that its wider bearing on the class struggle is apparent. He should help the workers to understand the political moral of the incidents about which he writes.

To do this effectively is one of the hardest things the worker correspondent must undertake. Inevitably, in drawing the moral, one tends to break out into a sermon. That tendency must be suppressed. One, two or three crisp, pointed phrases should be sufficient to link up the local item with the wider aspects of the case. Unfortunately many writers bury their news in a longer, rambling article.

On the other hand, there is the danger that a worker correspondent may lose himself entirely in the details of his news item and forget to fit it into the background of the general struggle.

It is necessary, especially in Great Britain, to break down the parochialism of the workers. Tradition — and the capitalist press — still makes the majority of workers think that what happens in other countries or even in other parts of their own country, is little concern of theirs. Many Scottish miners, for instance, do not realise that the operation of a wage cut in Durham vitally affects them. They do not understand that the closing of pits in Scotland, and subsequently a demand for lower wages from the Scottish owners, is due to competition in Durham, where production costs have been lowered by lowering wages.

In the same way few cotton textile workers in Lancashire realise that when the Bombay or Shanghai cotton millowners force lower wages or longer hours on Indian or Chinese cotton workers, it is so much the worse for Lancashire workers, who will be asked, on the plea of competition for India and China, to accept wage-cuts or work longer hours.

It is in order to break down this narrow, self-centred outlook that *Workers' Life* devotes each week considerable space to news items from abroad.

Worker correspondents can themselves assist greatly in this task by drawing attention to these wider issues. For instance, in writing of a "cut" in Poor Relief in a particular locality, the worker correspondent would, if it is applicable, point out that it is a result of the Blanesburgh Act, an Act facilitated by the signatures of three "Labour representatives" to the Blanesburgh Report. Or in another case, the unemployed story might be given as an illustration of how the T.U.C. General Council's attack on the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Move-

ment reacts on the workers. Similarly with other stories—from the factory, workshop, local Labour movement, and so on — a timely reference to the national situation or to conditions in other countries serves to drive home the identity of interests.

### IX. INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

One very important side of the worker correspondents' job is writing to workers in other countries. This is different from writing to the workers' press, since it is a correspondence between groups of workers in different countries who are interested in the same problems. The miners of a pit in Great Britain will be interested to correspond with the miners of a pit in the Don Basin, or in Silesia, or the Saar, Colorado, Broken Hill and so on. It will be the same with railwaymen, engineers, shipbuilders, textile workers, builders, agricultural workers and road transport workers. The letters will not always be for publication, though, where there are factory papers or wall newspapers, extracts at least will be published.

The letters should not be between individual workers, but between groups of workers; if possible, all the workers in a particular trade union branch, factory, shop, mine or depot should take part. The letters, translated if necessary will be passed round between the workers, who will send a collective reply. It is the job of the worker correspondent to gather up the ideas and suggestions of the other workers and combine them into a letter.

The contents of the letter should largely be guided by what the workers in the factory themselves want to say. A useful idea of what other workers want to know can be gauged from the results of a questionnaire sent round to all the worker correspondents in a big province of the U.S.S.R.

(1) *The life and customs of the workers.* The general living conditions, wages, hours, cost of living and prices. Conditions of work, safety appliances or lack of them, holidays, unemployment, unemployment benefits, poor relief.

(2) *Activities of the trade unions.* How are the unions organised? How many are there? Are there many unorganised workers, and why? How do the unions defend the interests of the workers? Are strikes frequent in any particular industry? The attitude of union officials to strikes. Are there many women in the unions? Are the militant members of the union being persecuted (either by the boss or by trade union officials)?

(3) *Women.* The general conditions of life and work of women. Whether they have the same rights as men. The attitude of the Government towards mothers and children. Are women active in the unions? Are there kindergartens for children? How are the children brought up? Do the workers' wives support their husbands in strikes, lock-outs, and in their militant work, or do they try to stop them?

(4) *Youth.* Hours and wages. Age limits. Safety appliances and health safeguards. Night work. Youth organisations.

(5) *The condition of industry and agriculture,* especially technical development. Whether the industry is in a good or bad state.

(6) *The Army, Navy and Air Force.* Conditions

of work, pay, discipline. Are the Services allowed to take part in politics?

(7) *Religion.* What kinds of churches are there? And how much influence have they upon the workers?

Here there are enough questions in answer to which several books might be written. No worker correspondent need suck his pen, thinking of something to say when the ideas of other workers have run dry.

Letters should be addressed to "Intercorr," *Workers' Life*, 29 Euston Road, London, N.W.1, and there should be a covering letter saying to what country and to what kind of workers the letter is intended to be sent.

*Workers' Life* will arrange for the letters to be translated where necessary, and for replies to be forwarded to the group of workers via the worker correspondent.

The organisation of international worker correspondence is one of the finest methods of creating mutual interest and fraternal relations between the workers of different countries, and so helping to secure international working-class unity.

## Bert Hogenkamp

### WORKERS' NEWSREELS IN THE NETHERLANDS (1930-1931)

(Netherlands, 1980)

"Up to this time my experience in *idea* editing had been rather sparse. My earliest experience was some time in 1929 when I was given charge of the film programs for a series of workers' cultural and educational Sunday mornings. On Friday nights we would borrow a number of commercial newsreels. On Saturday we would study the material in the newsreels in relation to the international and national situation of the week, re-edit them with any other footage we happened to have available to us giving them a clear political significance, print new subtitles (the films were still silent) showing relationships between events which newsreel companies never thought of, and which would certainly have shocked them if they had ever seen our uses of their 'innocent' material. For example, we could relate the injustice of an American lynching with the injustice of the Japanese aggression in Manchuria, making a general statement about injustice which we would then localize with a current event in our own country. Previously miscellaneous material was knit together into a new unity, sometimes with the addition of a spoken word on the public address system or some cartoons, photographs or photostats of an editorial from the Dutch conservative press. After our Sunday morning show was finished we would take the film apart again, restore its original form and return it to the newsreel companies who were none the wiser!"

Joris Ivens'

These exercises in *idea* editing, as recalled by Joris Ivens in his autobiography, formed part of the activities of the Dutch Association for Popular Culture (Vereeniging voor Volks Cultuur; VVVC). The newsreels produced by the VVVC in the early thirties were an important attempt to establish a workers' film movement in the Netherlands. By "stealing" images produced by the bourgeoisie and "subverting" them with the aid of the concept of film editing (*montage*), developed by Soviet film makers, it was an attempt to present news from a working-class viewpoint to the Dutch working class. The following article traces the developments (organisational, technological, conceptual and political) that led to the making of the VVVC newsreels, analysing their contents and attempting to explain why they ceased.

### FILM AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

1. Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, Berlin, GDR: Seven Seas, 1969, pp. 96-97.

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After the "invention" of cinematography in 1895 and its establishment as a new form of popular entertainment in the early years of this century, one would have expected the working-class organisations to go for a new medium that offered such excellent possibilities for political propaganda. The contrary was true. The Second International never developed a consistent theoretical position on film. The reactions among socialist organisations ranged from extremely negative to fairly positive. In Switzerland social-democrats proposed a cinema boycott, fearing that this frivolous form of entertainment would keep the workers away from its educational work, i.e. evening classes, socialist libraries, lectures, etc.<sup>2</sup> In the 1910s the Belgian socialist co-operatives started opening their own cinemas. They considered film as a pure commodity to be sold, as long as its content was not overtly anti-socialist. There was never a question of producing one's own films.<sup>3</sup> The British Independent Labour Party used "short cinematograph entertainment" to attract workers and unemployed to a Ramsay MacDonald speech in Southwark, London in 1908<sup>4</sup> and may have done so elsewhere. In Germany a film was even made to support a miners' strike in Saxony in 1912, *Der Bergarbeiterstreik oder der Kampf zum Sieg* (The Miners' Strike or the Struggle for Victory). This must have been the first campaign film ever made.<sup>5</sup> Still, the working-class movement, weakened by its divisions, stood empty-handed during the First World War as cinema was used as a very effective tool by its opponents: in Great Britain, film propaganda capitalised on the aura of "truth" that cinema had for the population in order to convince the British of German atrocities, by means of mostly faked films; in the United States, the well-known comedian Charles Chaplin lent his help to the cause by appearing in war bond films; and in Germany, the film industry was reorganised at the instigation of General Ludenhoff, resulting in the creation of the powerful company UFA. Countries like Denmark, France or Italy were cut off from their export markets and their once-flourishing film industries declined quickly. The US film industry did not let this opportunity slip by, establishing its hegemony on the international film market.

With the publication in 1925 of Willi Münzenberg's pamphlet *Erobert den Film!* (Conquer the Film!) the use of film by the working-class movement entered a new stage. Münzenberg, secretary of the Workers' International Relief (WIR) — known as the Workers' Red Cross — tried to outline a strategy for the use of film by the working-class movements in capitalist countries. He proposed, on the one hand, to seek the backing of the Soviet film industry (this was

2. Willi Münzenberg, "Erobert den Film!" in: Willi Lüdecke, *Der Film in Agitation und Propaganda der revolutionären Arbeiterbewegung 1919-1932*, Berlin: Oberbaumverlag, 1973, p.78.

3. Bert Hogenkamp, "Arbeidersfilm in België 1914-1939", *Skrien* (Amsterdam), 66, July-August 1977, pp. 18-24.

4. *The South London Press*, 7 February 1908, p.2.

5. See: *Zur Theorie und Praxis gewerkschaftlicher Medienarbeit*, Hamburg: MPZ, 1975, pp. 60-61.

6. Willi Münzenberg, *art. cit.*, p.80.

7. *Ibidem*, p. 85.

before Soviet films like *Battleship Potemkin* and *Mother* became world-famous), organise one's own film exhibitions and, if possible, produce one's own films. He tried to analyse film in marxist terms. A negative example was the behaviour of some Leipzig workers who, after seeing an anti-Soviet film shortly after the First World War, stormed the projection room, destroyed the projection equipment and burned the film. Münzenberg compared this act with the destruction of machines during the early period of capitalism. His conclusion: "Only later the proletarians learned that it is no use to destroy the machines, but that it matters much more to conquer the machines and to use them in a way that is profitable to the workers. The same goes today for the film."<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to see how Münzenberg strips the question of all its unnecessary "morality". For him, film is a tool of propaganda just as valuable and useful as newspapers, books or pamphlets: "How good and valuable are the means of agitation and propaganda until now, the spoken and printed word, their success will be even greater when used in connection with and by the modern means, the cinema."<sup>7</sup>

In *Erobert den Film!* Münzenberg pointed out the achievements of the WIR. During the relief campaign for the starving Soviet population in 1921 — the WIR was founded for this purpose, at the instigation of Lenin — the organisation used two films, *Hunger in Sowjet-Russland* (Hunger in Soviet Russia) and *Die Wolga hinunter* (Down the Volga). Later its Russian section, called Mezhrabpom, founded the film production unit Mezhrabpom-Russ, after a merger with the production firm Russ which made possible the continuous production of films. With the Russian feature film *His Call*, Mezhrabpom and the WIR attempted a breakthrough. Although they succeeded in organising film shows in almost all the countries that had a WIR section, reaching millions of workers, recognition only came later with *Battleship Potemkin* and *Mother* (a Mezhrabpom-production). In 1926 Münzenberg helped the German Prometheus Film Company off the ground. Prometheus played a crucial part, not only in introducing Soviet films, such as *Battleship Potemkin*, in Western Europe, but also in producing German proletarian films. With Prometheus the WIR directed itself to the film trade, but another subsidiary, Welt-Film, catered especially to proletarian organisations, in Germany and abroad. Münzenberg's activities left their traces not only on the film front; he was also instrumental in founding a workers' illustrated newspaper the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*, and an organisation of worker-photographers that would feed the paper with photo-material.

### THE NETHERLANDS

In the second half of the 1920s the Dutch cinema was marked by three important events: (1) the establishment of the Nederlandsche Bioscoop Bond (Dutch Cinema Association; NBB) as the powerful, cartel-like organisation of the film trade; (2) film legislation, especially film censorship; and (3) the appearance of an organised counter-movement of the spectators, the Filmliga. These three events had a profound influence on the way Dutch working-class

organisations were going to use film. First of all, the cartel-like character of the NBB prevented the use of normal channels, i.e. the cinemas. When the Film Service of the social-democrat Institute for Workers' Education, (FIVAO) decided to go commercial in 1932, it had to give up all its class distinctions and even accept a neutral name.<sup>8</sup> In 1926 a centralized national film censorship did not yet exist. Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* was shown in most of the big cities in Holland. Various rightwing organizations protested against the exhibition of this Soviet film. Warned of these reactions, the mayors of the four most important Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht) decided on a common policy and banned the showing of *Mother*, the next Soviet film.

The ban on *Mother* led to the foundation of the Filmliga. A group of artists decided to organise a private screening of the film in their club, De Kring, on 13 May 1927. When a nervous police commissioner phoned the Mayor of Amsterdam, the latter gave his permission arguing that the visitors were only some harmless "artists".<sup>9</sup> The organisers of this film show decided to continue and founded the Filmliga, a film society to show films of aesthetic interest to its members in private performances. One of the founding members of the Filmliga was Joris Ivens. He made some experimental films for the Filmliga showings, *De Brug* (The Bridge) and *Regen* (Rain).

### THE ASSOCIATION FOR POPULAR CULTURE (VVVC)

In January 1928 the VVVC was founded with the aim "to facilitate the organisation of film, cabaret and other performances in such a way that undesirable interference from authorities who are not kindly disposed towards us can be limited to a minimum."<sup>10</sup> Although it is clear that the VVVC was set up after the model of the Filmliga, its existence was more connected with the film activities of mass organisations such as the Dutch section of the WIR and of the International Labour Defence (ILD), with whom the VVVC also shared a secretary, the energetic Leo van Lakerveld.

The VVVC can be interpreted as a working-class answer to the film society movement which was at the height of its influence at that time. In the Filmliga journal the founding of the VVVC was in fact spoken of as being an "Arbeiders Filmliga" (a workers' film society)<sup>11</sup>. The French "Amis de Spartacus" (founded in March 1928 and disbanded in December 1928, after the French government forbid uncensored Soviet films to be shown in private performances) was such a workers' film society; as was the German Volksfilmverband (founded in February 1928); the British Federation of Workers' Film

8. See: H.C.M. Michielse, *Socialistische vorming*, Nijmegen: Sun, 1980, p. 169.

9. See: Joris Ivens, *op. cit.*, p. 20; *De Tribune*, 14 May 1927, p. 1.

10. *De Tribune*, 28 January 1928, p. 5.

11. *Filmliga*, 6, February 1928, p. 13.

12. Leo van Lakerveld, conversation with the author in 1978.

Societies (November 1929); and the Danish Foreningen for Filmskultur (1930). In all cases the principle was the same: to use the aura of respectability that surrounded the bourgeois film societies, and the possibilities offered by the legal status of a private society, in order to show films to working-class audiences.

The Dutch section of the Workers' International Relief had been the first working-class organisation in the Netherlands to organise film shows in a systematic way. From January 1925 onwards, faithful to Münzenberg's slogan "conquer the film", it distributed Mezhrabpom productions like *Lenin's Funeral*, *His Call*, *Polikushka* and *The Miracle of Soldier Ivan*. A few months later the International Labour Defence followed their example. And in 1926 the Amsterdam and Rotterdam districts of the Communist Party of Holland (CPH) joined hands with local trade councils to organise special screenings of the *Battleship Potemkin*. While the WIR started with portable projection equipment in workers' halls and local meeting places, it soon turned to cinemas especially hired for the occasion. With the growing repression against Soviet films, directly coupled with — or so it seemed — their increasing popularity, a new strategy was required. The solution was found in an organisation based on the film society model with private membership. Its name was kept rather neutral in order to attract the largest possible number of spectators. One could say that the VVVC tried to create a counter-cinema that was independent of the commercial cinema, but not quite, because it rented its films from commercial film distributors (who made money with Soviet films) and rented its cinemas from commercial owners. Initially the VVVC refused to compromise: it tried to get newsreels on the revolutionary movement shown in the commercial cinemas and it tried to distribute revolutionary films that no commercial distributor would take.

On 11 March 1928 the ILD organised a mass demonstration against the detainment of hundreds of Indonesian freedom fighters in the Digoel concentration camp. A Polygoon newsreel crew filmed the demonstration in a rainy Amsterdam and it was included in a Polygoon newsreel, the most important of its kind in the Netherlands. The ILD obtained a special print of the material to show at its meetings. For Polygoon this was a common practice; it often included shots in its newsreels of demonstrations or special events of social-democrat organisations, in exchange for their acquisition of special prints of this film material. The ILD had neither the "respectability" nor the financial means, however, to continue this kind of barter with Polygoon, as Leo van Lakerveld recalls.<sup>12</sup>

The next step was logical: the ILD had to produce its own films. A subject was easily found. The ILD was campaigning for the relief of poor agricultural workers in the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe. On 26 February 1929 the communist MP Louis de Visser paid a visit to these poverty-stricken areas, even more hit due to an exceptionally harsh winter. Van Lakerveld decided on an extraordinary propaganda effort: the illustrated weekly



*Het Leven* (Life) covered de Visser's visit with a photographer and artist, while ILD-supporter Joris Ivens — who was starting a career as a filmmaker — was asked to film the event. The result — a short film titled *Arm Drenthe* (Poor Drenthe) — was taken over by the VVVC. Through VVVC contacts an Amsterdam cinema decided to programme *Arm Drenthe* for a week, but otherwise the film had to serve its purpose at the special VVVC screenings.<sup>13</sup> An attempt, later in 1929, to distribute two revolutionary German films, *Red Front* and *Bloody May Day*, was a failure from the start: the censorship committee banned both films, which meant that they could only be screened privately, i.e. at the VVVC film shows.<sup>14</sup>

Early in 1930 the VVVC experienced again the constraints of working with commercial film companies. The vast majority of the Soviet films were distributed by FIM-Film. Suddenly, FIM-Film decided to demand a security deposit for the rental of Soviet films and raised its fees skyhigh. In the party daily *De Tribune*, it was suggested that the director of the firm, de Wind, was a supporter of a breakaway communist fraction, headed by Wynkoop. Whether this was true or not — it looks as if the principle "who is not with us, is therefore against us and out to destroy us" was once more applied — it was clear that the VVVC had to look for new ways of working.

#### THE VVVC AS AN UMBRELLA ORGANISATION FOR WORKERS' CULTURE IN THE NETHERLANDS

There were two ways in which the VVVC could extend its activities. It had to try to increase the number of its local sections (so far limited exclusively to Amsterdam), and it had to abandon its narrow base as a workers' film society and pay attention to the other arts as well. In 1930-1931 the VVVC worked hard in both directions. But before it did so, some obstacles had to be removed. The most important point was the relationship between the VVVC — as a mass organization — and the CPH. In *De Tribune* of 29 January 1930 a discussion was published on the functioning of the VVVC in which a party member from an Amsterdam working-class district complained that on two occasions a VVVC film showing was cancelled at the last minute when the party section had especially organized the visit of a group of agricultural workers. In reply, VVVC-secretary van Lakerveld blamed the party secretariat for forcing the VVVC to cancel screenings without any regard for the consequences, financial or otherwise. He warned that it "undermined the carefully built-up work of the VVVC". It seems that the situation cleared up

13. *Arm Drenthe* was lost during the Second World War; references on its making can be found in: *De Tribune*, 28 February 1929, pp. 4-5 and *Het Leven*, 2 March 1929, pp. 273-278; and on its exhibition in: *De Tribune*, 2 March 1929, p. 4 and *Roode Hulp*, 3, 1929 p. 4.

14. *De Tribune*, 28 November 1929, p. 1.

15. For workers' photography in the Netherlands see: Flip Bool and Bert Hogenkamp, "Arbeidersfotografie", in: *Fotografie in Nederland 1920-1940*, The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1979, pp. 44-56.

16. Jac. Smit, "De Agit-Prop Treedt Op", *Links Front*, 4, May 1934, p. 15.

17. *De Tribune*, 27 December 1930, p. 4.

considerably after the Party Congress in February when the CPH adopted a "left turn" and elected a new secretariat. The VVVC played an important part in the new policy of the CPH as it was to be the umbrella organisation for workers' culture in the Netherlands. Unlike Germany, where the IfA (Interessengemeinschaft für Arbeiterkultur; Interest-community for Workers' Culture) had to try to get already-existing organisations under its umbrella, the VVVC had to start from scratch. In this, two people played a crucial part: Leo van Lakerveld as organiser and VVVC secretary, and Joris Ivens because of his expertise in photography and cinematography.

During the 1930-1931 period the VVVC started a photography course, which in turn led to the foundation of the Vereeniging van Arbeidersfotografen (VAF; Association of Workers' Photographers).<sup>15</sup> Ivens was the instructor for the new group and the facilities of his father's photography shop were indispensable. The exhibition "Socialist Art Today" — a comprehensive exhibition of progressive art, with large sections on Germany and the Soviet Union — made a big impression on Dutch artists. The VVVC organised a special excursion to the exhibition for its members. Florrie Rodrigo and her dance group appeared often at the VVVC Sunday mornings. Her agit-prop ballet was a forerunner of the agit-prop theatre that was going to play an important part in the cultural work of the VVVC's successor, VVSU. One of the first agit-prop theatre groups, "Ontwaakt" (Awake), also made its first appearance at a VVVC Sunday morning performance. The omnipresent Ivens had been among their advisors. "With his film ambitions, he brought in speed."<sup>16</sup> But the VVVC film collective played the most important part; and their newsreels were highly appreciated: "[they] will render an excellent service in extending this mass organisation over the whole country."<sup>17</sup>

Which is what happened. In January 1931 it claimed to have 6,000 members. It had started sections in Apeldoorn, Arnhem, Groningen, Haarlem, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Lemmer and Utrecht, but with Rotterdam conspicuously absent. No longer could *De Tribune* act as an organ for the VVVC. In January 1931 it started its own illustrated periodical *De Sovjet-Vriend* (The Soviet Friend), in which information about the association's activities was mixed with brief political statements and with short stories.

#### THE VVVC NEWSREELS

The first VVVC newsreel was shown on 28 September 1930 in the Cinema Royal, Amsterdam. *De Tribune* wrote:

The VVVC newsreel — which turned out to be nothing other than a common bourgeois newsreel, but for this occasion a bit re-edited and provided with new titles — really hit the nail on the head. It made it clear to those present how such 'topical news on the screen', shown every week in theatres has to be viewed. It was wittily accompanied by Bern Drukker with improvised organ-playing.

In contrast to subsequent, numbered, newsreels there is no trace of this newsreel. One can assume that

it had been edited the way Ivens has described above, then restored to its original form and returned to the distributor the next day. The concept of *idea editing* — as Joris Ivens calls it — had been put into practice by a number of Soviet film makers; Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Vertov, Kuleshov and others, who also devoted many theoretical articles and debates to montage. Dziga Vertov, whom Ivens greatly admired, edited most of his films from footage that had been shot by

other cameramen. But there was a more explicit example from Berlin. At the opening performance of the Volksfilmverband (Popular Association for Film Art) in Berlin on 29 February 1928, the screening of a special newsreel, *Zeitbericht-Zeitgesicht* (News of the Times-Face of the Times) was scheduled but never shown. Despite the fact that all the newsreels from which footage had been taken had been approved for public exhibition, it was banned by the censorship

De Vereeniging  
Voor  
Volks  
Cultuur



heeft het aantal van  
**ZES DUIZEND LEDEN**

bereikt  
Ziehier haar werkorganen  
voor JANUARI

**Apeldoorn** DONDERDAG 22 JANUARI  
's avonds 8 uur, Tempeliers-  
huis, Paschlaan. De films:  
**„DE SOWJET-KOERIER”**  
en nieuw V.V.V.C.-Journaal

Met speciale muzi-  
kale begeleiding.  
Inleider:  
L. v. LAKERVELD

**Haarlem** ZONDAG 25 JANUARI  
's ochtends 10 uur, Gemeentelijke  
Concertzaal, Lange Begijnestraat  
de films:

**„GEVANGENIS”**  
„V.V.V.C.-Journaal”, Sovjet-Unie  
Medewerking van  
**Jean Modern**  
(Revolutionaire liederen op de  
Occarino) - Speciale filmbege-  
leiding met orkest  
Spreker: JOHAN VISSCHER

**Utrecht** ZONDAG 25 JANUARI  
's ochtends 10 uur, in het grootste  
theater van Utrecht. Rembrandt  
Theater, Oude Gracht. De films:  
**TIEN DAGEN DIE  
DE WERELD DEDEN  
WANKELN**  
Nieuw V.V.V.C.-Journaal, Mede-  
werking van den declamator  
**Coen Hissink**  
Speciale muzikale begeleiding

**Groningen** ZONDAG 25 JANUARI  
's ochtends 10 uur in „Grand  
Theater”, Grootte Markt. De  
films:

**„ZIJ DIE VAN DE  
STRAAT LEVEN”**  
**„BLOEDIGE MEI”**  
**„ARM DRENTHE”**  
Medewerking van den be-  
kenden Cabaretier  
**Meier Hamel**

**Amsterdam** ZONDAG 25 JANUARI  
„Tuschinsky”. De films:

**„STORM OVER AZIË”**  
(niet, zooals abusievelijk in  
de circulaire is gemeld „Com-  
mune van Parijs”)

**Prachtig V.V.V.C.-Journaal**  
— (o.a. de begrafenis van Lenin)  
Medewerking van  
**Stetson de Groot's acrobaten**  
met politieke scènes. Speciale  
muzikale begeleiding

**Arnhem** ZONDAG 1 FEBRUARI  
's ochtends 10 uur, Bioscoop-  
Theater, Klarendalscheweg. De  
films:

**„KELLNER VAN HET  
PALAST-HOTEL”**  
**„ROOD FRONT”**  
met speciale begeleiding  
Spreker: L. VAN LAKERVELD

**Voorwaarts!**  
**Werkt mee aan**  
**de V.V.V.C.!**

Advertisement for the film and cultural programs of  
different local VVVC sections throughout the Nether-

lands (Published in *De Tribune*, 21 January 1931).

committee.<sup>18</sup> It was quite clear that the German censor had banned the *idea* expressed through the editing, not the separate shots. Through the writings of Siegfried Kracauer and Bela Balazs, *Zeitbericht-Zeitgesicht* had gained a certain fame, which in turn may have inspired Ivens to do something similar for the VVVC.

Joris Ivens was no stranger to the VVVC, as he had shot the film *Arm Drenthe* in February 1929. Later in that year the Algemeene Nederlandsche Bouwarbeiders Bond (General Dutch Builders Union) had commissioned him to make a film, *Wij Bouwen* (We Are Building), for the Union's 25th anniversary. With excerpts from this film and others Ivens had made a tour through the Soviet Union early in 1930. This trip, and especially the debates with Russian workers about his films, had made an enormous impression on the young filmmaker. After his return, in April 1930, Ivens gave a Sunday morning lecture at the VVVC. Out of these initial contacts grew an organic link: Ivens — from now on mentioned in *De Tribune* as "comrade Joris Ivens" — was involved in almost all the cultural activities of the VVVC during 1930-1931. This meant more than the membership of a single man; Ivens' close collaborators Johnnie Fernhout, Mark Kolthoff, Joop Huisken and others all became involved in VVVC activities.

The involvement of Ivens and his group (called the "Joris Ivens Studio"! ) meant not only skills and ideas, but also equipment. Through his father's photography shop free developing and editing facilities became available, while — as Mark Kolthoff recalls<sup>19</sup> — undeveloped raw film left over from the shooting of the Philips and Zuiderzee films on which Ivens was working at that time, were carefully saved and in the dark were glued together, put in a cassette and later used to shoot material for the VVVC newsreels.

The contacts with Polygoon — the most important Dutch newsreel company, which included a photo agency — were left to Leo van Lakerveld. As ILD secretary he had already been in touch with Polygoon in 1928 and he knew their weak spot; photos from the Soviet Union. In exchange for stills from the Soviet Union, he could obtain older Polygoon newsreels. Van Lakerveld had contacts in Germany too, with Weltfilm. Despite these film sources, the first numbered VVVC newsreel was for the most part composed of images "shot personally by one of the friends of the VVVC in the Soviet Union"<sup>20</sup>, in other words Joris Ivens.

VVVC newsreel No. 1 was titled *Film Jottings from the Soviet Union*. It was premiered on 16 November 1930 in Amsterdam. *De Tribune* commented:

18. See the opening speech by writer Heinrich Mann in *Film und Volk*, 1, 2, p.4.

19. Mark Kolthoff, in conversation with the author and Mike Quee, 20 November 1979, published in *Skrien*, 92-93, Winter 1979/80, pp. 34-37.

20. *De Tribune*, 17 November 1930, p.1.

21. *Ibidem*.

22. *De Tribune*, 27 December 1930, p.4.

23. *De Tribune*, 28 January 1931, p. 4.

24. *Ibidem*.

a fine choice of images from the Southern part of the Soviet Union, from Baku, Kharkov, Kiev, elucidated by some spoken texts and parts of an older film in which we see Lenin and Stalin 'in action', and later a beautiful series of images showing how the Russian comrades celebrate their October.<sup>21</sup>

This newsreel was part of a programme that featured Eisenstein's *October* as the main attraction.

The second VVVC newsreel, *Demonstratie van proletarische solidariteit* (Demonstration of Proletarian Solidarity), was premiered on Boxing Day, 26 December 1930 in two (!) Amsterdam cinemas. *De Tribune* wrote:

The VVVC newsreel, now a regular attraction of the Sunday-mornings of the big cultural organisation, was devoted this time to the work of the ILD. In the limelight was a series of images shot by the VVVC film collective of a canvassing and collection-tour in the Amsterdam Jordaan [a working-class district; B.H.] and worked up and edited with an older series of images. In this way the VVVC is gradually building up an archive of newsreels of its own, that will render an excellent service in extending this mass-organisation over the whole country.<sup>22</sup>

This remark and the fact that the VVVC newsreels 1 and 2 were scheduled for screenings all over the Netherlands, contradict Ivens' statement that the newsreels had to be taken apart after every screening. It seems more likely that Polygoon turned a blind eye to the VVVC use of its newsreels.

VVVC newsreel No. 3 was released in January 1931, as a part of the "Triple L" (Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg) campaign. In the words of *De Tribune*: "This newsreel has been composed by a masterhand, it is more eloquent than the best of our writers or speakers, it is an uncommon force in recruiting for the Party of Lenin, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg!"<sup>23</sup> The new VVVC monthly, *De Sovjet-Vriend* summed up the contents of this newsreel: "The Terror in Europe and America; Life, Work and Death of Lenin; the Construction in the Soviet Union." The newsreel was the occasion for a rave review in *De Tribune*:

The VVVC newsreel, edited by the VVVC film collective, left a really unforgettable impression behind — it showed us in a series of images that was just as varied as it was exciting, both the sad acts of heroism of the police in Haarlem against protesting unemployed, as the terror against the working-class in other countries, especially in Germany and in America. It showed Vladimir Ilitch, the great champion for our life, and also it revealed the nameless grief of the bolchevik leaders who are normally hard as steel, while they carry our dead comrade to his grave amidst the proletarian legions. As soon as we have seen the old guard of the bolsheviks, we witness the solemn oath of the younger generation, confirming that it will continue the work of its parents.... And then... smoking factory-chimneys, machines, flywheels in their mighty rotation, the triumphant song of the construction, the more and more powerfully reviving reality of the Socialism in our Soviet Union!...<sup>24</sup>

Newsreel No. 4 which premiered on 15 February 1931 in Amsterdam was titled *Het Gezicht van Twee Werelden* (The Face of Two Worlds). It compared the German social-democrat "revolution" with the Russian bolchevik one. It can be assumed that this newsreel had been imported in its entirety from

Germany.

VVVC newsreel No. 5, titled *De Interventie is nabij* (Intervention is Near), was undoubtedly the most ambitious in the series. Its two reels showed:

The powers that drive to the war; the terror throughout the world; the demonstration of the ILD on March 8 and the behaviour of the police on the Leidscheplein; Fascism (Mussolini, Hitler, the Pope); the counter-revolution gas attack; the construction in the Soviet Union; the Red Army on guard.<sup>25</sup>

This was the last of the VVVC newsreels. In March the association changed its name to Vereeniging van Vrienden der Sovjet-Unie (VVSU; Association of Friends of the Soviet Union). On the first Sunday morning screening in Amsterdam organised by the VVSU under its new name, a newsreel was shown... a newsreel made in the Soviet Union! Apart from the newsreels, the VVVC film collective, responsible for the October 1930 short propaganda film *Breken en Bouwen* (To Break and To Build; on the alterations to the *De Tribune* premises by party members in their spare time), was mentioned only one more time. In the summer 1931 it filmed, as the VVSU film collective, a national meeting of the VVSU and ILD in Amersfoort. This newsreel, showing among others, agit-prop theatre groups from Amsterdam and Arnhem, was premiered on a Sunday in Amsterdam. It was the last film of the VVVC film collective.

## NEWS AND NEWSREELS

The VVVC newsreels filled a long-standing need for news after abortive attempts to obtain a place in the commercial newsreels (the 1928 ILD demonstration) and to produce news films (*Arm Drenthe*, 1929) for exhibition in commercial cinemas. In this respect the VVVC followed the example of other workers' film societies that had produced their own newsreels: the German Volksfilmverband with its one issue of *Zeitbericht-Zeitgesicht* (1928); the Federation of Workers' Film Societies in the United Kingdom with *Workers' Topical News* (three issues, 1930-31). The first workers' film collectives that came into existence at that time, the American Film & Photo League and the Japanese Prokino; were just as interested in the source of news. Their newsreels, *Workers' Newsreel* and *Prokino-Newsreel*, were entirely composed of footage shot by the collectives themselves. Contemporary left film critics and theoreticians explained this by arguing that the stupidity of the commercial newsreels had to be exposed and that of all the different film forms the newsreel was most suitable as it was relatively easy to produce. These workers' newsreels could perfectly complement the exhibition of a Soviet feature film.

The VVVC newsreels were unique in so far as they combined, the "old with the new", to paraphrase the title of Eisenstein's film. Whereas the other workers' newsreels (with the exception of *Zeitbericht-Zeitgesicht*, which was banned) concentrated on simply capturing reality (in this case not the reality of the capitalist class, but that of the working

25. *De Tribune*, 20 March 1931, p. 6.

26. Joris Ivens, conversation with the author in 1979.

class), the VVVC newsreels tried to present an analysis of reality by juxtaposing images shot by the VVVC collective itself with images from the commercial newsreels and by confronting their different levels of meaning with each other. If we look at the contents of the 5 issues we see the importance of the Soviet Union. Although three Dutch sequences were included (an ILD canvassing campaign in an Amsterdam working-class district (No. 2), an unemployment demonstration in Haarlem (No. 3), and an ILD demonstration in Amsterdam (No. 5)), this is not strange as the VVVC was closely linked to the ILD through Leo van Lakerveld. However, it is quite obvious that the VVVC newsreels failed to report the trade-union opposition activities in the Netherlands. There is no direct proof, but one can assume that the spectators recognized and identified with the three Dutch items. However, in the reports in *De Tribune* written by worker-correspondents, one can only find: "The appearance on the screen of Stalin was greeted with thunderous applause and the Red Army was received with the International and shouts of Red Front", "Stalin was greeted with applause and ... elicited from those present spontaneous cheers". In an anecdote Joris Ivens confirms this impression: "At that time photos of Lenin and Stalin were very rare. Now I noticed every time one of these newsreels was returned the sequence with Lenin or Stalin had become a little shorter. Finally they simply jumped on and off the screen. Such was the people's interest; they simply took the frames out."<sup>26</sup>

The VVVC newsreels cannot be studied without taking the overall work of the VVVC into consideration. The VVVC newsreels were screened at private performances in rented cinemas with a Soviet film as the feature. The Amsterdam section had undoubtedly the most comprehensive programme, with singing, dancing and readings, but the other sections also had special programmes. The introduction, spoken by a VVVC official, or the spoken commentary to the newsreel was considered to be of prime importance to educate the spectators. The VVVC organ, *De Sovjet-Vriend*, also tried to combine entertainment with information. With the VVVC membership amounting to some 7,000 or 8,000 in the spring 1931, one can assume that each issue of the VVVC newsreel was seen by an average 4,000 to 5,000 people. In this, the VVVC audience clearly outnumbered that of the CPH. Nevertheless, the VVVC had a limited political margin of manoeuvre. It is difficult to see the change in the spring 1931 as being simply a change in name; rather it was a change in emphasis; from the establishment of a Dutch workers' culture, to the dissemination of Soviet culture in the Netherlands. This change, and not so much the departure of Joris Ivens to the Soviet Union, may have been responsible for the demise of the VVVC newsreel. But there is one other factor we have not taken into consideration so far, the technological development of the cinema in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was the period of the advent of sound film on the one hand, with its reinforcement of monopoly tendencies, and on the other hand, the growing orientation of the producers of film equipment towards the amateur market, the so called home-movie maker. This contradiction — the

gradual closing off of the commercial market and the growing expansion of the amateur market — was a situation difficult to grasp. In 1934 the party cultural official Jef Last even argued against the use of 9.5mm or 16mm film.<sup>27</sup> Due to this opposition a newly-founded workers' film collective disappeared without even making a single film.<sup>28</sup>

## NEWS, IDEAS AND EDITING

How can we summarize the experience of the VVVC newsreels? First, it can be seen as the result of many experiences in the use of film for political propaganda, but especially as effected by Münzenberg's concepts which were put into practice. After insuring the private exhibition of Soviet films from the attacks of the censorship committee, it seems natural that the VVVC concentrated on the production of its own newsreels, as did similar organizations abroad. In doing so, it made optimal use of its resources: (1) the organizational framework of the VVVC, with its local sections and regular film showings; (2) the presence of Joris Ivens as an experienced film editor, who also had access to the means of production (cameras, raw film, editing facilities); and (3) access to the Polygon newsreels through Leo van Lakerveld. However, it was the concept of *idea* editing developed in the Soviet Union which was needed to make a coherent newsreel out of these disparate elements. Although one can attribute the disappearance of the VVVC newsreels to Joris Ivens' departure to the Soviet Union, it seems more accurate to take political factors (the change from the VVVC to the VVSU) and socio-economic factors (sound film and the growing amateur film market) as the principal reasons. The Communist Party had difficulty adapting itself to this new situation. Thus, Arfots (the Workers' Photographers) experienced a similar fate at the end of 1932 with the disappearance of their illustrated magazine *Afweerfront*.<sup>29</sup>

27. The debate for and against the small film format took place in the party's cultural magazine *Links Front* (Left Front) in 1934. It has been reprinted in: *Skrien*, 64, April 1977, pp. 28-30, with comments by Tinus Heijmans (pp. 26-27) and Bert Hogenkamp (pp. 27-28).

28. See: Bert Hogenkamp, "Terugblik op Land in Zicht", *Skrien*, 67, September 1977, pp. 36-38.

29. *Afweerfront* was an attempt to create a Dutch equivalent to the German *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (*AIZ*). After 11 issues (including a double-issue, No. 8-9), *AF* had to stop appearing as an illustrated magazine. Its aim — a workers' illustrated printed on a rotary press — was never realised, due to financial reasons. In order to look as much as possible like the famous *AIZ*, *AF* was printed in a copper-colored ink!

## Guilia Barone Armando Petrucci POPULAR LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIES FOR THE PEOPLE (Italy, 1976)

Popular libraries sprang up in Italy in the middle of the nineteenth century with the purpose of giving the mass of illiterate or semi-illiterate Italians a "taste" for literature and to accustom them to reading. Naturally, these libraries reflected to a great extent the ambiguity innate in the founders' conception of "people", as well as the moralistic and educational functions which they were anxious to confer on this first attempt at "culturalization".

Considering the nature of the books which they wanted to put into circulation and the message which these books were to convey, we must infer that by "popular library" they meant a library designed for an uncultured public, incapable of critical thinking, whom they wished to "instruct" through the reading of texts appropriate to their limited cultural capacities and whom they would thus keep in a state of profound intellectual, cultural and, consequently, political inferiority.

It is for this reason that the term "popular library" — which had already been harshly contested at the beginning of the twentieth century by Ettore Fabietti, who was one of the most active promoters of "popular" libraries — appears by this time to have passed into oblivion once and for all, to be replaced by "public library" (*biblioteca pubblica*) or "libraries for all" (in contrast to the large libraries with specialist collections and restricted entrance). The term "*biblioteca pubblica*" was a translation of the English "public library" which brought to mind a new and more "democratic" concept of the library's function; in short, a type of library which had always been extolled, but never actually realised in Italy.

As we have said, the first popular libraries were founded at the time of the Unification; in fact the first one was started by Antonio Bruni at Prato and dates back to 1861, the very year in which Italy was declared a Kingdom. One can easily see how this new type of library was part and parcel of the desperate attempt to "create Italians" which dominated the efforts of the political unifiers of our country. But these libraries were an unmitigated failure for a number of reasons: firstly, they sprang from a narrow and outmoded concept of popular culture; secondly, they had only very meagre funds at their disposal; and

This text was first published as a chapter in the authors' *Primo: Non leggere (Biblioteche e pubblica lettura in Italia dal 1861 di nostri giorni)*; Milan: Mazzotta, 1976. It was translated from the Italian by Diana Hosker. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

thirdly, they were incapable of catering for the actual needs of their potential public.

The case of the libraries founded by Bruni provides us with an example. Bruni, who has rightly been called "the true apostle of popular libraries", was a schoolmaster in a teachers' training college and was genuinely interested in pedagogic problems. In his view, a library could be started by an association of promoters—readers aided by a workers' society or with funds from a Town Council. In any case, however, the library was to be a circulating one (that is to say, public reading rooms were not envisaged) and the books would be lent only to members, who would pay a small monthly sum (his reasoning being that people have more respect for things which they partially own). However, the reading of periodicals was to be permitted on the library premises.

Bruni's programme was simple; it was a question of "procuring all current and recent publications of useful and interesting reading matter which had come out in Italy, excluding any text which was contrary to the tenets of the State religion and good morals." The limits of such a policy are immediately apparent, likewise its unswerving "conformism" and deference to religion.

Since the aim was to attract a non-homogenous mass of readers, with a variety of interests, the library was to be stocked with bibliographic material covering all types of subjects: economics, history, geography, literature, in order to form the basis of a "culture which was to be complete and multilateral, but at the same time popularized and easily accessible."

Bruni's good intentions are indisputable. He seriously intended to provide his fellow citizens with spiritual nourishment for the good of their immortal soul which is "the most sacred sign of his [man's] nobility and greatness". He wanted to appeal to mankind's common estate, rising above differences of social condition, of life, of interests — what we call "class" differences — since "the basis of education consists in man's nature and not his profession... God created man before he created the worker".

It seems that Bruni shrank from the idea of transforming the library into a reading room because he feared that this would have compelled him to conform to "ends which were purely for scientific purposes or which stemmed from idle curiosity or even from unwholesome pleasure", and the library would thus have failed to fulfill "its specific and intransgressible function of educating the people".

It is symptomatic of a certain Italian provincialism that the reading of novels, even those recommended by one of Bruni's closest collaborators, was only with the utmost of caution extended to encompass foreign works; French novels seemed to be particularly pernicious to the spiritual welfare (this was at the time of the trial of *Madame Bovary*!). Consequently, the novels were largely limited to those of Italian authors ranging from Manzoni and D'Azeglio to a host of highly obscure and long-since forgotten prose-writers of that era.

Despite the limitations of Bruni's approach, or perhaps because of these limitations, his attempts were hailed in Italy and even abroad with great enthusiasm and gained the approval of many very

important representatives of the Italian cultural and political scene; Quintino Sella, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Michele Amari, il Tommaseo, le Viessieux and the publisher, Pomba. But, passing from public eulogy to the real situation, it is not difficult to evaluate the extremely limited nature of Bruni's success. In 1866 there were 150 members of the Prato library with 1,500 volumes at their disposal; three years later, the membership had increased to some 200 whilst the number of books had risen to 4,000. It is true that these 200 pioneers were a relatively active group, reading on average — presupposing that they did not just take the books out on loan — 12 books a year (2,399 books were lent out in 1868). In any case, the authorities did nothing to encourage the venture, which had, nonetheless, imitators in 32 Italian cities, so that, by 1908, of the 405 popular libraries in existence in Italy only 133 had been founded by the Town Councils.

The reasons for the failure of the libraries have been clearly expounded by Giuseppe Fumagalli: charitable institutions rather than a public service, these collections of books were

constituted for the main part of books which had been picked up at random, from the poorly-stocked shelves of the libraries of suppressed convents or else donated by people clearing out their houses who wanted to be thought of as generous benefactors at a minimum of cost. Moreover, the collections were generally entrusted to incompetent and unenthusiastic staff... [on account of which] ...the libraries had a short and difficult existence.

Nothing came of a similar project, characterised by an extreme conservatism, which was launched by Desiderio Chilovi in 1901 for the purpose of increasing the number of libraries in rural areas.

Although provisions for the permanent education of those living in the towns were problematical, these people, workers or clerks, seemed positively privileged in comparison with the peasants who were completely left to their own devices and deprived of any sort of culture from the point when they left school at 9-10 years of age, that is, if they had ever attended school in the first place. Having learnt, as Chilovi writes, only the purely technical aspect of reading, but not having developed

a taste for literature [the youth] has no idea of the pleasurable aspects of studying; nor does he have any faith in, nor even a vague conception of the merits and the moral and material advantages which can be derived from reading and studying.

In other words, the children of the Italian peasantry, within the space of a few years, were once again destined to illiteracy.

As we have already said, the experiences of other countries had exerted an important influence on all the young librarians of the so-called "fortunate spring". Chilovi was no exception; he was mindful of American achievements in the field of reading promotion, both in the towns and in the countryside, and even in those seemingly insurmountable regions, the areas of pioneer expansion.

Naturally, the instructive aim was always foremost:

Books... should provide a source of pleasurable recreation and should always have an instructive and moral

purpose; they should give the reader the desired notions... in good narratives the reader can discover an abundance of noble actions, unselfish ideas and examples of domestic and civil virtue worthy of imitation.

But, together with a generic morality, Chilovi stressed the importance of culture as a value which could contribute to forming a "national cement":

A more widespread culture, whilst increasing the common good, should also arouse a national spirit, which, in its turn, contributes to the safety and political force of a State.

However, he also had another preoccupation which we might consider uppermost in his mind; namely that of ignoring the fact that books can open new and revolutionary horizons:

Any book which might incite violence must be banned... one must exclude all those [books] which, by virtue of transporting the reader to a world too remote from his own experience, might cause him to feel aversion for his own modest station in life.

And Chilovi sees opportunely-chosen books as a good "political" weapon with which to combat the ominous influence of the "extremist" parties, who, up until then, had been the sole promoters of reading for their followers. Thus, they were to be fought against in order to prevent "bad" literature from causing a reoccurrence of unpleasant incidents like the uprisings in Milan in 1898 and regicide (!).

But the educators and librarians were not the only ones at the end of the nineteenth century to tackle the problem of reading or, more generally, culture for the "popular" masses.

For instance, the founders of the Florentine association "Pro Cultura" (1898) were, for example, a doctor, an architect and a naturalist. These "enlightened" members of the bourgeoisie intended to

give lectures with accompanying slides which would not only entertain the audience, but would also help to spread modern thinking amongst as many people as possible.

They were brave enough to open the lecture-rooms to the workers, who thus had access, if only on Sundays, to the very same premises, which, every Wednesday evening were occupied by the members of the association who "constituted the most select body of citizens". There were also those of a more timorous nature who suggested "a guardian angel" in some shape or form should be present during these lectures, even if dressed in bourgeois clothes".

But, if we look more closely, we find that this supposedly disinterested concern for popular culture was masking, and not very skilfully at that, a genuine fear of emerging socialism.

Consequently, when it was a question of finding the funds to set up a popular library (which never had more than 6,000 volumes in its possession — and we have no idea of their value as opposed to a stock of at least 12,000 slides) they appealed to Florentine industrialists and suggested that they support the "Pro Cultura" in order to counteract potential subversion. It was Bellincioni, one of the founder members who related an interview of the following type:

Although I could see that an industrialist was not necessarily in a position to appreciate the advantages of

culture, I could not, however, understand why, at a time when socialism was threatening to destroy the people's finest patriotic and civil sentiments, these same industrialists were incapable of realizing that it was in their best interests for their employees to find a hearty welcome at the "Pro Cultura" after work was over for the day. The "Pro Cultura" was manned by young people with humanitarian ideals, unselfishly intent upon introducing the workers to the pleasures to be had from the appreciation of aesthetic beauty and from learning about the marvels of science.

However, none of the initiatives of which we have spoken achieved any success worth mentioning. Nevertheless, at this time, Italy was just beginning to emerge from the murky depths of illiteracy, particularly in those areas with a high rate of immigration. Between 1861 and 1911 the number of illiterates in Piedmont fell from 54 per 100 inhabitants to 11 per 100, in Latium from 68 to 33 in a 100, whilst in the agricultural areas in the South and in the islands the illiterates were still in the great majority (58% in Sardinia and more than 70% in Calabria). Only when they came into contact with more civilized surroundings, the towns of the industrial triangle for example, or better still, by emigrating to countries like America where the propagation of culture was one of the "national" values, did the illiterate Italian proletariat realize the immense advantages which might accrue to them if they too became cultured. The acquisition of culture, which had hitherto been monopolized by the bourgeoisie, could enable the proletariat to rise in society and give its members a greater awareness of their own rights. And so the workers, tired of waiting for the State to intervene (assistance from this quarter was clearly not forthcoming), banded together and paid out of their own pockets to open schools to spare their children, younger brothers and sisters and grandchildren from the ignorance to which they seemed destined.

"They leave here as animals and come back as civilised men", pronounced the director of a peasant's association in the South of his compatriots who returned to their home town as educated men. This lapidary phrase was the worst type of condemnation that could be pronounced in the confrontation with the post-unification ruling class.

It is in this framework of "self-education," in this search for the means of entering the "bourgeois" culture, that a new class-consciousness aroused the mass of Italian workers; no doubt this new awareness contributed to the great success obtained by the popular libraries sponsored by workers' organizations.

The real history of popular libraries begins in Milan in 1903. In this big northern city, in the year 1867, a society for the creation of popular libraries had founded a library. However, this library was little frequented and soon lost its prestige and its readers, partly due to the Town Council (who transferred the library premises several times) and eventually became overrun by "cobwebs and mould". But despite the inauspicious ending of the this first library, another movement was started in 1904, thanks to the joint forces of the Humanitarian Society (formed for the purpose of "alleviating the unemployment situation and to help the poor to help themselves"), the Popular University, the Trade Union Council, the

old society for the promotion of popular libraries, and the valuable support of Filippo Turati, who became the first president. This movement was known as the Consortium of Popular Libraries and in 1908 gave rise to the Italian Federation of Popular Libraries which survived thanks to financial aid from the Town Council, the Cassa di Risparmio [Savings Bank] and the Chamber of Commerce.

If we have given 1903 as the starting-point of the new movement it is because the *Report-Project For the Institution of A Consortium of Popular Libraries [Relazione-progetto per l'istituzione di un consorzio per le biblioteche popolari]*, edited by A. Osimo and F. Pagliari, for the third section of the Humanitarian Society was issued in this year. This long document, which is essentially a brief history of popular libraries in the western world, helps shed light on the real factors which were at the root of the success of the new type of libraries for the people.

On the one hand, from the utilitarian, production point of view, the advantages of having a more cultured working class were stressed ("in order to produce a satisfactory quantity and quality of goods, one must first concentrate upon moulding the worker's character") in addition to the "mollifying" value of culture in the field of social relations ("the industrialists acknowledge the fact that employer-employee relations are less tense and problematical when the workers are better educated"). On the other hand, they recognized the political value of an all-round education during this period of rapid economic and social expansion:

it is more important than ever that the working class should play their part in the new order brought about by social evolution. In fact the workers are playing an increasingly important role in the production and distribution of wealth. It is imperative... that the struggles of the workers should not be characterized by the foolhardy behaviour and angry outbursts of an uneducated mass, incapable of understanding the real situation.

Despite these proclamations, the main lines along which Ettore Fabietti, the great animator of Italian popular libraries, ran the new organization remained faithful to the moral requirements of "spiritual elevation". So, for Fabietti too, the primary aim for promoting reading was an instructive one:

since the general public, particularly in Italy, does not go out of its way to find books and does not show any particular need for literature, the book must reach out the reader and must gradually instill in him a love of books.... In the public library the reader should find not only a large selection of practical texts, but also reading matter to enrich his spiritual life.

Because of their instructive and edifying function, books should be available everywhere: in prisons, in hotels, in the ships which carry the emigrants over the ocean, since

the library is like a burning hearth, the receptacle of noble sentiments and elevated thoughts in the midst of men saddened by the struggle for existence, deprived of joyous moments and plagued by ill-fortune.

In his popular library, Fabietti intended to give "priority to useful publications" in order to supple-

ment a mere three years of compulsory State education which was often ignored altogether in the South and in rural areas.

Because of his fear of falling into the trap of confessionalism, which had been one of the principle causes of the failure of the parochial libraries, in which one could find only "the lives of saints and fantasy adventure stories" and from which "even very popular books by De Amicis were strictly banned", Fabietti wanted his popular libraries to be completely apolitical:

The popular library cannot belong to a political party, nor serve a philosophical or religious credo; because a commitment of this kind alters the function of the library and leads to sterility.

The initiative of the Milanese Consortium had a great success right from the start. In 1903-04 there were four local libraries in operation which numbered, in the course of only eight months, no less than 5,000 readers and 14,000 volumes. By the end of 1904 the number of books had risen to 17,635 and this figure doubled again in the space of only four years. The number of books loaned out was 60,000 in 1904 and 204,641 in 1908. There were so many imitators in Lombardy that the Consortium had to set up a special office, destined to become, a few years later, an autonomous body, the Union of Popular Libraries of the Province of Milan.

There are two fundamental reasons for the rapid spreading of the new popular libraries. Firstly, it was clear by now, that those masses which they wanted to attract and to inspire with enthusiasm for reading could not, and would not be satisfied with literary rejects or with the left-overs from the "real" libraries, because, as Fabietti writes,

it has been proved that the people do not want to be put on a special diet, they prefer to read books which have been written for everyone.

The second reason is, in fact, a corollary of the first and lies in the trust which the "people" felt immediately and instinctively for these libraries, which had so earnestly been desired by Filippo Turati, one of the fathers of socialism. Moreover, the libraries were organized by Ettore Fabietti, a self-educated man, whom the Milanese workers were able to treat as "one of them", rather than the intellectual bourgeois, distributor of the word for the chosen few. Probably many of these same books were being collected in vain by the industrialists for the factory libraries, because, as one reads in the *Report of the Humanitarian Society [Relazione-Progetto dell'Umanitaria]*: "the workers feared that these libraries were run in a tendentious way"; and consequently, they devoured the books in the reading rooms of the popular libraries during the few hours of the week when they were not working.

The strengths and weaknesses of the popular libraries were, in reality, connected to a very complex cultural problem, of which public reading habits played only a small part. Their real merit lies in the fact that they satisfied a confused and indifferentiated thirst for knowledge on the part of the workers and the petit-bourgeoisie in the Italian towns. As a result of these libraries, hundreds and thousands of

"potential readers" finally formed the habit of reading; people whom the big government libraries had always rejected or worse still, ignored. But, because they were isolated, largely unsupervised and did not form part of a wider programme of "culturization" from above, or that of an "alternative culture", these libraries ended by supplying their readers with only the most accessible works of world literary output; and their great historical limitation lies in this.

Although they had been founded with the definite aim of furthering the permanent education of adults who did not want to lapse back into illiteracy, but who wanted to better themselves and to reach a higher professional and cultural level, the popular libraries ended by providing their readers with little more than the opportunity of an "honest diversion". One had only to consider the following percentages to verify this: of 5,000 volumes in Fabietti's model library at least 1,000 (20%) were to consist of *light reading*, 600 (12%) of *literary texts*, whilst there were to be only 400 (8%) scientific texts and 300 (6%) devoted to skills of a useful nature.

The spectacular success of the Milanese initiative led many private individuals, motivated by the best of intentions, to create similar libraries, but naturally these did not have the same results as their model. A central Consortium for libraries was first set up in Ferrara and then in Bologna (in 1906). The Consortium was organized by Clara Cavalieri Archivolti, who was in charge of the creation of school libraries throughout Italy. In Turin, in that same year, a Consortium for libraries was set up with the intention of making books available not only in schools, but also in factories, barracks and workers' societies. This consortium distributed around 200,000 volumes in the 16 years of its existence.

But most of all, Fabietti deserves the highest praise for the fact that, despite the Fascists' campaign against popular libraries, which led to the end of their existence as autonomous entities in 1932, it was nonetheless possible to read eight years later in *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia* (one of the magazines that was most "in line" with Mussolini's Italy) that:

One must acknowledge that this cultural and popular library organization succeeded, albeit with a spirit which we are now forced to condemn, in introducing many of the working classes to culture, and that they did this in a sincere and enthusiastic way.

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## Bertolt Brecht

### RADIO AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION: A TALK OF THE FUNCTION OF RADIO

(Germany, 1930)

Our social order, which is an anarchic one — if one can imagine its anarchy of orders, that is to say a mechanical and uncorrelated confusion of complexes of public life, which are in themselves highly organised — our social order, which is anarchic in this sense, makes it possible for inventions to be made and developed which must first conquer a market, demonstrate their reason for existing: in short, inventions which have not been commissioned. Thus at a certain point in time technology was far enough advanced to produce radio while society was not sufficiently advanced to take it up. It was not the public that waited for radio but radio that waited for a public; to define the situation of radio more accurately, raw material was not waiting for methods of production based on social needs but means of production were looking anxiously for raw material. *It was suddenly possible to say everything to everybody but, thinking about it, there was nothing to say.* And who was 'everybody'? To begin with, the answer was not to think about it. One looked around to discover where something was being said to someone and attempted to muscle in purely and simply as a competitor and to say no matter what to no matter whom. That was radio in its first phase as a substitute. As a substitute for the theatre, for the opera, for concerts, for lectures, for café music, for the local columns of the press and so on.

From the beginning radio imitated almost all the existing institutions that had anything to do with the diffusion of whatever could be spoken or sung. The result was an inescapable profusion and confusion in the tower of Babel. In this acoustic department store you could learn in English how to keep chickens to the Pilgrim's Chorus from *Tannhäuser*; and the lesson was as cheap as tap-water. This was the golden childhood of our patient. I do not know whether it is over yet or not, but if it is, then this youngster, who did not have to produce any qualifications in order to be born, will at least have to look around later on for an *aim in life*. In the same way it is only in riper years, when they have lost their innocence, that people ask

This text was written in 1930 and was published in the author's *Gesammelte Werke: Band 18. Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst*, Frankfurt Am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood and first published in English in *Screen* (London), XX, 3/4, Winter 1979/80, where it was prefaced by an article on Brecht and the radio by the translator. Copyright in the translation Stefan S. Brecht 1980. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

themselves why really they are on this earth.

As far as radio's aim in life is concerned, it cannot in my opinion consist in merely embellishing public life. It is not merely that it has shown little aptitude for doing so; unfortunately our public life also shows little aptitude for being embellished. I have nothing against sets being installed in shelters for the unemployed and in prisons (it is obviously thought that in this way the life-span of these institutions can be cheaply prolonged) but it cannot be the chief task of radio to install receivers underneath the arches even if it is a nice gesture to provide those who wish to spend their nights there with the minimum: namely, a performance of *The Mastersingers*. This is a case where tact is needed. Nor does radio, in my opinion, suffice as a method of making the home cosy and family life possible again so we can cheerfully leave aside the question whether what it cannot achieve is in any case desirable. But quite apart from its dubious function (to offer a lot is to offer no one anything), radio is one-sided when it should have two sides. It is a pure instrument of distribution; it merely hands things out.

And now to be positive, that is to say, to turn to the positive side of radio, here is a proposal to give radio a new function: Radio should be converted from a distribution system to a communication system. Radio could be the most wonderful public communication system imaginable, a gigantic system of channels — could be, that is, if it were capable not only of transmitting but of receiving, of making the listener not only hear but also speak, not of isolating him but of connecting him. This means that radio would have to give up being a purveyor and organise the listener as purveyor. That is why it is extremely positive when radio attempts to give public affairs a truly public nature. Our government needs the activities of radio as much as the legal system does. Whenever the government or the legal system oppose such activity on the part of radio then they are afraid and adapted only to the days before the invention of radio — if not before the invention of gun-powder. I have no more ideas than you have of, say, the duties of the Prime Minister; it is the job of radio to make them clear to me; but it is one of the duties of the highest official in the state to report to the nation by means of radio on his actions and the reasons for them. The task of radio is not exhausted, however, by the relaying of these reports. It must, in addition, organise the demand for reports — that is to say, transform the reports of our rulers into answers to the questions of the ruled. Radio must make this exchange possible. It alone can organise the great discussion between industry and consumers about the standardisation of objects of daily use, the debates over the rise in the price of bread, the disputes in local government. If you should think this is utopian then I would ask you to consider why it is utopian.

But whatever radio undertakes it must endeavour to combat that *inconsequentiality* which makes nearly all our public institutions so laughable.

We have an inconsequential literature, which not only takes pains to have no consequences itself but goes to a great deal of trouble to neutralise its readers by picturing all objects and situations without



Poster, "The Voice of Liberty In the German Night at Radio Frequency 29.8" by John Heartfield (Published in

*Die Volks-Illustrierte*, II, 16, 21 April 1937).

their consequences. We have inconsequential educational institutions, which go to great lengths to transmit an education devoid of consequences and itself the consequence of nothing. All those of our institutions which shape ideology see it as their main purpose to ensure that the role of ideology is without consequences in accordance with a concept of culture which considers that the development of culture is already finished and that culture does not require a continued creative effort. This is not the place to examine in whose interest it is that these institutions are inconsequential; but when a technical invention so well adapted by nature to decisive social functions encounters such anxious attempts to keep it inconsequential and concerned with the most innocuous entertainment, then the irrepressible question presents itself whether there is no possibility of confronting the excluding powers with an organisation of the excluded. The slightest move in this direction would inevitably have a natural success which would far exceed the success of all the programmes of a culinary character. Every campaign which has clear consequences, that is to say, every campaign which really intervenes in reality, even at points of very modest importance, for instance the making available of public buildings, would ensure for radio an incomparably more far-reaching effect and a totally different social importance than its present purely decorative role. The technique for all such projects has still to be developed; but it will be directed towards the prime task of ensuring that the public is not only taught but must also itself teach.

It is one of radio's formal duties to give these didactic projects an interesting character — to make interests interesting. One area, the area aimed at young people in particular, can even be treated in artistic terms. This attempt on the part of radio to shape didactic material artistically would correspond to those efforts on the part of modern art which aim to give art a didactic function.

At the Baden-Baden Music Festival of 1929 I explained 'Ocean Flight' as an example of possible exercises of this kind, which use radio as a means of communication. This is one model for a new application of your apparatus, another model could be *The Badener Lehrstück on Understanding*. In this case the pedagogic part, taken by the 'listener' is that of the air-crew and that of the crowd. It communicates with the parts of the trained choir, of the clown and of the announcer contributed by the radio. I am deliberately limiting myself to a discussion of principles because the confusion in the realm of aesthetics is not the reason for the unparalleled confusion in the realm of principle but merely its result. The mistaken view — a very useful mistake for some — of the true function of radio cannot be corrected by aesthetic insights. Let me put it this way — the application of our theoretical knowledge of modern dramatic methods, namely of epic theatre, to the field of radio might produce extraordinarily fruitful results.

Nothing is more inappropriate than the old-fashioned opera, which is based on the inducing of a state of intoxication, for what it finds in front of the set is the individual — and of all alcoholic excesses none is more dangerous than solitary drinking.

Even the old-fashioned drama of the Shakespearean school is almost unusable on radio, for it is an isolated individual and not a crowd in close contact in front of the set that is led to invest feelings, sympathies and hopes in plots which have only one aim — to give the dramatic individual a chance to express himself.

Epic theatre, because it is made up of separate numbers, because of its separation of elements — the separation of image and word and of words and music — but particularly because of its didactic attitude, could provide a great number of practical hints for radio. But their purely aesthetic application would only lead to a new fashion and we have plenty of old fashions as it is. Were there a theatre of epic drama of didactic documentary performance, then radio could carry out an entirely new kind of propaganda for the theatre, namely genuine information, indispensable information. A commentary of this kind, closely bound up with the theatre, a genuine, worthy complement to drama, could develop entirely new forms and so on. Direct collaboration between performances in the theatre and on the radio could also be organised. Radio could transmit choruses to the theatre just as it could broadcast publicly the decisions and productions of the audiences at the meeting-like collective performances of didactic plays.

I shall not elaborate on this 'etc' and deliberately do not deal with the possibilities of separating opera from drama or both from the radio play or of solving similar aesthetic questions, although I know that you perhaps expect that of me, since what you aim to do is to sell art through your sets. But in order to be saleable art today has first of all to be buyable. And I preferred not to sell you anything — only to formulate the proposal in principle that radio should be made into a means of communication for public life. This is something new — a proposal which seems utopian and which I myself describe as utopian when I say 'radio could' or 'the theatre could'; I know that the great institutions cannot do everything that they might do nor everything that they want to do. They want to be supplied by us, reinvigorated, kept alive by innovations.

But it is no task of ours to renew ideological institutes by innovations on the basis of the present social system; rather our task is to move its basis through our innovation. So we are for innovations but against renewal! By continuous, unceasing proposals for the better employment of the apparatus in the interest of the community we must destroy the social basis of that apparatus and question their use in the interest of the few.

These proposals cannot be achieved in this social system — can be achieved in another; yet they are merely a natural consequence of technological development and of the propagation and formation of that other social system.

Hanns Eisler

## THE WORKER'S MUSIC MOVEMENT

(Germany, 1931)

The first stage of music-making among the workers is remarkable not for its "high" cultural level compared perhaps with that of the bourgeoisie, but for their original use of music. Certainly, the form of the music societies was taken over from the bourgeoisie, but the first music associations of working people show essential differences from bourgeois organizations. The main difference is that the first workers' choral societies which arose in Germany roughly around 1860-70 had a real political task. At the time of the illegal political struggle under the anti-socialist laws, they were a cloak for political activity. It is indicative of the militant character of an apparently purely cultural organization that immediately after their foundation they were put under police surveillance and finally suppressed. That teaches us the classical attitude of the proletariat to culture. Under compulsion to reproduce labor power through leisure—here through musical activity—these cultural organizations are immediately forced into the class situation of the workers and take on a militant character. Precisely this makes it impossible for them to confine themselves exclusively to bourgeois *Liedertafel* literature (glees), which only depicts the relation of the individual to nature, love, *Gemütlichkeit*, conviviality. The obligation to defend their organization entails attack which in cultural matters is agitation and propaganda; this finally leads to the birth of a distinctive form of music, *Tendenzlied*.

Workers were not yet in a position to be culturally effective themselves, due to their one-sided employment in the production process. At that time they did not establish a new musical direction, but they did introduce a new method. With regard to their musical material, that is to say from the bourgeois aesthetic standpoint, it was a style which was regarded as old-fashioned and ridiculous by the more advanced circles of the bourgeoisie. If anyone had said in 1880 that these somewhat clumsy, blatantly red songs of the workers were the means by which they would possess the great heritage of German classical music, it would have seemed utter rubbish even to the most discerning mind. Yet it is correct, for history has taught us that every new musical style has

This text was originally presented as part of a lecture given by the author in Dusseldorf in December 1931, and was published as "Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur" in the author's *Reden und Aufsätze*, Winfried Höntsch, ed., Leipzig, 1961. It was translated into English by Majorie Meyer and was published in the author's *A Rebel in Music: Selected Writings*, Manfred Grabs, ed., Berlin, DDR, Seven Seas Books, 1978. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

not arisen from an aesthetically new point of view and therefore does not represent a material revolution, but the change in the material is conditioned as a matter of course by an historically necessary change in the function of music in society as a whole.

We must also discover this ever-recurring process in the beginnings of the workers' music movement. Only aesthetically dimmed eyes and dialectically unschooled heads can fail to appreciate these small signs of a change in function. This change in function was of necessity small since it was conditional upon the distinctive situation of the class-conscious workers at the end of the nineteenth century. While science was executing only propagandistic exercises, while social pressure and unmitigated capitalism were making the broad masses ripe for Marxism, it stands to reason that the art of the workers was not yet able to reflect progressive ideas. At that time *Tendenzkunst* was an art which the class-conscious worker offered to the non-class-conscious worker with the object of stirring both of them, of arousing class instincts and of drawing him into the class struggle. Music and text, therefore, had to appeal to the non-class-conscious worker and to the emotions of the individual and were actually only the preliminary to a planned propaganda action.

In the years between 1880 and 1914 a large number of such works appeared in vocal literature which, aesthetically judged, meant adopting the backward music style of the bourgeoisie. Today we know that this was an historical condition, since the education that the bourgeoisie provides for the modern industrial proletarian fits him only for exploitation, and fails to equip him with what the bourgeois artist calls a profound appreciation of art. The musical material offered to both singers and listeners thus had to be quite simple and so constructed to guarantee a purely emotional effect in the listeners. In addition to this purely practical artistic activity of the workers we must examine yet another aspiration.

With regard to the new methods now practised in the workers' music movement, I would like to remark: No recipe can be given here. It is the task of the specialists and experts in the workers' music movement to examine the material changes involved in the new functions of revolutionary art. At the same time the broad masses of the workers and their officials must force their experts to undertake this analysis and to control and critically examine the results by applying them in practice.

To conclude I would like to say: Socialism means the entry of reason in society. If we, and by we I mean the vanguard of the proletariat, the revolutionary workers, really want to take political power and not merely talk about it as a vague and distant hope, then we must propagate the practice of an art which takes its new methods from the daily struggles of the revolutionary workers. However, it should not only reflect their sufferings and cares, as the reformists and "social" artists believe it should, but it must clarify the right methods for taking power by the broad masses of the hungry and impoverished in Germany. Seventy years ago, in the early period of capitalism, when the German worker was still in a state of destitu-

tion and without culture, one of the classical authors of dialectical materialism, Frederick Engels, pronounced that precisely this wretched class of men and women, living under barbaric conditions, would be the only class called upon to take over the heritage of classical philosophy in Germany. This sent all the professors of the day into fits of laughter. And so I would also like to apply Engels' prediction to music and maintain that the workers, and by that I mean the Ruhr miners here in Düsseldorf, the metal workers of Solingen, the chemical proletarians of Höchst, are the only class which will eagerly take over the heritage of great bourgeois music, after the downfall and decay of the music culture of the bourgeoisie, which we are at present witnessing. From this class will emerge the builders of the new music culture of socialism.

To the progressive bourgeois musicians let it be said that the new methods of music will only emerge in the daily struggle of the revolutionary workers against the bourgeoisie; and a new music culture will only arise after the workers in Germany have taken power during the construction and completion of socialism.

It is the old idea of national education which, when applied in the musical field, means the music of feudalism and of the bourgeoisie to be taken over by the workers. Right from the beginning it was love's labor's lost, for the economic situation of the working class makes it impossible for them to take the same attitude to art as the bourgeoisie. This is the old classical mistake of every reformist action, which leads as a matter of course to compromise and which necessarily results in aesthetically valuable material being played off against politically valuable material, and which unknowingly, furthers the aims of the bourgeoisie.

It is clear that we must combat these reformist aspirations as well. However, the workers are not only threatened by this danger, they are also threatened by the vulgar petty-bourgeois view of art, which infiltrates into the working class from sections of the bourgeoisie. We must remember that the operetta, the hit song, false and genuine folk songs are listened to by a large proportion of all strata of society and that the workers are faced here with just as big a danger as musical snobbism. The cultivation of classical music is correct if it is used to liquidate light entertainment music. The advantages of classical music over entertainment music are clear, in that a certain demand is made of working-class listeners to be attentive, while entertainment music makes no such demand and rather panders to laziness and comfort. It is important to counter this danger for working-class listeners by performing the great works of bourgeois music. Yet this advantage can quickly turn into the most serious disadvantage, if it results in their taking a negative attitude towards the revolutionary movement of *Tendenzmusik*.

In order to raise the workers' music movement to the level of thought in the political struggles, it is necessary to criticize the forms of bourgeois music activities, and not to use them uncritically any longer. In addition the new social situation of the workers should be analyzed.

The old *Tendenzmusik* had the task of winning the non-class-conscious worker through the class-conscious worker. But the present-day political situation is different. The broad masses of the workers have their organizations, the trade unions, the parties, cultural and sport associations. These bodies are conducting a constant struggle to determine the correct revolutionary position. The question of tactics has become the topical question for the working class. Only when this question becomes superfluous, that is when the right tactics are adopted, will the revolution be triumphant. *Tendenzkunst* which mechanically copies the attitude of the workers' music movement of 1880, even though it includes aesthetically progressive elements, is nevertheless pointless and counterrevolutionary. In the long run it will be retrogressive, because it ignores all the contradictions in the working-class movement. It surely cannot be the task of *Tendenzmusik* to stir the emotions of the militant workers aimlessly. This would not change the situation at all. This kind of music must be superseded by a revolutionary art whose main character is militant and educative. That involves thinking about the dialectical-materialist method of thought and its results over the past eighty years; it means thinking about the revolutionary experiences of the last twenty years.

In a society where the broad masses are indeed united in the necessity for class struggle, but disunited in how it should be conducted, by what methods and with what means, art for the first time can become the great tutor of society. Art will have to depict the theory and experiences of the class struggle in powerful images. The main purpose of bourgeois art is pleasure. The working class has entered one of the most complicated and difficult periods of its class history; contradictions are rife in its own ranks. Nevertheless, it is faced with the real task of taking power and it again elects the arts as its great ally, the arts whose function is changing. Pleasure which was the main purpose becomes a means to an end. Art no longer sets out to satisfy the people's hunger for beauty, but makes use of beauty to teach the individual, to make the ideas of the working class and the actual problems of the class struggle comprehensible and attainable.

Music no longer prostitutes its beauty, but brings order and discipline into the confused emotions of each individual. We can see that a new and great change will result in the function of art. Brought forth as a teacher, as a weapon in the most difficult situation in class history, art loses all that the bourgeois artist calls "beautiful." The new function of art in a classless society is already contained to a marked degree in its beginnings.

**Franz Höllering**

## THE CONQUEST OF THE MACHINES THAT CAN OBSERVE THINGS

(Germany, 1928)

Since human beings have existed there has been a desire abroad in the world to fix what is transient. The individual's memory of the past has proved unreliable. Everyone has a different recollection of things. For that reason several witnesses have always had to remember a fact for it to be believed. An old German legal saying goes that truth comes out of the mouths of two witnesses. But even two witnesses can in the best of faith testify falsely. Feelings, friendship, enmity, temperament, different views of the world, lack of intelligence prevent humans being even with the best of intentions, even with the utmost effort, from giving accurate, objective reports.

Objective reports — that is the dream of all thinkers, all just men, all those who for whatever reason must know what actually happened.

For a very long time technology has been trying to satisfy the need for objective reporting. In this field the aim has been machines that can observe things, which are not susceptible to error, and today we can assert that they have achieved their aim. The photographic camera, the film camera, the gramophone record, radio, are the results of technical research which, properly used, can without doubt provide us with objective reports. The photograph fixes the moment, film registers so many moments one after another that we see a "living picture", the gramophone record allows us to hear the voices of those long dead, radio allows us to participate in acoustic events which, since they took place in other parts of the world, once came to our knowledge only on the basis of unreliable testimonies. The day is not far distant when the combination of reporting by picture and sound, by film and radio, will be so perfect that it will be possible to transmit any piece of reality we wish in its totality. The perfected "machine that can observe things" will record everything. Changes in daily life such as we today still cannot imagine will result from the realisation of these technical possibilities which are already in sight.

The working-class, the creator and champion of the future, must not only prepare itself for the new age politically. It must also be conscious of the changes which technology will produce as it follows

This text was first published in *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf*, II, 10, 1928 and was reprinted in *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf: Dokumente und Beiträge zur Arbeiterfotografie 1926-1932*, Cologne, Prometh, 1978. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

the inevitable laws of its development. It is the great task of the auxiliary troops of the proletariat to study these questions and to master the machines. Today they are almost exclusively in the possession of the bourgeoisie, which quite naturally uses them against its class enemy, the proletariat. With the help of photography the police identify those who take part in a demonstration. In Vienna after the destruction of the Palace of Justice last year many workers were brought before the courts on the basis of identification from photographs. The bourgeoisie attempts to falsify the picture of the present by a press photo-service of a particularly refined kind. Films have become one of the chief means of reactionary propaganda. What power will the combination of these instruments of power—the technically perfected machines that can observe things—represent?

We can see that the human mind has succeeded in finding methods for retaining objective observations but—and this is decisive—it depends who possesses these technical means. From cotton one makes clothes for human beings suffering from cold or dynamite for the destruction of freedom-loving people. Machines that can observe things—photography, film, the gramophone, radio—can be used for the liberation or for the oppression of mankind. Today in the capitalist countries all technical inventions are almost exclusively in the service of the ruling class which, with their help, maintains the exploitation of the masses.

The workers' photography and the workers' radio movement is the beginning of that great organisation within the proletariat whose task will be the preparation and carrying out of the technical struggle for the socialist future. Although the beginning may be difficult, although today's daily tasks may be modest and not yet understood by many, these technical troops of the proletariat face great tasks. The task is to learn thoroughly how to use and master the machines that can observe things and to prepare ourselves for the struggle.

# Der Arbeiter-Fotograf

Offizielles Organ der Vereinigung der Arbeiter-Fotografen Deutschlands

## PROLETARISCHE TENDENZ UND BÜRGERLICHE „KUNST“ IN DER FOTOGRAFIE

Von Franz Höllering

Wenn man es nicht täglich erlebte, würde man es nicht glauben: auch heute noch, im Zeitalter der Technik, möchte jeder gern ein „Künstler“ sein. Das „Studentenideal“ hat schon gründlich abgewirtschaftet; aber „Künstler“, das ist noch immer der Traum des Kleinbürgers, der sich zu einem klaren politischen Weltbild nicht durchringen kann, sich aber auf einem, wie er glaubt, unkontrollierbaren Gebiete gern einen Seitensprung leisten möchte. Er traut sich nicht in sein tägliches Leben, wie es durch Herkunft und

Milieu bestimmt ist, radikal einzugreifen, er ist zu bequem und zu feig dazu; mit Worten aber, in schlechten Gedichten, oder malend, theater-spielend und als „Kunstfotograf“ hätte er gern vor seinem einfachen Mitmenschen etwas voraus. So entsteht der Dilettant, der Feind der Kunst, dem nichts künstlerisch genug ist. Einer seiner Haupttummelplätze ist heutzutage die Fotografie. Landschaftliche Idyllen, sinnlose Stilleben, Familienmitglieder, die er als Hausvater tyrannisch behandelt, unnatürlich beleuchtete Köpfe . . . . . das sind die „Motive“ dieser „Künstler“. Die bürgerliche



Entwurf einer Werbepostkarte

Max Wolff, Leipzig

Kunst, die, solange sie einen Inhalt hatte, solange sie die Wahrheit suchte und gestaltete, große Werke schuf, ist heute, von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, vorbei. Ihre sich wiederholenden oder degenerierten Formen aber werden noch immer als die „Kunst an sich“ angesprochen. Der Dilettantismus ist nichts anderes als der Versuch geistloser, äußerlicher Nachahmung. Mancher glaubt ein Künstler zu sein oder gar ein Genie, wenn er sich einen Schlapput auf sein Köpfchen setzt und einen großen wahlenden Schlips vor den

Adamsapfel bindet — was heute kein Künstler macht. So ist es mit der ganzen „Kunstfotografie“. Äußerlichkeiten werden von der Malerei her übernommen, nachgemacht, Beleuchtungseffekte und Schattenspiele, die man vor hundert und mehr Jahren gemalt hat, die werden jetzt fotografiert. Wozu, warum, welcher anderer Sinn als nutzloser Zeitvertreib dahintersteckt, bleibt verborgen. Aber „Kunst“ und „künstlerisch“, das sind die Wörter, die in den Artikeln der bürgerlichen Fotozeitingen in jedem Absatze vorkommen. Solchem Unsinn gegenüber steht das klare Wollen des Arbeiter-



## Edwin Hoernle

### THE WORKER'S EYE

(Germany, 1930)

This is just another of these "Bolshevist" exaggerations, I can hear a reader exclaim, as if the eye were not in all human beings a basically similar natural organ, which can change its structure only through illness or damage. Certainly there are different kinds of eyes in spiders, bees, snakes, cats, elephants and human beings—but in the human race there are no special eyes for workers on the one hand and for manufacturers, bankers, lawyers and ministers on the other. Even Marxists and Leninists should keep their feet a little in touch with the ground of the facts of nature.

Take it easy, dear colleague with the camera! It is precisely with your example of the manufacturer, the banker, the minister, that we can convince you of your error. When a German manufacturer travels to America what do you think his physical eye sees? The Ford factories in Detroit, the slaughter-houses in Chicago, the derricks of Standard Oil, the President's White House in Washington, and Fifth Avenue, New York. Do you think his eye, the eye of the German capitalist eager for business, well-fed, hungering for new profits, sees the hungry figures of the 6 million unemployed; the crushed ruined figures of the Ford workers who are not even 40 years old; the tiny, anaemic children, who are worked to death at the age of seven in the textile and canning factories of this most democratic and most Christian state; the material and mental deprivation in the Negro quarters of the famous lynching state of Texas; not to mention the bloody brutality of the state and factory police who are bought, bribed and incited against strikers? And if, just in passing, he happens to see them—for he cannot always drive blindly past the underside of American freedom and "prosperity forever"—even then he doesn't see them, for behind his retina the circuits of his brain are blocked; the pictures taken by the natural camera he carries in his head are not developed, are not visible to consciousness. And even if, as an exception, they were to penetrate the consciousness of this clever businessman, who is completely taken up with his calculation of percentages and his banquets, then they are neither in focus nor properly lit, and amidst the collection of pictures in his brain and his camera—supposing he has either of these to hand—they form only a tiny exception, little shadows to set against the bright spots. And even the bourgeois reporter who

This text was first published in *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf*, IV, 7, 1930 and was reprinted in *Asthetik und Kommunikation* (West Berlin), III, 10, 1973. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

goes to America or even—to compare great with little—to the working-class district of Wedding in Berlin to film "the people", he will not even with his sharp eye find the real "types", or if he does find them will not dare to record them on the photographic plate, will have no idea how to get them there without make-up.

So it is a question of the mind's visual power, of that liaison staff between the retina of the physical eye and the picture which the eye of the mind takes of the facts out there. How untrained most human beings are at seeing facts we can see from our neighbours or from ourselves. Can we judge distances accurately? Are we capable of stating five minutes after looking at a particular house, which architectonic details were in specific places? We take the same road every day but none of us has seen what a splendid, exciting pictorial theme for our proletarian camera this little paper-seller is, or what an impertinent, provocative criminal physiognomy is flaunted by that swastikaed youth whom we meet daily and who perhaps one day with the kind permission of the democratic parties will shoot down one of our best colleagues. One needs the eye of a particular profession to see immediately certain details in nature, in technology, in the clothing or life style of our fellow human beings; one needs the special eye of a class to recognise the characteristic signs of the prevailing social relations in the internal and external life of our fellow human beings, in the way houses and factories are built and how they look, both in their interiors and in the general picture of the streets; yes even in the size, distribution and cultivation of the fields and meadows out in the country.

And this "class eye" must be trained. Millions of proletarians do not have it. Some of them possess it only in an imperfect way. Only very few have the experience and discipline to take the eye of their class with them everywhere, all the time, even on holiday, on trips and during the weekend, to games and entertainments, and to use it. For the proletarian cameraman the rule must be: No camera without a proletarian class eye.

The worst of it is that the majority of today's proletarian proletarians—in direct contradiction with their class situation—not only have a very defective class eye, or none at all, but run around with a definitely petty-bourgeois eye. The bourgeoisie is delighted and deliberately attempts, with its "cultural achievements" such as the church, school, the daily press, family magazines, illustrated weeklies, cinemas, and advertisements, to prevent the development of proletarian eyes and to stick petty-bourgeois spectacles on the proletariat's nose.

So what is typical of the petty-bourgeois eye? Every shop window, every camera shop, every illustrated paper, whether it is the Berlin, Cologne or Munich version, whether it has Harry Peal and Lil Dagover in it or not, reveals not only the eye but the "soul" of the petty bourgeois. This is a "soul" with a longing for "higher things", even if it is only in the form of a display of how the top ten thousand amuse themselves or how they "live graciously" with their great need for "closeness" in a "nasty" world

# Der Arbeiter-Fotograf

Offizielles Organ der Vereinigung der Arbeiter-Fotografen Deutschlands

## UNSERE WERBEPOSTKARTE

Nun liegt das Ergebnis des von Redaktion und Verlag veranstalteten Preisausschreibens vor. Die technische Kommission der Vereinigung der Arbeiter-Fotografen brauchte mehrere Stunden, um die vielen eingegangenen Arbeiten zu prüfen, und es war ihr nicht gerade leicht, von den in die engere Auswahl genommenen Arbeiten diejenige zu bestimmen, die den ersten Preis davontragen sollte.

Wenn wir ein Gesamturteil abgeben sollen, so müssen wir sagen, daß alle Prüfenden von den oft vortrefflichen und originellen Ideen, die den Arbeiten zugrunde lagen, überrascht waren. Aber wir haben auch die Bestätigung dafür erhalten, daß unsere Warnung vor komplizierten Fotomontagen angebracht war, denn so manche gute Idee wurde durch Zusammenstellung zu vieler Bilder unübersichtlich, ging also in ihrer Wirksamkeit verloren. (Nicht das Plakat wirkt, auf dem möglichst viel — wenn auch nur Richtiges — geschrieben steht, sondern dasjenige, welches in wenigen klaren Worten Aufgaben und Ziel hinausschreit.)

Wenn der Leser den hier wiedergegebenen Entwurf der Werbepostkarte betrachtet, für den sich die Preisrichter entschieden haben, so wird er mit uns

übereinstimmen, daß gerade durch die Anwendung einfachster Mittel — ein zielbewußter Arbeiter, der seine Waffe zu gebrauchen versteht — die wirkungsvollste Propaganda entfaltet werden kann.

Der Preisträger, der Gewinner des Fotoapparates, ist Genosse Willi Zimmermann aus Dresden, der außer dieser Arbeit noch drei weitere geliefert hat, die alle ziemlich gut gelungen sind.

Aber es gab auch noch einen Entwurf des Genossen Max Wolff aus Leipzig, den wir gern bevorzugen hätten, wenn die technische Ausführung besser gewesen wäre. Wir haben diese Arbeit angekauft und werden sie in der nächsten Nummer veröffentlichen.

So wird also die erste Werbepostkarte aussehen, die die Vereinigung herausgibt. Sie wird sich zum Versand an bekannte Fotofreunde und zum Verkauf auf Ausstellungen vorzüglich eignen, denn ihre Herstellung in Lichtdruck oder als Fotokopie garantiert überall den Erfolg. Der Verkaufspreis wird voraussichtlich 15 Pf. pro Karte betragen. Wir ersuchen alle Interessenten, vor allem die Ortsgruppen, uns schnellstens ihren vorläufigen Bedarf aufzugeben, damit mit der Herstellung begonnen werden kann.



wherein nevertheless virtue has its reward in the end. With their need for heroes, gods and film-stars, the bourgeoisie experience a perverse pleasure when they can kneel in the dust in front of someone or something; with their lack of critical sense, they hunger for sensations and romance. Male and female members of the proletariat are bamboozled by the bourgeoisie and allow these papers, these illustrated weeklies, this Ullstein-literature, these films, these posters, to be put in front of their eyes and into their brains.

We are not raising here the question of *Kitsch* and lack of good taste. That is something, too, which can only be judged from a class point of view. From the point of view of the petty bourgeoisie all this is simply not *Kitsch* and not lack of taste. We are raising the question from the standpoint of social content. The content is unproletarian, counter-revolutionary, and eyes — of adults and even more, of children — which take in nothing else year in and year out become blind to the facts of life, facts which are seen from the point of view of the proletariat. Is it proletarian visual culture when in nine-tenths of all working-class homes we see pictures, photographs and knick-knacks which mirror the petty-bourgeois ideal of slick, romantic, unreal beauty; the petty-bourgeois longing for "leisure time"; the petty-bourgeois stupor of the family; the petty-bourgeois veneration

of "higher" creatures, human or divine; and last but not least, the petty-bourgeois penchant for dirty stories and dirty jokes, which are the consequence of a sensuality crippled and repressed by morality and the church?

In almost all pictures of the bourgeoisie, in the *Kitsch* as well as in "art", we find the cult of leisure. Leisure is represented in the theatre as well as in the cinema, in the illustrated papers and in novels, in newspaper reports and in commercial advertisements, and when a member of the working-class for once goes to the photographer, he and his girlfriend are reproduced in exactly the same poses of more-or-less elegant leisure just like the company secretary from Tietz or the wife of the managing director of Krupp. Only the execution differs according to the purse and education. And when a worker manages to get a camera on the instalment plan then in nine cases out of ten he begins, just like his bourgeois neighbour, with snapshots of some "beautiful landscape" or a "romantic nook", a family party, a "pretty girl"; in other words, keeps the subject matter as far removed as possible from the class struggle because what he wants in his album is something to bring forth "nice memories", something that allows him to "forget" his poverty and the dirt of everyday life. In the best of cases he aspires to take artistic photographs.



Political agitation in the German countryside (Published in *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf*, 5, 1931).

Willi Munzenberg

## TASKS AND AIMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKER-PHOTOGRAPHER MOVEMENT

(Germany, 1931)

Photography has become an indispensable and splendid means of propaganda in the revolutionary class struggle.

Forty years ago the bourgeoisie had already understood that the photographic picture has a very special effect on the spectator. For an illustrated book is easier to read and to buy, and an illustrated paper is more entertaining to read than the leading article in a political daily. Photography works on the eye of human beings—events are mirrored in the head without the man or woman being forced to complicated thoughts. In this way the bourgeoisie encourages the laziness of wide sections of the population and besides does good business, for illustrated papers often reach circulations of millions.

But that is not enough—what is far more important is after all the political effect which is achieved by the placing of several pictures side by side, and by the captions and accompanying texts. That is the decisive factor. In this way a clever editor can falsify any photograph into its opposite and can influence the politically unschooled reader in the desired direction.

The revolutionary workers of all countries must recognise these facts clearly. They must engage the class enemy with all means and fight him on all fronts. Just as the workers of the Soviet Union have learned to build their own machine-tool machines, to make their own inventions so as to place them at the service of peaceful socialist construction, just as the workers in the capitalist countries have learned to write their own newspapers, so the proletarian amateur photographers must learn to master the camera and use the photograph correctly in the international class struggle.

The history of the organised worker-photographer movement is not old. It is almost five years since a dozen comrades sat down together for the first time in Hamburg and formed the first local groups. Six months later the first—still eight-page—number of our periodical *The Worker-Photographer* appeared. In April 1927 the first national conference took place at Erfurt; here the union of German worker-photographers was founded and proletarian

This text was first published in *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf*, V, 5, 1931, and was reprinted in *Asthetik und Kommunikation* (West Berlin), III, 10, 1973. It was translated from the German by Stuart Hood. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

pictures shown for the first time in a photographic exhibition. Today we can say to these comrades who sent us their pictures then: "you were pioneers, your powerful pictures made an immense impression and were received with enthusiasm all over Germany."

In what is scarcely five years we have succeeded in building up an organisation that today has more than 2,412 members in 96 groups and a paper with a circulation of over 7,000. Today the revolutionary workers' press is no longer dependent on bourgeois photographic agencies; our worker-photographers have learned to focus on the right subjects, to do social reportage, to organise political exhibitions and lectures with slides.

In the last year we have taken an important step forward. Our tasks are limitless—we have to conquer a world and defend our own world. We have made contact with the comrades in the Soviet Union through delegates and have from our own resources sent five workers to the 13th anniversary of the Russian revolution; they travelled all over that vast country and reported at numerous meetings in Germany on the immense success and efforts to fulfill the Five-Year Plan in less than four years. The value of these reports was immeasurably greater than all previous enthusiastic speeches because these comrades could simultaneously show 80 slides which they had made themselves and which were witnesses of the truth of their speeches.

We have become strong enough to venture another leap forwards. We are faced with the widening of the offensive against the international exploitation of capital. We must advance, we must collect the proletarian cameramen in every country in the world and give them a programme and tasks. We already have solid groups and circles in America, France, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Austria, Roumania and Japan. These groups are still weak but they are there and wish to fight in line with us. So we have decided in agreement with the comrades in other countries to found an international bureau of worker-photographers of all lands. You will have read our appeal in the last number of *The Worker-Photographer*. Meanwhile it was decided to hold our first international conference along with the 10th Congress of International Workers' Aid, which takes place in Berlin at the beginning of October. In connection with this conference there will be a great international photographic exhibition.

Our most important task over the next six months is to prepare this conference and exhibition so that their success will have a great impression politically and organisationally in all important capitalist countries.

What tasks must the international bureau fulfill in that time?

1. The organisation of further groups and circles, their political direction and technical training.

2. Intensive correspondence and personal contact with worker-photographers and those who wish to become one in all important countries.

3. The setting of concrete tasks for each individual country and the development of photographic themes in connection with the international

# Zum fünften Jahrestag



Die Bourgeoisie versteht es ausgezeichnet die Volksmassen auf allen Wegen mit allen Mitteln zu ergreifen, ihrem Einfluß zu unterwerfen. Sie sucht Eintritt ins Bewußtsein der Arbeiterklasse durch Wort, Bild, Klang. Solange die Arbeiterklasse unterjocht ist, wird sie keine dieser Waffen im gleichen Maßstabe mit der Bourgeoisie zu benutzen in Stande sein. Weder die Presse, noch das Bild, noch das Radio. Aber anfangen den Kampf muß das Proletariat auf allen Gebieten.

Die Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung hat ihn auf dem Gebiete des Bildes begonnen und erhebliche Fortschritte dabei erreicht. Ich beglückwünsche sie dazu. Es gilt die Waffe zu vervollkommen. Vermeidet die Schablone. Gebt nicht nur Fehlerbilder, sondern auch Bilder des Kampfes, ob sie Sieg oder Niederlage bringen. Gebt das Bild der großen Welterschütterung, die wir erleben. Und greift den Kapitalismus nicht nur mit den ersten Worten der Anklage an. Lehrt durch das Bild ihn zu verachten und zu hassen. Das satyrische Bild ist Macht. Nicht nur Käthe Kollwitz, nicht nur Meister Zille, sondern auch Grosz — sie mögen alle die Richtungslinie anzeigen. Ihr steht am Anfang. Ich wünsche Euch eine Million Leser und Käufer. Schlagt Ullstein und Hugenberg. Und schlagt sie mit unseren Waffen, der kommunistischen »Illustrierten«.

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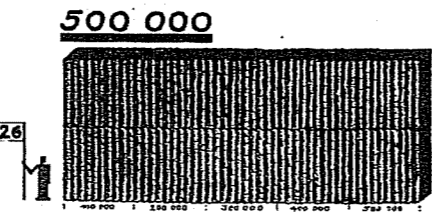
kämpfen wagt. Im Gegensatz dazu will die Illustrierte Arbeiterzeitung den Werkstätigen ein anschauliches Wissen vermitteln, das befreit, in dem Erkenntnis für die Freiheit kämpfen zu müssen und in der Entschlossenheit für die Freiheit kämpfen zu wollen. Daß das Blatt dieses Ziel erreicht, hängt nicht nur von dem Wirken der Redaktion und des Verlages ab, sondern auch von den breiten Massen selbst. Sie müssen es als ihre Aufgabe betrachten, ihr illustriertes Organ in allen Werkstätten und Heimen der Ausgebeuteten zu verbreiten. Sie müssen durch Anregung und Mitarbeit zu der ziel-



Die Entwicklung der Arbeiter-Illustrierten von 1921-1925. Während der Hilfsaktion für die Hungernden in Sowjet-Rußland gab die Internationale Arbeiterhilfe erstmalig die Zeitschrift »Sowjet-Rußland im Bilde« heraus. Diese in einer Auflage von nur 10000 Exemplaren erscheinende Illustrierte fand so großes Interesse, daß sich die IAH entschloß, die Zeitung unter dem Namen »Sichel und Hammer« weiter auszubauen. Nach Übernahme in den Neuen Deutschen Verlag entwickelte sich die »Arbeiter-Illustrierte« rasch zu der führenden Illustrierten aller Werkstätten Deutschlands und der deutschsprachigen Gebiete.

gesetzten Ausgestaltung des Blattes beitragen. Mit den aufrichtigsten Wünschen für die weitererfolgreiche Entwicklung sendet herzliche Grüße zum Jubiläum

*Wass Gell. w.*



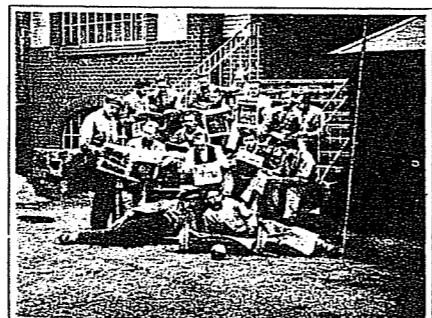
Wie wir wachsen! Das vorstehende Diagramm zeigt die durchschnittliche Monatsauflage der »Arbeiter-Illustrierte« während ihres fünfjährigen Bestehens u. Dem Wunsch unserer meisten Leser folgend, wird die »Arbeiter-Illustrierte« ab 1. November 1926 wöchentlich erscheinen.



Eine tüchtige Werbekolonnen des R. F. B.



»Sie kennen die A. I. Z. noch nicht?«



Frühstückspause im Betriebe. »Die A. I. Z. ist eingetroffen.«

exhibition.

4. The creation of liaison between the separate sections and the development of links particularly between the German and Soviet sections.

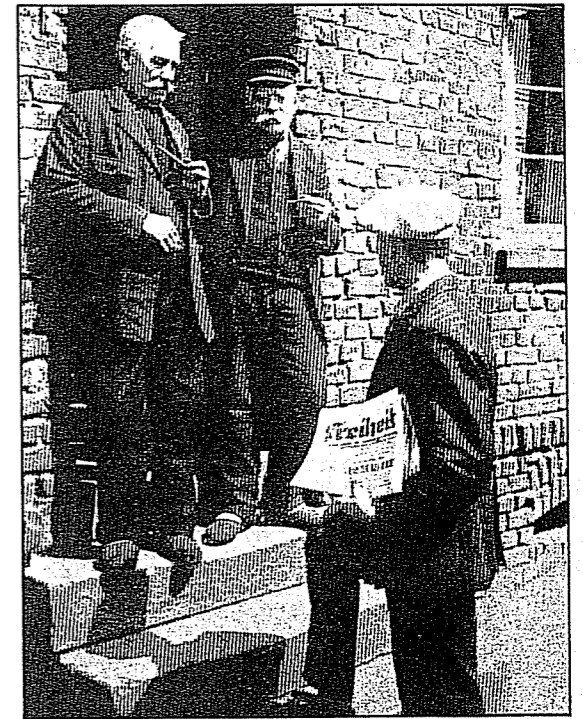
5. The organisation of competitions through the various sections.

6. The implementation of an international week in July: "The Proletarian Picture".

7. The working out of a scheme for an international programme of action and a constitution.

That briefly is our programme. Now we must mobilise all forces. In the next few weeks we need 10 portfolios for the different sections. We need your advice and collaboration. And we shall do everything to create a living international.

For the proletarian photograph, the picture taken by the class-conscious worker must contribute to the defence of socialist construction in the Soviet Union against every attack by the imperialist pack; it must spur on the workers and peasants of the whole world to bring the capitalist system down in ruins and to build the world of the rule of all workers, the dictatorship of the proletariat.



Door-to-door political agitation in German cities (Published in Der Arbeiter-Fotograf, 12, 1931).

## Pierre Gaudibert

### THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE ARTS

(France, 1974)

The brief existence of the Popular Front after the electoral victory of April-May 1936 did not prevent it from crystallising and giving impetus to a powerful cultural *élan* as numerous accounts have stressed. This cultural *élan* had repercussions on the distribution of culture as well as on artistic production, and even transformed models of behaviour of social groups or individuals, shaping collective sensibilities. Jean Lacouture's expression for characterising this historic moment, 'a brief and fervent encounter between People and Culture', expresses this general effervescence and defines, at the same time, the consensus which cemented the active forces of the Popular Front: People in the place of proletariat, Culture with a capital C, a sole indivisible patrimony, instead of class cultures. All the possibilities of a relationship between these two terms, People and Culture, gave birth to a great quantity of ideological discourses, and thus to a dispersed set of rituals and practices: the right of People to Culture, the conquest of Culture by the People, the restitution of Culture to the People, bringing People and Culture closer to one another, the renewing of Culture by the People, etc.

We know that such a consensus was made possible, in spite of the resistance of extreme-left minorities, by the profound reshaping of the political strategy of the PCF [Parti Communiste Français] which passed from the slogan of 'class against class' to one of rallying all democrats against fascism, of the union of the French people against the 200 families.<sup>1</sup> From 1935 onwards, the effects of this decisive transformation began to be felt, little by little, in all sectors of ideology and culture. However, in the domain of the plastic arts, the unifying theme of cultural democratisation continued to cover up more or less masked aesthetic and ideological differences.

If, because of a lack of funds for 'cultural leisure', the intervention of the Under-Secretary of State in charge of Sports and Leisure was limited in respect to the plastic arts, the International Exhibition of Paris in 1937 allowed the General Director of Fine Arts of the Ministry of National Education to display some activity in the opening of new museums, and in the policy of buying and commissioning works by artists, which contrasted somewhat with the general mediocrity of the art policy under the Third Republic.<sup>2</sup> However, above all, the Popular Front was marked in

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this domain by the multiple initiatives of associations, groups of individuals, parties and trade unions which in certain cases were encouraged by the State in the form of subsidies.

In particular, a determinant role was played by a Federation of Cultural Associations which grouped together in the framework of the Maison de la Culture of Paris, founded in 1935. Under the impetus of René Blech, a network of cultural centres and cultural circles extended to a large number of cities in France and North Africa. Among the member cultural associations, special mention must be given to the Association of Painters and Sculptors, the Mural Art Group, and the Popular Association of the Friends of the Museums.

#### THE MAY-JUNE 1936 DEBATES

Without doubt, it was in the plastic arts that the confrontation was the liveliest, touching the major part of the professional world. This was demonstrated immediately after the victory of the Popular Front in three public debates held under the auspices of the Maison de la Culture of Paris in May and June 1936. In company of Aragon, Malraux and Jean Cassou, several artists, breaking with the usual silence and solitude of the studio, spoke out. The first assembly was particularly tumultuous and the themes tackled (contemporary art in relation to society, people and politics) led to polemics which were carried on afterwards. The intensity of these meetings struck intellectual circles and a part of public opinion. In *L'Humanité*, 27 July 1936, Malraux declared, 'Nowhere else than in Paris, and in no other epoch than our own, would such debates on such a subject have set off such passion'.

The book *La Querelle du réalisme* (The Realist Quarrel) (Paris, ESI, 1936) published accounts of the first two debates, with two earlier texts by Moussinac and Crevel as appendices, as well as an investigation by the revue *Commune* in 1935, 'In What Direction Is Painting Going?'. Alberto Giacometti replied to this question with a drawing, reproduced at the end of the book, showing a man advancing his raised fist in front of the first ranks of a procession of demonstrators. In reading the book, the bitterness of the conflicts is somewhat unclear due to the ambiguity of the hastily re-established consensus around the terms of realism and 'neo-realism' which covered over divisions which were as much ideological as aesthetic. These divergencies were centered on the acceptance or rejection of the movements of rupture and artistic innovation at the beginning of the 20th century, in particular, cubism and abstractionism. Beyond this, there were

1. Pierre Gaudibert, *Action culturelle; intégration et/ou subversion*, Paris, Casterman, 1972.

2. J. Laurent, *La République et les Beaux-Arts*, Paris, Julliard, 1955.

[Translator's note: the term *arts plastiques* in France is far more comprehensive than fine arts in English including sculpture, architecture, drawing, painting and also decorative arts and choreography. Although the noun has been translated as 'plastic arts', for obvious reasons the adjective *plastique*, the adverb *plastiquement* and *plasticien* have been translated respectively as artistic, artistically and artist. These words in the text should be understood in the very wide sense of the French conception given above.]

differences concerning the relation of artists and art with society, politics, revolution and people. A polemical article published by Aragon coincided with the book's release and better expressed the atmosphere of the debates and virulence of the disagreements, in particular, through his stand against several passages by Fernand Léger.<sup>3</sup>

What determined, finally, these divergences, which were as much ideological as aesthetic, was the doctrine of socialist realism, well on the way to being dogmatically institutionalised in the USSR, but defended, at the time, without doctrinal rigidity by several PCF intellectuals. However, the term 'socialist realism' itself was only used once in the published texts (in the first intervention of Aragon) and does not seem to have been applied, at the time, to artistic works, as was the case for literature.<sup>4</sup> But, paradoxically, the partly underground action of this aesthetic ideology was to encourage an artistic movement to return to social subjects, using forms inherited from the realism which was opposed to the extension of cubism and abstractionism. Deeply repressed and transposed in the opposition modern art/return to the subject, stood the antithetical couplet bourgeois/proletarian, abandoned in the terminology of the PCF, but which was to resurge openly in the 1950s precisely on the basis of the polemics on socialist realism. Significantly, a slightly earlier text by Moussinac, *Les peintres devant le sujet* (Painters In Front of the Subject), reproduced in *La Querelle du réalisme*, still used the expression, 'nascent proletarian art', while already designating, in fact, this new form of social realism.

#### UNEMPLOYED ARTISTS

The approval of the artists who rallied around the policy of the Popular Front was sufficiently strong to conceal these differences. More profoundly, their social preoccupations indicated a certain rupture with the traditions of artistic individualism, a new convergence between most of the artists. The development of a social consciousness, heightened in 1936, had begun several years earlier as a result of the great economic crisis of 1929. Having left Wall Street it reached Europe a little later and resulted in, among other effects, the cessation of private patronage, the stagnation of the art business, the slowdown in transactions and fall in prices of works at auction. The cubists' dealer, D. H. Kahnweiler, has told how during 7 years, visitors and clients practically deserted his gallery.

This situation brought about unemployment in the artistic profession. Artists' struggles developed to obtain, then maintain, an unemployment fund for artists and artisans, and do away with usual reporting-in procedures. Around 1934, about 2,000 artists and art students received unemployment benefits. The Popular Front had neither the time nor the capacity to resolve this dramatic problem; one can now understand better what Le Corbusier meant when he began his intervention in the second debate of the Maison de la

3. L. Aragon, 'Le réalisme à l'ordre du jour', *Commune*, 37, September 1936.

4. J.-P. A. Bernard, *Le Parti communiste français et la question littéraire*, Grenoble, PUF, 1972.

Culture with the words 'The destiny of painting! Is it a question of painting, or, today, with the rumbling of anxieties everywhere, a question of unemployed painters?' In 1938 Tanguy and Herold, among many others, still continued to draw on the artists' unemployment fund. In April of the same year, the Maison de la Culture of Rouen included on the agenda of the General Assembly of the Plastic Arts Section the following: 'Constitution of a Committee of Unemployed Artist-Painters of Rouen'.

Such a crisis led many artists to realise their dependence on the market system and a society which exploited and alienated them and to perceive their role as buffoons or decorators for a wealthy minority of the ruling classes. Aragon declared to them during the second debate in 1936, "Your paintings have become the Baccara cards of the days of prosperity. With the coming of uncertain and bleak times of crisis, your bosses have given you up, like the stable owner with his worn-out horses". At the same time, this situation made artists realise more than ever their isolation from the working class masses and the lack of any response to their innovative research. This long, painfully-felt solitude was not foreign to the political evolution of several artists; thus Ozenfant, the creator of 'purism', one of the extreme outcomes of cubism and abstractionism, in 1935 vigorously revived an avowal published in 1928: 'the obsession with the abyss between the people and oneself leads finally to a paralysing vertigo'.

This change in the sensitivity and mentality of many artists explains largely how the ideology of cultural democratisation and the bringing together of art and the people could benefit from such reverberations during the Popular Front, giving rise to hopes and illusions. The Popular Front was perceived as an exceptional moment of the movement for popular emancipation, the beginning of a policy of leisure which would allow the people to have access to art. Of course, for some it was a question of making people sensitive to the most audacious artistic innovations, whereas for others, on the contrary, the moment had come to reject the impasses of an avant-garde art shut away in the ivory towers of formal research, far away from the people or history, and to rehabilitate 'human subjects' in forms immediately accessible to the largest number. However, both currents joined together in believing and hoping that the dynamic of the Popular Front was going to fill in the famous abyss separating art from the people and break the solitude of artists.

#### FERNAND LÉGER

Among the artists close to the Popular Front it was Fernand Léger who asserted with the most confidence and vigour the hope that an artistic democratisation would allow the people to be reconciled to the most innovative and difficult modern art. Besides his personal action during this period, and his many interventions in different organisations and with political and cultural officials, two texts illustrate this: his speech in the Maison de la Culture debates, 'The New Realism Continues', and a conference published in 1938 in the revue *Europe*, 'Colour In The World'. After the war he continued to develop the same

themes with frequent references to the Popular Front, in particular in *'L'art et le peuple'* (Arts de France, 1946) and in *Peinture murale et peinture de chevalet* (1950, 'Mural and Easel Painting').<sup>5</sup> Despite the rupture brought about by the war they expressed the same courageous optimism and the same confidence in the industrial and social future; an imminent harmony was going to reunite the intensity of the modern world, the audacity of contemporary art and the popular *élan*.

Every fundamental certainty of Léger rebelled against the condemnation of a part of modern art as an expression of the bourgeoisie: 'The people are told that the *modern* is not for them, that it is for the rich, that modern art is specialised, bourgeois art. This is totally false'. Since the 1920s, Léger had thought that a necessary, desirable and possible harmony existed between the anticipatory art of the 20th century and the popular masses. For him, only the existing society, the school and a certain conception of art history prevented this coming together from being manifested in resounding fashion: '*Voilà* the obstacles between the people and us: the Italian Renaissance, the lack of leisure and easel painting'.

### A NEW REALISM

What was the basis of this harmony, according to Léger? It was the fact that a new realism was created in common by the 'popular multitude' which produced anonymously, in its everyday work, the modern environment, industrial and technical objects, and machines; in short, 'modern beauty'. For Léger, the same visual realities widespread by industrial work were largely at the origin of the ruptures and conquests in the plastic arts in the artistic movements which marked the period 1910-20.

Léger noted that people spontaneously felt the mechanical beauty of industrial products, using qualifiers like 'beautiful' and 'pretty' for cars and planes. On top of this, they sometimes used some of these objects as decoration in their collective life; 'aeroplane propellers are found as wall decorations at popular *bals-musettes*; everyone finds them beautiful'. These aeroplane propellers were very close in form and spirit to some modern sculptures which people refused to recognise as Art. According to Léger, the responsibility for this temporary divorce between the sensitive approval of modern technology and the rejection of contemporary art was in no way due to the so-called 'inhumanity' of this art, but especially the social order and education system which was opposed to art and the people finding each other again.

Refusing to accuse dealers and collectors who monopolised the works of contemporary creators in the form of speculative commodities (Aragon took him to task severely for this), Léger pointed out that the first responsibility for this situation lay with a society which gave workers neither the necessary time nor sufficient freedom of mind to look around them, develop their sensibilities and familiarise themselves

5. Quotations from the texts of Léger are taken from F. Léger, *Fonctions de la peinture*, Paris, Gonthier, 1965.

6. Quoted by E. Raude and G. Pronteau, *Le message de Léo Lagrange*, Paris, 1950, p.101.

with art. This explains Léger's total approval of the leisure policies of the Popular Front, symbolised by the creation of an Under-Secretary of State in charge of Sport and Leisure, headed by Léo Lagrange. It was the sign of a new epoch where 'social circumstances' would prove determinant for people to 'have access to' works of art; 'I want to speak about leisure, the organisation and creation of leisure for the workers . . . everything depends on it'.

### FOR ART IN THE SCHOOLS

According to Léger, the second obstacle came from the school at all levels, above all, at primary level. It gave preferential treatment to the Italian Renaissance as a humanist ideal, the culminating moment of a pretended artistic progress, selecting some works of art issuing from the Renaissance as normative models, refusing all artistic expression foreign to the conventions of an illusionist representation which flowed from it. Thus, it instilled imitation and resemblance to a 'beautiful subject' as the only criteria, which later served to analyse and judge other paintings and sculptures, instead of teaching the criteria of invention, transposition and equivalence. Part of popular taste was therefore conditioned. 'Popular judgement is free only when confronted with everyday objects. For other things, it is distorted by traditional education'.

Léger tried, under the Popular Front, to convince certain political officials of the urgency of an artistic education in the schools, but without result. He wanted the schools to popularise other forms of artistic expression than those of the Renaissance through the first half of the 19th century; and dreamed of seeing paintings and 'good reproductions' of objects in the classroom to form good taste and sensitivity. The school should encourage child creativity because, before copying, children know how to invent artistically and give power to the imagination. In this way, a selection of childrens' free drawings could be reproduced by stencilling on classroom walls. At the International Exhibition of 1937, Le Corbusier presented at the Porte Maillot his pavillon of the modern era with the title, 'Experimental Popular Education Museum'. For part of the highly polychromed interior decor, Léger had his pupils (including Jorn) make enlargements of childrens' drawings (for example, *la Moisson* (The Harvest) enlarged to 50 square meters).

Léger was less insistent on the artistic education of adults which was one of the preoccupations of the Popular Front. Malraux and Léo Lagrange thought of sending 'excellent reproductions of masterpieces that could be seen without charge' to provincial towns. The war in Spain prevented these imaginary museum projects from being realised. The idea was that the techniques of reproduction ('the printing of plastic arts') whose importance was first pointed out to Malraux by Walter Benjamin, would combine with cultural leisure so that art would reach the masses. Paying homage to Léo Lagrange in 1945, Malraux stressed this common ideology of cultural democratisation, 'through democracy on the one hand and technical discoveries on the other . . . culture becomes, regardless of whether one wants it or not, the lot of an increasingly large number of people'.<sup>6</sup>

Other initiatives of an entirely different nature were born or developed under the Popular Front with the goal of spreading the practice of art among adults. Thus, Franz Masereel took charge of an Academy of Painting, Drawing and Architecture under the auspices of the United Trade Unions of the Seine, while there were 100 beginners in plastic arts at the Université de Montreuil in 1937. As for Léger, he made several attempts at conference-debates on art. Encouraged by Paul Vaillant-Couturier who told him, 'it's a unique occasion for revealing the riches of art to the people', he once went to Lille, but instead of the popular public he had hoped for, the audience was made up of a hundred engineers and 'not one worker'. He thus had personal experience of the sociological constraints which regulated ventures in popular education and cultural diffusion; whereas the public sought was from the most impoverished sectors or the most excluded from culture, the public actually reached were, in the large majority, middle class.

Léger was more successful in his intervention aimed at keeping museums open in the evenings, as these cultural institutions normally closed their doors when workers and employees left work: 'At the time of the Popular Front, we said: something must be done. There was the 8 hour day and the 40 hour week. We said to Mr. Huisman, Director of Fine Arts; "Open your museums in the evenings". He replied, "You're going to ruin me with the cost of guards". Finally they were opened and in the evenings, people crushed one another to get in.' The Musée de l'Orangerie, then the Louvre, profited from the experiment of the evening museum and the Mona Lisa became the star attraction of these evenings. Between June and October 1937, 40 open evenings registered 48,900 entries, one night a week being reserved for trade union members at a reduced rate.

### LIVING MUSEUMS

A particularly active association, formed in June 1936, joined the Maison de la Culture: L'Association Populaire des Amis des Musées (APAM; Popular Association of the Friends of Museums). It was animated by G.-H. Rivière under the Presidency of Paul Rivet, aided by Jacques Soustelle. The ideology of cultural democratisation applied to museums could be found on every page of its revue, *Le musée vivant*; these elitist places, reserved for a privileged minority of enlightened amateurs now had to receive a new public and be transformed into institutions of permanent education. One of the slogans of the Popular Front, 'Let's open the doors of culture' was translated into APAM's affirmed objective 'to make the museums great instruments of culture and leisure, to rejuvenate them and open them up as much as possible to workers and young people'. For his part, E. Dolléans wrote, 'The museum no longer belongs to a few, but to each and everyone'. Dialectically, the influx of this new public was to transform museum

7. At the International Exhibition of 1937 a museum science section produced three proposals for 'educative' exhibitions: the Theatre of the Middle Ages, the Rural House and a Van Gogh room.

8. Schoedelin, 'Responsabilité de l'artiste', *Europe*, 166, October 1936.

science, giving life and meaning to sleeping necropolises and rise to a transformation of the museum: 'Popular friends are the surest guarantee of the living museum' (Jean Cassou).

APAM multiplied visits to museums and exhibitions under the supervision of expert guides or artists; in 1938 there were 500 with 25,000 workers and young people participating. APAM also organised visits to artists' studios, such as the sculptor Maillot's at Marly-le-Roi who talked with 300 young people. It also organised exhibitions in business firms (for example at the Bloch aviation factories) and itinerant exhibitions, as well as discussing methods of initiating the public to contemporary art and preparing a Peoples' Festival at the *Musée de l'Homme* after its inauguration in July 1938. An agreement was reached with the Teachers' Union to develop educational visits by school children to the museums. Thus, there were many concrete responses to the question posed in October 1936 by a discussion-debate at the Maison de la Culture; 'For Whom Are The Museums Made?'

### MURAL ART

Fernand Léger was no less than totally convinced that there existed a specifically artistic response to the question of the relation between art and the masses: mural art. If easel painting had established a rupture between art and the people, it was now on the walls that both the future of painting and the re-creation of a great social art shared by all had to be worked out. From 1925, with Le Corbusier, Ozenfant and Delaunay, Léger actively worked for a mural art as well as coloured walls and polychrome architecture.

With the coming of the Popular Front, his hopes grew to see the birth of a 'modern, collective, popular mural art'. Such an art would allow a rupture with the post-Renaissance individualism of intimist painting destined for private appropriation in apartments, for it would use new material spaces for new collectivities. It would be the integration or indeed the synthesis between, on the one hand, painting and sculpture, and on the other, architecture, a collective art *par excellence*; although it remained linked to a creative individuality in its conception, its realisation required the teamwork of numerous artists and technicians. This would give the possibility for the total development of abstract art through the use of the new techniques and material provided by the modern era. In short, Léger conceived of mural art both as the expression of the advance of the collective forces in the contemporary world and as the foreshadow of collective harmony in future society.

The Mural Art group of the Maison de la Culture animated by Saint Maur, Schoedelin and C. Rodde beginning in 1935 organised several exhibitions and demonstrations and disseminated analogous ideas: mural art has decided to speak to the people, it renders the artist responsible, it is the only authentically 'social' art.<sup>8</sup> The influence of Mexican 'muralism' whose distant echo had finally reached France should also be pointed out. After the 1920 Revolution in Mexico, Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and their students covered a large number of public buildings with enormous frescos. In a survey carried out by the revue *Commune* in 1935, the Argentinian artist

A. Berni, who had worked in Buenos Aires in Siqueiros' team, expressed a total confidence in mural art: 'Paintings must be placed at strategic points in big cities . . . accessible to the broad dynamic masses of the modern epoch, mural art is the art *par excellence* of the future socialist society'.

The context, however, was totally different from that of Mexico as it was in the 1930s economic crisis which contributed to the preparation of this orientation; giving walls to artists rather than giving them unemployment benefits had been one of the demands of the artistic milieu, particularly the Sculptors' Union.<sup>9</sup> To respond to this demand, several projects were elaborated which originated what is now called in France the 1% decoration work [1% of the construction budget for school buildings in France is for decorative work]. Two successive parliamentary bills failed due to Senate opposition. When Jean Zay became Minister of National Education under the Popular Front he wanted to apply to his own ministry buildings a provision which allowed for '1.5% of the decoration funds to be given to unemployed artists', but he wasn't able to do it!<sup>10</sup>

### THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

The commissions ordered for the International Exhibition of 1937, however, allowed for large mural decorations, some for the new permanent constructions (in particular the theatre), others for the temporary pavillions. Léger stressed the importance of the event, even though he did not personally benefit from it: "this mural art has become one of the newer aspects of the 1937 Exhibition." In fact, both press and visitors seemed to have been struck more by the other great artistic attraction of the Exhibition; the exceptional group of works commissioned by the Spanish government in the Spanish Pavillion. These included Picasso's *Guernica*, Calder's *The Fountain of Mercury*, Gonzalès' sculpture *Montserrat* and a large mural painting by Miro, *The Reaper*.

The most important mural decorations of the Exhibition were entrusted to Raoul Dufy, Robert Delaunay and Sonia Delaunay. For the wall of the entry-hall of the Pavillon de la Lumière (constructed by Mallet-Stevens, in front of the Ecole Militaire), Dufy executed a 600-square metre work entitled *La Fee Electricité* (The Fairy Electricity). It consisted of 250 fitted plywood panels on a surface 60 metres long by 10 high, relating the entire history of electricity from the fantasy elements of mythology to its multiple contemporary applications, passing through the gallery of philosophers and scientists who had contributed to its discovery. Dufy devoted himself to a scrupulous documentation, multiplied by preparatory sketches, drawings and water-colours, before letting himself go in an extremely joyful liberty in the final composition,

9. For the WPA (Work Projects Administration) project in the USA, more than 5,000 mural paintings were produced by artists hit by unemployment in 1930.

10. G. Luigi, *Les Problèmes du 1%*, Master's thesis, Université de Paris I, 1972.

11. R. Delaunay, *Du cubisme à l'art abstrait*, Paris, Sevpén, 1957, p.233.

12. *Idem*, p.238.

13. Chafé realised a large diptych, *L'Usine à gaz* in the same place.

drawing and colouring (the whole work can be seen today in the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris).

Robert Delaunay, who had dreamed for a long time of 'large architectural mural works presenting a collective idea', and who had re-affirmed in 1935 his desire to bring about 'a revolution on the walls' was given the task of realising two vast compositions for the Palais de l'Air, each one with surface of 780 square metres, as well as coloured reliefs (*Rythmes sans fin*; Endless Rhythms). For the Pavillon des Chemins de Fer he collaborated with a young architect, Audoul, for a 1,772-square-metres composition. The realisation of a painting of such dimensions required a team of 50 painters who worked for 9 days (including Manessier, Bissière and Estève). Several years later, Delaunay still stressed the significance of such a collective work: 'You see the possibilities there are in well-ordered team where everyone has a place; there are immense possibilities in collective work which can exercise an enormous influence at the social level'.<sup>11</sup>

When war broke out, Delaunay continued to hope that mural art announced a new function for art in society and that it foreshadowed alternative relations between artists:

Artists are beginning to realise that they have been clowns and apes for a certain social class (and some have taken themselves seriously in their own trap). They are beginning to realise that they are no longer mutual enemies and that there are higher human possibilities — more collective, immediate — to be satisfied.<sup>12</sup>

As for Sonia Delaunay, she executed two enormous decorations, *Portugal* and *Voyages Lointains* (Distant Voyages) for the Pavillon des Chemins de Fer, as well as some panels for the vast dome and interlinked rings devised by Robert Delaunay for the Pavillon de l'Air, whose other panels were done by Gleizsa, Bissière, Survage and Villon. At the Pavillon de la Manufacture de Sèvres, a 12 by 4 metres decorative panel by Gromaire (*Les loisirs*) was placed on the front of the building.

### LÉGER'S PROJECTS

Although Léger did not have the occasion to carry out such large murals, he painted a large decorative painting for the new Palais de la Découverte, *Le Transport des Forces*.<sup>13</sup> Under the Popular Front, he had several possibilities of artistic intervention other than easel painting which he also continued. He created the decors and costumes for a ballet (*David triomphant* by Serge Lifar) at the Opera. When J.-R. Bloch staged a popular play, *Naissance d'une cité* (Birth of a City) with music by Honneger and Milhaud, at the Palais des Sports in 1937, Léger invented mobile decors, evocative and symbolic objects which appeared and disappeared, drawing on the new aspects of the evocative power of the electric light as well as the language of colour: 'the dark blue jackets of workers, the 'sign' of work, will suddenly be replaced by the flourishing of multi-coloured sweaters, the 'sign' of joy, festivals and liberation'. Finally, he created the general decor for the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail) Unions for their 1938 festival at the Vélodrome d'Hiver.

However, his most ambitious project, which was

also the closest to his heart, was not carried out. He wanted to link a transformed Paris to a totally original conception of the 1937 Exhibition, beginning by cleaning the facades of the monuments and buildings of Paris (which was later carried out by Malraux under the Fifth Republic).

Imagine Paris 'all white', ie all the building fronts scraped and restored using all the unemployed for the job . . .<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, imagine the Exhibition itself as extremely polychromatic: a yellow plaza, a red and blue avenue. Dominating everything, an Eiffel Tower whose silhouette would be camouflaged. . . To make it a popular attraction, it must be talking, sonorous and 400 metres high.<sup>15</sup> The colour would be changed. Briefly, it would become a new important aspect of the Exhibition. And that's just for the daytime. By night it would be all light. It would replace the fireworks, announce the shows, clamities and festivities. Multi-coloured lines would run from top to bottom (*Vu*, 14 August 1935).

Following coloured walls, polychrome architecture and mural art, Léger arrived at the concept of the polychrome city. The modern city is a confusion, a riot of colour. It has begun to be organised in the streets through displays and art in shop windows. The artistic, physiological, psychological, symbolic and even therapeutic power of liberated colour could create in the city of tomorrow a genuine artistic order, both geometrical and sensitive, coherent and shattered (*éclaté*). Shows, happenings and visual rhythms could be multiplied and enriched with all the resources of the electric light. Mural art would only form one of the elements of a utopian urbanism; a city organised and arranged by artists with a harmoniously orchestrated total art offering an expressive synthesis of modern dynamism. In this city, all the conquests of modern art, from cubism to abstraction would be integrated and surpassed in a collective aesthetic of everyday life, a permanent source of joy and communion.

### THE SOCIAL SUBJECT

The extreme outcome of the artistic thought of Léger deeply underlay the concept of 'neo-realism' he defended in the Maison de la Culture debates. This could only have been the direct opposite of another concept which used the same term 'neo-realism' to designate a very different direction: an art with *new* content, inheriting the forms of *realism*. In fact, this latter current, affirmed under the Popular Front, was the embryo of the socialist realism of the 1950s. The polemical themes were already in place on both sides and Léger himself took up after the war the same positions he had in the 1930s.

14. In 1937 he proposed once again an all-white Paris, 'Greece on the Banks of the Seine', to Huisman, director of the *Beaux-Arts*. Cited by R. Garaudy, *Pour un réalisme du XX Siècle*, Paris, Grasset, 1968.

15. At the time the Eiffel Tower was 300 metres high. The addition of a television antenna in 1959 raised it to its present height, 320m. [Translator's note].

16. Le Corbusier, *Quand les cathédrales étaient blanches*, Paris, PLM, 1937.

17. B. Taslitzky, 'Souvenirs du Front Populaire', *La Nouvelle Critique*, 70, December 1955, p.14.

In his 1936 interventions, he expressed, like Le Corbusier,<sup>16</sup> the fear that the 'return to the subject' would be the sign of an artistic 'return to the past' towards the Renaissance, Rembrandt and Rubens. He feared in social realism the manufacture of a purely descriptive, sentimental and anecdotal art, an 'inferior-quality popular painting' for the people. The appearance of quickly made propaganda art would only continue the academic approach of 'first imposing the subject and then, if need be, afterwards slipping in the pictorial elements'. All of this betrayed, in the eyes of Léger, a somewhat demagogic impatience to capture peoples' attention easily, without taking into account the fact that their sensitivity is deformed by society, the school and the dominant taste.

During the 1930s a number of artists who had evolved towards figurative art came together, coming either from cubism and abstraction (Ozenfant) or from the surrealist orbit (Giacometti, Lurçat), both within a more general and ideologically suspect movement of a 'return to the real' or a return to the 'French tradition'. Other painters who had always been figurative translated social preoccupations into their choice of subject matter (*Les loisirs* by Walch, 1935, *le Chômeur* by Gromaire, 1936). However, it was the works of younger militant artists which best illustrated this new social realism, particularly Amblard, Gruber, Lingner and Taslitzky. Francis Gruber painted a series of small paintings to the glory of work and the working world, as well as a *Homage à Léo Lagrange*. Boris Taslitzky, who was already known for his *Homage à Villemain*, a youth of 14 killed on 6 February 1934, realised several compositions including *le Jeudi des enfants d'Ivry*, *le massacre des chômeurs d'Haiti*, and presented *la Foule au Mur des Fédérés* at the third exhibition of the Maison de la Culture.

### NEW CONTACTS

This small group of artists, either members of, or very close to the PCF, did not express itself only through easel paintings or sketches. The Popular Front allowed them to discover new forms of contact with workers and new modes of artistic participation in political life. Several of them went into the occupied factories during the great strikes of June 1936, including Taslitzky: 'For 15 days, I drew the joy of frank, open faces in the factories, the re-awakened cheerfulness of the sales girls in the department store *Printemps*, and in the Hôtel Crillon, place de la Concorde, where I visited kitchens maintained like the engine room of a ship, the authoritative look of the cooks polishing their stoves'.<sup>17</sup>

The same artists did work for many short-lived decorations: in school playgrounds for the electoral campaign, and in the meeting and festival halls for political and union organisations after the victory. Their most original activity was to popularise the art of the past during the innumerable marches and demonstrations of the Popular Front where they prepared huge painted compositions on paper, mounted on moveable frames reproducing famous paintings of the realist tradition. Thus, *la Barricade* by Delacroix and *le Très de Mayo* by Goya (enlarged to a length of 10 metres) was to be seen marching in

the midst of the crowd: 'We carried the museum onto the streets, and it was us, by reproducing a giant-size *la Rue Transnonian* or *le Très de Mayo* who gave the people a knowledge of their greatest images, at the same time that Aragon and other writers returned to them Hugo and Anatole France.'<sup>18</sup>

This ideology or reviving the accumulated cultural treasures confiscated by the ruling classes, flowed from the PCF's new national policy which linked the coming together of intellectuals and the people for the defence of culture to an increasingly affirmed revival of the national heritage in all areas. Thus, both artists and actors carried, in their outstretched arms, giant portraits of intellectuals and politicians from French history (Fouquet, Callot, Courbet, Ronsard, Diderot, Hugo, Barbusse, France, Marat, Jaurès etc). Taslitzky later evoked the 14th July 1936: 'I carried a monochrome painting of Jacques Callot by Gruber and he carried my painting of Daumier'. All of these painted panels, anonymous and short-lived, constituted one of the sources of socialist realism in the 1950s. The choice of the realist tradition in the cultural heritage revival (Courbet became the most lauded example), and the exaltation of all national values, ended up on the ideological level, in the notion of 'French realism', proposed by Aragon in 1937 as the national road to socialist realism. Subject, content and form all had to be drawn from the national reality.

Therefore, believe me, the whole movement of art in its history of thousand turns tends toward the triumph of reality, and above all, the reality in which the artist is submerged, the national reality. The path for French artists and writers to continue the effort of knowledge over the centuries, is necessarily that of French realism.<sup>19</sup>

## THE REJECTION OF THE AVANT-GARDES

The avant-gardes of the 20th century which had questioned pictorial realism could thus only be rejected. They were considered either as movements of negation and destruction linked to the bankruptcy of a decadent bourgeoisie, or as laboratory research which had no doubt perfected its techniques and developed an artistic vocabulary — the 'means of art' — but had never enriched itself with a 'new content' linked to the movement of history. Although the use of the adjective 'bourgeois' to designate a part of culture had been abandoned, a text by Aragon in 1936 indicates well this mistrust *vis-à-vis* existing modern art because it was a product of a society dominated by the bourgeoisie:

It does not occur to Léger that perhaps modern art is not given once and for all and that the process of transformation of society, the revolution, will create conditions for a *modern art* no longer conforming to what Léger considers as modern art, born in our own time during the reign of the bourgeoisie.<sup>20</sup>

However, some artists of the Maison de la Culture looked for a middle-ground between the

18. *Idem*, p.13.

19. L. Aragon, 'Realisme socialiste et réalisme français', *Europe*, March 1938; reproduced in *La Nouvelle Critique*, 16, May 1949, p.88.

20. L. Aragon, *idem*, p.29.

tendency which took its inspiration from the avant-gardes of the beginning of the 20th century, and that which, under various names, constituted the embryo of socialist realism in France. Without wanting to renounce the lessons of Cézanne's geometric constructions and cubism, they recommended at the same time the choice of 'human subjects'. This was the case of André Lhote and Pignon. Since that time, the latter has occasionally undertaken political or social themes without renouncing a certain artistic research (*l'Ouvrier mort*, 1935-6; *le Grand Meeting*, 1937).

## GUERNICA

The pictorial work which dominated the whole epoch, and which remains today the very example of an exceptional meeting between a theme taken from current political events and the use of a new artistic language, without any concession to social realism, was Picasso's *Guernica*. This large black and white painting (3.50 metres by 7.70 metres) was the result of an intense work (a hundred or so studies) undertaken in a state of indignation: on the 26 April 1937, the civilian population of the small Basque town of Guernica was massacred by Nazi bombing. Picasso began to make sketches at the beginning of May and finished the final composition at the end of June and it shown in the Pavillon of Republican Spain at the International Exhibition. A surprising fact: it seems to have remained incomprehensible at the time, not only for most visitors, but also for most of the press and critics, and even politicians. Only a minority of artists and intellectuals close to the artist understood its importance at the time. The Spanish tragedy and the monstrosity of fascism had overwhelmed Picasso's sensitivity; between January and June of the same year, 1937, he engraved a series of 18 etchings, a comic-strip-like accusation entitled *Songe et Mensonge de Franco* (Dreams and Lies of Franco), and in October his raging violence went even further in the facial deformations of *La Femme en pleurs* (Woman in Tears).

It was the war in Spain rather than the reality in France and the Popular Front which most shook artists, and led them to treat political themes in painting and sculptures. This time all aesthetic tendencies, including surrealism, were united. The Surrealists included Goerg, Gonzalès, Masson, Lam Picasso, Suzanne Roger, Fougerson, Tal Coat, Hajdu, and Miro. Aesthetic causes and arguments seemed ridiculous compared to the tragedy of the outbreak of the Second World War which confirmed more than ever the necessity of an anti-fascist struggle.

Besides, the Popular Front's constant policy of bringing together different currents had always aimed at grouping all currents and individuals in exhibitions and shows, over and above ideological and aesthetic oppositions. One of the most significant demonstrations of this was held on the evening of the 14th of July 1936 in the hall of the Alhambra, where the play by Romain Rolland, *14 juillet*, was staged with a curtain by Picasso. The installation of paintings in exhibitions, also marked a democratic innovation in its refusal of prestige hierarchies and its juxtaposition of all works without main panels, fraternally mixing the young

and the less young, celebrities and *débutants* including Braque, Amblard, Goerg, Gromaire, Lhote, Pignon, Matisse, Marchand, Léger, Laurens, Gruber, Taslitzky and Lipchitz.

The only left artistic opposition which abstained from participating in these types of demonstrations and the debates was represented by the surrealist group which multiplied its own activities and collective exhibitions as much on the international level as in France, in the name of a *revolutionary art*. We have seen that the war in Spain was a common meeting ground between various currents of 'committed' painters where the surrealist André Masson, particularly, was active. We should also note the survival within the 'evening museum' program of the workers' library and cultural centre, which during the Popular Front was at 15, rue Médeah, and where several artists were dubbed 'proletarian', including the miner Lacasse.<sup>21</sup>

Breton, the muralist painter Diego Rivera and Trotsky concretised their convergent opposition to 'socialist realism' in the manifesto, *For a Revolutionary Independent Art* which appeared in Mexico on 28 July 1938. The aesthetic doctrine advocated and imposed in the USSR was denounced as the 'official art of the Stalinist epoch'. The defence of a maximum liberty of creation and 'artistic licence', as well as the rejection of 'pure' art, indifferent to politics, made up the two unequal parts of an appeal for a world-wide artistic *opposition* to organise itself in the *Federation internationale de l'art révolutionnaire indépendante* (FIARI). On his return to Paris, Breton attacked nationalism in art in the revue *Minotaure*. A national committee of FIARI was formed (which André Masson joined) which edited the bulletin *Clé* after the Munich agreements (September 1938). This issue, which was to be the only one before the War, denounced the 'return to a French art'.

Although the left was in power only briefly and never really controlled the State and its ideological apparatuses, it succeeded in modifying artistic life and peoples' sensitivity in several embryonic aspects which the War, then the Vichy regime hastened to wipe out. These included the opening of the museums and proposals for educational exhibitions, the encouragement of mural art through economic constraint and ideological justification, and the beginning of a current of social realism which foreshadowed the episode of socialist realism of the 1950s. These significant experiences should be analysed, not only for drawing up the cultural map of the 1930s, but also for considering the possible articulation between a programme of the left, the reflections of the extreme left and the plastic arts today. The problematic has profoundly changed but we find today innumerable reflections on art and the people which allow us to disentangle continuity and rupture: May 1968 reactivated a class analysis of bourgeois art, although sometimes summary; without being convincing in the search for a proletarian art, surrealism, in the company of their avant-gardes, still nourishes the pretensions of a free revolutionary art; socialist realism has been abandoned by the PCF and

21. R. Bonnet, 'le musée du soir', *les Cahiers du Peuple*, 2.

picked-up again by Maoist and extreme-left, even marginal communists; and the museums and exhibitions are still looking for a change which would make them instruments of cultural action destined if not for the popular masses, then at least for an influx of the middle classes, of which a part is becoming radicalised. A new Popular Front would stir up, in turn, all of these currents by multiplying new experiences, practices, discourses, illusions and utopias, all without doubt beneficial to a helpless artistic scene.

## V.I. Lenin

### AN URGENT QUESTION

(Russia, 1899)

In the previous article we said that our immediate task is to establish a Party organ, one that appears and can be delivered regularly, and we raised the question of whether and under what circumstances it is possible to achieve this aim. Let us examine the more important aspects of this question.

The main objection that may be raised is that the achievement of this purpose *first* requires the development of local group activity. We consider this fairly widespread opinion to be fallacious. We can and must immediately set about founding the Party organ — and, it follows, the Party itself — and putting them on a sound footing. The conditions essential to such a step already exist: local Party work is being carried on and obviously has struck deep roots; for the destructive police attacks that are growing more frequent lead to only short interruptions; fresh forces rapidly replace those that have fallen in battle. The Party has resources for publishing and literary forces, not only abroad, but in Russia as well. The question, therefore, is whether the work *that is already being conducted* should be continued in “amateur” fashion or whether it should be organised into the work of one party and in such a way that it is reflected in its entirety in one common organ.

Here we come to the most urgent question of our movement, to its sore point — organisation. The improvement of revolutionary organisation and discipline, the perfection of our underground technique are an absolute necessity. We must openly admit that in this respect we are lagging behind the old Russian revolutionary parties and must bend all our efforts to overtake and surpass them. Without improved organisation there can be no progress of our working-class movement in general, and no establishment of an active party with a properly functioning organ, in particular. That is on the one hand. On the other, the existing Party organs (organs in the sense of institutions and groups, as well as newspapers) must pay greater attention to questions of organisation and exert an influence in this respect on local groups.

Local, amateurish work always leads to a great excess of personal connections, to study-circle methods, and we have grown out of the study-circle stage which has become too narrow for our present-day work and which leads to an over-expenditure of forces. Only fusion into a single party will enable us strictly to observe the principles of division of labour and economy of forces, which must be achieved in order to reduce the losses and build as reliable a

bulwark as possible against the oppression of the autocratic government and against its frantic persecutions. Against us, against the tiny groups of socialists hidden in the expanses of the Russian “underground”, there stands the huge machine of a most powerful modern state that is exerting all its forces to crush socialism and democracy. We are convinced that we shall, in the end, smash the police state, because all the sound and developing sections of our society are in favour of democracy and socialism; but, in order to conduct a systematic struggle against the government, we must raise revolutionary organisation, discipline, and the technique of underground work to the highest degree of perfection. It is essential for individual Party members or separate groups of members to specialise in the different aspects of Party work — some in the duplication of literature, others in its transport across the frontier, a third category in its distribution inside Russia, a fourth in its distribution in the cities, a fifth in the arrangement of secret meeting places, a sixth in the collection of funds, a seventh in the delivery of correspondence and all information about the movement, an eighth in maintaining relations, etc., etc. We know that this sort of specialisation requires much greater self-restraint, much greater ability to concentrate on modest, unseen, everyday work, much greater real heroism than the usual work in study circles.

The Russian socialists and the Russian working class, however, have shown their heroic qualities and, in general, it would be a sin to complain of a shortage of people. There is to be observed among the working youth an impassioned, uncontrollable enthusiasm for the ideas of democracy and socialism, and helpers for the workers still continue to arrive from among the intellectuals, despite the fact that the prisons and places of exile are overcrowded. If the idea of the necessity for a stricter organisation is made widely known among all these recruits to the revolutionary cause, the plan for the organisation of a regularly published and delivered Party newspaper will cease to be a dream. Let us take one of the conditions for the success of this plan — that the newspaper be assured a regular supply of correspondence and other material from everywhere. Has not history shown that at all times when there has been a resurgence of our revolutionary movement such a purpose has proved possible of achievement even in respect of papers published abroad? If Social-Democrats working in various localities come to regard the Party newspaper as *their own* and consider the maintenance of regular contact with it, the discussion of their problems and the reflection of the whole movement in it to be their main task, it will be quite possible to ensure the supply to the paper of full information about the movement, provided methods of maintaining secrecy, not very complicated ones, are observed. The other aspect of the question, that of delivering the newspaper regularly to all parts of Russia, is much more difficult, more difficult than the similar task under previous forms of revolutionary movement in Russia when newspapers were not, to such an extent, intended for the masses of the people. The purpose of Social-Democratic newspapers, however, facilitates their distribution. The chief places to which the

newspaper must be delivered regularly and in large numbers are the industrial centres, factory villages and towns, the factory districts of big cities, etc. In such centres the population is almost entirely working class; in actual fact the worker in such places is master of the situation and has hundreds of ways of outwitting the police; relations with neighbouring factory centres are distinguished by their extraordinary activity. At the time of the Exceptional Law against the Socialists (1878-90) the German political police did not function worse, but probably better, than the Russian police; nevertheless, the German workers, thanks to their organisation and discipline, were able to ensure the regular transport across the frontiers of a weekly illegal newspaper and to deliver it to the houses of all subscribers, so that even the ministers could not refrain from admiring the Social-Democratic post (“the red mail”). We do not, of course, dream of such successes, but we can, if we bend our efforts towards it, ensure that our Party newspaper appears no less than twelve times a year and is regularly delivered in all the main centres of the movement to all groups of workers that can be reached by socialism.

To return to the question of specialisation, we must also point out that its insufficiency is due partially to the dominance of “amateur” work and partially to the fact that our Social-Democratic newspapers usually devote far too little attention to questions of organisation.

Only the establishment of a common Party organ can give the “worker in a given field” of revolutionary activity the consciousness that he is marching with the “rank and file”, the consciousness that his work is directly essential to the Party, that he is one of the links in the chain that will form a noose to strangle the most evil enemy of the Russian proletariat and of the whole Russian people — the Russian autocratic government. Only strict adherence to this type of specialisation can economise our forces; not only will every aspect of revolutionary work be carried out by a smaller number of people, but there will be an opportunity to make a number of aspects of present-day activities *legal* affairs. This *legalisation* of activity, its conduct within the framework of the law, has long been advised for Russian socialists by *Vorwärts* (*Forward*), the chief organ of the German Social-Democrats. At first sight one is astonished at such advice, but in actual fact it merits careful attention. Almost everyone who has worked in a local study circle in some city will easily remember that among the numerous and diverse affairs in which the circle engaged some were, in themselves, legal (e.g. the gathering of information on the workers’ conditions; the study of legal literature on many questions; consultation and reviewing of certain types of foreign literature; maintenance of certain kinds of relations; aid to workers in obtaining a general education, in studying factory laws, etc.). Making affairs of this sort the specific function of a special contingent of people would reduce the strength of the revolutionary army “in the firing line” (without any reduction of its “fighting potential”) and increase the strength of the reserve, those who replace the “killed and wounded”. This will be possible only when both the active

members and the reserve see their activities reflected in the common organ of the Party and sense their connection with it. Local meetings of workers and local groups will, of course, always be necessary, no matter what extent we carry out our specialisation; but, on the one hand, the number of mass revolutionary meetings (particularly dangerous from the standpoint of police action and often having results far from commensurate with the danger involved) will become considerably less and, on the other hand, the selection of various aspects of revolutionary work as special functions will provide greater opportunities to screen such meetings behind legal forms of assembly: entertainments, meetings of societies sanctioned by law, etc. Were not the French workers under Napoleon III and the German workers at the time of the Exceptional Law against the Socialists able to devise all possible ways to cover up their political and socialist meetings? Russian workers will be able to do likewise.

Further: only by better organisation and the establishment of a common Party organ will it be possible to extend *and* deepen the very content of Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation. We stand in great need of this. Local work must almost inevitably lead to the exaggeration of local particularities, this is impossible without a central organ which will, at the same time, be an advanced democratic organ. Only then will our *urges* to convert Social-Democracy into a leading fighter for democracy become *reality*. Only then, too, shall we be able to work out definite political tactics. Social-Democracy has renounced the fallacious theory of the “one reactionary mass”. It regards utilisation of the support of the progressive classes against the reactionary classes to be one of the most important political tasks. As long as the organisations and publications are local in character, this task can hardly be carried out at all; matters do not go farther than relations with individual “liberals” and the extraction of various “services” from them. Only a common Party organ, consistently implementing the principles of political struggle and holding high the banner of democracy will be able to win over to its side all militant democratic elements and use all Russia’s progressive forces in the struggle for political freedom. Only then shall we be able to convert the workers’ smouldering hatred of the police and the authorities into conscious hatred of the autocratic government and into determination to conduct a desperate struggle for the rights of the working class and of the entire Russian people! In modern Russia, a strictly organised revolutionary party built up on this foundation will prove the greatest political force!



Lluís Bassets

## CLANDESTINE COMMUNICATIONS: NOTES ON THE PRESS AND PROPAGANDA OF THE ANTI-FRANCO RESISTANCE (1939-1975)

(Spain, 1976)

Culture and political propaganda in conditions of clandestinity provide unusually interesting material for reflection on persuasive discourse in general, and on the effects of communications media in particular. The sociology of communications, based primarily in the United States, and empirical in its origins, has been prone to two types of fallacies whose very negativity throws light on the question of clandestine communications. The first error, made at the level of subject matter, is to reduce the wide variety of phenomena which can arise in a clandestine context to a simple dialectic of propaganda and counter-propaganda. The second, this time at the level of epistemology, is to limit the study of persuasion to the so-called effects of communication, the positive or negative results of specific messages on opinion, taken as susceptible to analysis by quantitative methods.

The counter-propaganda fallacy, which has provided us with some work which is not entirely without interest—mainly on persuasive techniques in wartime, and on the characteristics of Hitlerian and Stalinist discourse—has either completely ignored clandestine forms of culture and propaganda, or has considered them as part of persuasion and espionage in the various circumstances prevailing in time of war, whether hot or cold. The source of this fallacy must be sought on the one hand, in the political/military interests which have for the most part lain behind research carried out in the United States, and, on the other, in the naive and mechanistic ideology which informs a large part of such research, and which leads to a consideration of clandestine communicators as agents of one or other of the world powers, generically identifiable by their similarity of ideology.

The fallacy of effects has likewise led to the exclusion of all those forms of communication which are supposedly irrelevant because lacking in effect. In the case of clandestine propaganda, duly considered under the heading of counter-propaganda, its

This text was first published in the anthology *Sociología de la comunicación de masas*, Miquel de Moragas, editor, Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1979. Reprinted by permission of the author. It was translated from the Spanish by Phil Gunson. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

negligible effects are said to render its study uninteresting.

The basis of this fallacy is also to be found in two oversights. The first is that the empirical sociological study of the effect of a specific communication itself forms part of the totality of persuasive discourse in a given society; or, in other words, that quantitative analyses of public opinion are also part of public opinion. The second oversight concerns the isolated consideration of communications, separate from the semantic universe in which social culture exists. This has raised the question as to whether rather than the message creating an effect on the public, the opposite may not in fact be the case,<sup>1</sup> and leads eventually to argument over effects in the field of interaction, for there is no communication, however unidirectional, in which some type of interaction is not produced.

These are the obstacles which have impeded the systematic study of this aspect of social communication. The incentives, in my view, for opening up this new field of investigation, which has so far been limited to the history of the press, to journalistic essays, or to that ambiguous—and also American—form, the “underground”, are various. In the first place, a deeper awareness is needed of the model which corresponds to the totalitarian state, regarding which there already exists a bibliography which, if not complete, is at least considerable. Under totalitarianism the absolute annihilation of the opposition is only achieved in genuinely exceptional, and brief, situations, and thus it is impossible to study communication in this type of state without including a consideration of clandestine modes. In the second place, there is the particular interest aroused by this form of communication in countries which have recently emerged from dictatorship, and where it is possible to carry out, in addition to historical reconstructions, concrete research into the communicative model which has been functioning up to very recent times for a large part of the present-day political class. The Spanish case has special additional attractions, such as a peculiar richness and variety of the clandestine model, which means it is possible to find virtually every type of communicative mode in the past 40 years of the country's history. In the third place, there is the attraction of studying communication within clandestine groups, and their interaction with the repressive forces in a society in which programmed violence—between the state and terrorist groups—occurs increasingly frequently.<sup>2</sup> It is, moreover, no secret that any former militant of the various anti-fascist resistance groups in Europe is familiar with particular forms of behaviour current among the armed groups which today operate in Italy, Spain and—to a limited extent—in Germany. It should not be forgotten that not only in terms of methods, but also in terms of ideology, there exists, formally, a certain continuity between the present-day phenomenon and the more or less peaceful anti-fascist resistance movements. Fourthly, and

1. Umberto Eco “Does the Public Harm Television?”, Bologna, 1973.

2. Paolo Fabbri, a teacher at the University of Bologna, is the person who, to my knowledge, has concerned himself most with the semiotic and communicative problems raised by terrorism.

finally, there is the stimulus such a study provides for the study of political communication in general, in that clandestine persuasion is a form of persuasion without an audience, or with a limited audience, for which it is possible to isolate more completely the form chosen by the originator, beginning with the discourse and the conditions in which it is produced.

But in addition to these stimuli of a theoretical nature, I believe I can point to an attraction of a more directly political nature, which ought to lead experts in mass communication to concern themselves more closely with situations involving political resistance. The political changes which have taken place in recent years throughout the world show that progressive movements lack, in the vast majority of cases, a clear policy as to how they should frame their communications in situations of resistance, and are even less clear as to how they can capitalise on the communications channels developed clandestinely once they find themselves able to operate legally. The cases of Spain and Portugal are singularly clear examples of this process, in that both demonstrate a political reverse suffered by the labour and popular movements under democracy as compared with the possibilities they were able to develop under dictatorship.

I believe that this subject, around which one could structure the whole of the political debate on the Spanish “transition” and the Portuguese revolution and counter-revolution, is of vital importance for those countries which are currently living under dictatorships or reactionary regimes, and whose labour and popular movements are obliged to express themselves in clandestine forms. Much more important than knowing how to express oneself under such circumstances—a skill which, after all, can be learned in the same way in any part of the world, though at the cost of much blood and many sacrifices—is knowing how to arrive at the moment of political change having preserved certain organs of the popular press from the coming manoeuvres of reactionaries; having created that progressive utopia (as it still remains), a press agency independent of the major information circuits; or in a position to force through the democratic and public control of the media. This subject, which I can only outline here, since its discussion would involve a much more extensive political debate, should shed light on a great many of the concepts employed by the left and by grass-roots movements, which, although they often point to the issue of power over the media, nevertheless tend to turn the history of this power, and along with it all authentic future possibilities, into abstractions. The type of mistake which should be avoided is that which, for example, has been committed in Spain, where an entire chain of local newspapers belonged to the Falange is to be sold to the private sector because of the fear on the part of the right of a press which might be open to control by the left, but also because of a left which is incapable of proposing and supporting in a determined fashion alternatives of cooperative power, popular control, or even municipal or regional control for this type of press.

The reflections presented here on the model of clandestine communication under Franco do not

pretend to be a complete study of, nor even a coherent approximation to, all the problems raised. Neither the scope of this necessarily limited work nor the state of research into the subject would permit such a claim. What is offered here, however, are some notes on the main components—historical in some cases—of the underground resistance in Spain, along with some first working hypotheses and some suggestions for further research. Such a modest aim would be more than fulfilled if this contribution served us an introductory guide to a subject which is very little known, and thus requires the attention of students and the studiously inclined.

### I. THE LEVELS OF CLANDESTINE COMMUNICATIONS

The term “Clandestine communications” is here understood in its broadest accepted sense: that is, as referring to the totality of communicative activities carried out outside the law and with the identity of the protagonists concealed as far as possible. Defined like this, clandestine communication would include both the traditional media of clandestinity—press and radio—and the inter-personal communication which takes place within the banned political organisations; both propaganda actions—slogan-painting for example—and propaganda through action—such as the demonstration or the act of terrorism.

Within clandestine communications it is possible to pick out three levels of complexity, which undoubtedly correspond broadly to the organisational levels attained by the opposition to the regime, but which appear always to arise simultaneously, though in varying degrees of intensity. Thus there is a first stage, or level, of *information*, which corresponds to the creation of a minimal organisational structure. The basis of communicative work is the collection, or transmission of data. A second level, of *propaganda*, corresponds to the extension of the limited organised nuclei and their intervention in social conflicts. The basis of communicative work here is political persuasion through proselytism, and agitation or propaganda on a scale intended to be massive. The third level, the formation of a *culture*, corresponds to the consolidation of numerous organised (and stable) nuclei—insignificant in comparison with the bulk of citizens who are neither organised nor linked to the underground movement—in which there appears both a lucidity absent from the information and propaganda—and compatible with the concept of art—and distinct forms of behaviour and ways of life. These three levels are established in opposition to the prevailing power with the aim of counteracting its effects: they include information against censorship; propaganda against the subjugation of awareness through terror and totalitarian propaganda; culture against lack of culture and against official culture.

A good example of the stage at which information is of prime importance is provided by the first phase of *franquismo* up to the end of the Second World War. Information at this time came in the form of data from allied sources on the state of the conflict—carefully censored by the Franco regime—and the diffusion of the data primarily through interpersonal networks. But it also came in the form

of espionage and networks of support for the French resistance. In this context the broadcasts made by the BBC and its news bulletins<sup>3</sup> throughout the war need to be studied, as does their later utilisation by the few organised nuclei or by particular individuals who, in some cases, went so far as to circulate typewritten letters informing circles of friends of developments in the war. During this same period a large proportion of organised militants inside Spain worked on tasks resembling espionage work, from the formation of networks to facilitate entry to and exit from the country, to the production of information, both strategic and political. Interestingly, it seems to have been the nationalist parties of Catalonia and the Basque country<sup>4</sup> which became most intensely involved in this type of work. In discussing this period, it is important not to forget the role played by information in relation to repression, not so much on account of its political content as of its use in locating disappeared relatives who had been jailed or killed.<sup>5</sup>

The same period also saw the production of propaganda, but on a very small scale, and more closely resembling a first attempt than a genuinely proletarian and persuasive effort. Information continued to play a primary role right up to the death of Franco, in direct relation to the intensity of the censorship. Propaganda itself, which for a certain type of recipient may not be convincing, played an informative role because of the lack of information available from the legal media. In the final decade of Franco's rule clandestine press agencies began to form and to survive for fairly long periods, informing the opposition nuclei and providing a valuable source of news for the foreign media.<sup>6</sup> Curiously, several of these arose during periods of exceptional repression, in which press censorship was increased and news of repressive actions and violations of human rights by the regime became more common.<sup>7</sup> The informative role of the humanitarian organisations—Amnesty International, the Solidarity Commissions, Caritas—is one of the most noticeable aspects of this period, and one which can be seen to be a constant under all authoritarian regimes.

Propaganda, on the other hand, is not characteristic of any specific period, and the history of *franquismo* is therefore effectively a crescendo whose only possible conclusion is the death of the dictator. At the end of the 1960's, however, there occurred a point at which the extent of the propagan-

3. Max Gallo, *Historie de la Espagne franquist*, Paris, 1971, p. 117.

4. In practice, in Catalonia it was the Front Nacional de Catalunya and the remnants of the *zoum*, and in the Basque country the PNV, which concerned themselves most with this sort of task. For the case of Catalonia, see *Vint anys de resistència catalana (1939-1959)*, by Fabre, Huertas and Ribas, Barcelona, 1978, p. 103 ff. For the case of the Basque country see the personal testimony of Joseba Elosegui in *Quiero morir por algo*, Barcelona, 1977, pp. 245-261.

5. The execution of the president of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Lluís Companys, was reported precisely because of the existence of these information networks.

6. The most noteworthy cases of this type of activity are represented by "Avui; Servei Català d'Informació" and "API" ["Agencia Popular Informativa"]. See *Prensa catalan clandestina (1970-1977)* by Crexell, Barcelona,

da clearly surpassed its informational role: on top of the proliferation of party publications and of those of workers and scholars came increasing quantities of the persuasive products of the underground resistance, as painted slogans, placards, demonstrations and pamphlets made their appearance on the streets of towns and cities. The extent of the propaganda apparatus of the opposition—clearly limited when looked at in comparison with the extent of the legal media—should not, in my view, be seen in terms of effectiveness, but in terms of its organisational role. Propaganda becomes, in a clandestine situation, the principal means of preserving organisational identity itself, a system of self-representation for each group,<sup>8</sup> rather than a means of persuasion.

A good example of this mechanism is provided by the party press. The existence of a publication which can speak for the organisation is the precondition for the organisation's credibility. To organise is, above all, to communicate at an interpersonal level, but it is not possible to organise without that faith in the life of the organisation which is furnished by its written organ. The party press is intended in many cases not merely as something to be read but as something to be distributed, with all that this implies in terms of an organisational and political act. And there is a further point. Organising and re-organising, splitting into new fractions, usually begins with the propaganda apparatus, the party organ. Fractional struggles are mainly waged around the propaganda apparatus, in the most technical sense of the term.

But perhaps the most illuminating example of this phenomenon is provided by certain slogan-painting campaigns carried out in Catalonia, in which all that was painted was a single letter within a circle: "P" for protest; "A" for amnesty, and "L" for liberty. The walls of certain cities would repeatedly be covered with these curious symbols over a period of several months. They were written with chalk, with felt pens or with spray paint, but the only people who understood their meaning were the militants involved in the campaign, or at most small circles of sympathisers. The function of subjective affirmation appears very clearly here in the self-representation which this type of communicative activity performs.

Finally, with regard to the third level—clandestinity as culture—it must be said that there exists clandestine culture from the moment that the 1977, and *La premsa clandestina a Catalunya (1939-1975)* by Bassets, Bastardes, Bonet, Labrador, Gifreu; Barcelona 1979.

7. This type of agency is typified by the Karl Marx Committee of Madrid, promoted by, among others, Eva Forest, which carried out extensive and valuable clandestine publicity work in areas mainly linked to the repression, beginning with the state of exception of 1969. The Committee was known as the "quevedos" on account of the verses from a Spanish poet with which they headed their bulletins: "A starving people does not know how to fear death, the dispossessed people still has weapons".

8. The action of the communications media as media for the self-representation of the group involved has been developed by Professor Harry Pross of the Freie Universität of Berlin, at a seminar held in the Faculty of Information Sciences in Barcelona ("Medios de comunicación y cambio social") between 26 February and 2 March 1979.

clandestine nuclei establish a form of existence. In so far as there is a clandestine ethic—a repertory of usages and customs—there is also the possibility of broader communicative modes: cinema, theatre; literature, sales outlets for illegal cultural products from books to lithographs. On a normally very-limited scale there was clandestine culture practically from the very moment of Franco's victory, in the form of anonymous poetry,<sup>9</sup> limited editions of literary texts—in Catalan for instance—or talks. From the 1960's onwards this culture was extended until it came to exceed the bounds of clandestinity, though not always of illegality, and it became closely associated with the culture which was tolerated by the regime, the Nova Cançó, cine-club circuits, independent theatre, etc., while still retaining areas of obligatory illegality, as in the case of the Catalan Pen Club, which was wholly an underground organisation until the death of Franco, or the subterranean existence—more extra-legal than illegal—of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans.<sup>10</sup> As can be seen, the reconstruction of the resistance simply at the level of culture is one of the most interesting tasks which can be tackled today in the field of the study of communications during the Franco era, always taking into account that the anthropological sense of the term, which involves the ways of life and forms of behaviour of the clandestine society, must be dealt with along with the sociological sense, which involves cultural production.

## II. PROPAGANDA AND ACTION

The fundamentally anarchist principle of propaganda through action, which lies behind a large part of the proletarian terrorism which has taken place in Europe since the end of the XIX century, can arise only in a society in which mass communications media have begun to function, and in particular, in which newspapers have begun to circulate.<sup>11</sup> Propaganda through action is effective, however, only to the extent that the media reflect, even in a partial and mutilated form, the events of daily life. The press and media in general under Franco did not fall into this category until the Press Law of 1966 was introduced. Propaganda through action was limited up to this date to libertarian groups which took advantage of the psychological effects of spectacular blows against the regime by giving the sensation that there exists a tough and invincible resistance movement, even in spite of the fact that the media may limit reports of such incidents to those in which a militant dies at the hands of the police. The actions of the libertarian

9. Popular anonymous poetry, which circulated in the form of typed, or later, photocopied, sheets, will some day have to be subjected to a thorough compilation and criticism. This form of clandestine expression lasted right up to the death of the dictator, on the occasion of which, in Barcelona, there were circulated some verses entitled "L'auca de l'enfadós o la mort del cagalastes".

10. *Vint anys de resistència* . . . , pp. 149-154.

11. The International Workingmen's Association congress held in London in 1881 publicly affirmed the tactics of propaganda through action, making use of the new technology and the latest scientific advances, as well as the clandestine press, against those who supported the legal

groups, which have been amply explained in recent publications,<sup>12</sup> normally had two simultaneous objectives: to accumulate funds for the maintenance of the organisation and the finance of its publications, and to serve as propaganda. The effect which these attacks produce on public opinion is fascinating, and has been taken up on many occasions in different types of publications, including literary ones.<sup>13</sup>

Once the Press Law came into effect, all the opposition groups clearly saw the possibilities it presented for propaganda through action, understanding that the best way of carrying out anti-Franco propaganda was to make sure that the media reflected, however partially, what went on in the streets. From 1966 onwards a large number of opposition activities were organised which no longer concentrated on the political character of the action itself or on its real content but on the possibility of its being reported in the press. This in itself obliged the opposition to build up networks of contacts and of information which would permit the news to be passed on to trusted journalists without risk. This fact, which has undoubtedly been underemphasised, is at the root of the non-clandestine communicative phenomenon which developed from 1966 onwards and which benefited from many aspects of the ideas and the culture of the underground resistance, involving many of the same people. This was the growing democratic movement within the press, which waged a constant battle with the authorities in its attempts to raise the ceiling of the permissible. Clearly a history of the resistance from the point of view of its communications will have to include a detailed analysis of the evolution of the press and of the democratic journalists' movement.

The concept of propaganda through action, classically associated with the most radical libertarian movement, was enriched with the appearance of new forms of action whose only meaning lay in the possibility of being transmitted and amplified through the legal media: occupations of churches, hunger strikes, demonstrations with few participants, meetings held in secret but whose aim was to cause street disturbances on particular days, etc. The state of exception brought in 1969, by limiting the possibilities for the most active opposition militants to meet one another, created the conditions in which numbers of people not exceeding 1000 for each of the major cities, began a series of lightning demonstrations, which shortly took on a violent nature. This type of demonstration—known in Spanish either as "lightning" or "ghost" demonstrations—could be organised up to four times per day using the same

methods of trade union struggle. V. Nettlau, *La Première Internationale en Espagne 1868-1888*, Dordecht, R. Lambert, 1969, cited by Gérard Brey and Jacques Maurice in "Casas Viejas; Reformism and Anarchism in Andalucía (1870-1933)", in the Supplement to *Cuadernos de Ruedo Ibérico* (Paris) 1974, entitled "El Movimiento Libertario Español".

12. Sabaté: *Guerrilla urbana en España 1945-1960*, by Antonio Tellez, Barcelona, 1978; *Faceries, La guerrilla urbana* by Antonio Tellez, Paris, 1974.

13. *Faceries* . . . , p. 178; *El Movimiento Libertario Español*, op. cit., p. 332; and for the literary version *Si te dicen que caí* by Juan Marsé.

people. The repressive conditions thus created the conditions for the radicalisation of the opposition. The relatively significant influence of the extreme left in Spain can also be explained in the light of this development.

Propaganda in the more restricted sense, however, is represented primarily by the unwieldy corpus of the written press. Its weight among the whole gamut of anti-Franco propaganda is determined by the lasting nature of the printed word, which makes it possible to study the functioning of clandestine communication in this particular field. The same cannot be said of propaganda through action, of painted slogans, handwritten posters—which were of great importance in the University—or of the radio broadcasts in Spanish from the socialist countries. Only in one case, that of the most important radio station, Radio España Independiente, is it possible to work with archives which have been preserved since the station was founded, and it appears that at the time of writing this is being done by the last director of the station, Eduardo Mendozana, who is preparing its history.<sup>14</sup>

However, it must be said of the famous "Radio Pirenaica" (the name by which the station was popularly known) that the work it carried out was not strictly speaking propaganda, in spite of the fact that this was the intention of its backers, but rather the reinforcement of communist (and to some extent anti-Franco) opinion among not inconsiderable sectors of the population who had no other means of maintaining a small spark of hope. The role played by REI, which is now hard to assess since to do so would involve an *a posteriori* analysis of the audience, must have been fundamental in the rural areas most distant from anti-France agitation, and which in the last elections had shown a reasonable communist presence. "It is possible, however", says one of the station's editors,

that in the collective memory of the country REI will remain simply as a cry against Franco, perhaps exaggerated, always triumphalist, undoubtedly pamphleteering, but in spite of everything, a voice of hope for many years—all the years of *franquismo*—for all the vanquished and persecuted; a voice which said insistently that not all was lost, and that with struggle, sacrifice and patience a way out could be found.<sup>15</sup>

No work exists on the clandestine press which covers the entirety of the period, or which covers the clandestine publicity work carried out in Spain as a whole.<sup>16</sup> The most complete inventory of titles so far made, which covers only those publications distributed in Catalonia, extends to some 800 titles.

14. Forthcoming 1977.

15. "Radio Espanya Independent: apunts per a una història", Marcel Plans, in *Nous Horitzons*, (Barcelona) 49-50, December 1978-January 1979.

16. In addition to the books already cited, which cover only the Catalan press and in one case only the last few years, there exists a small, basic but very interesting work entitled *Panfletos y prensa antifranquista clandestina*, by Cora, Cuadrado, Galván and Rodríguez, Madrid, 1977. For a detailed bibliography on the subject see the already cited *La premsa clandestina a Catalunya (1939-1975)*.

17. In Europe the oldest clandestine press organ must be the Portuguese Communist Party's *Avante!*, which

Although the case of Catalonia is certainly exceptional, as is that of the Basque country, and it is not possible to extrapolate this figure to arrive at an estimate for the whole country, nonetheless the almost unmanageable magnitude of the whole corpus is clear. This figure, however, is balanced by the small circulation of this type of publication, which normally amounts to between 200 and 3,000, and only exceptionally reaches more than 10,000, although the number of people who read each edition is certainly greater than for the legal press.

Within the clandestine press as a whole the party newspapers hold first place as regards the number of publications and distribution, being particularly numerous in the last decade of the Franco regime, when there was a notable increase in the number of parties and political groupings. There are some publications—a few only—which occupy an exceptional place within the range of this type of press. These are the few party organs which cover virtually the whole of the period, and which allow us to follow the evolution of the organisation itself, and of the regime, without a break. The press belonging to the Communist Party is the most noteworthy of these, and is also representative of a constant found in other countries which have been ruled by fascist regimes.<sup>17</sup> As an exponent of party journalism it exemplifies in its most acute form the stereotyped and pamphleteering language which one finds virtually throughout the spectrum of the clandestine press. Of particular interest is its adoption of the stalinist mode of language, whose characteristics remain visible almost up to the final stage of the regime, when the Communist Party opted for what is known as "Eurocommunism", a phenomenon which, moreover, has not yet been analysed from a linguistic viewpoint.<sup>18</sup>

After the party press, that of the labour and union movements is the richest and most complex, in spite of its limited geographical coverage and its normally short duration. Up to the later part of the 1960's it did not occupy an important place in the panorama of the opposition. The publications of the traditional union federations—UGT and CNT—are of limited value throughout the period, and it is necessary to await the arrival of the new labour movement which formed around the Worker's Commissions<sup>19</sup> in order to find a journalistic resurgence. This resurgence surpassed in importance the party press itself, demonstrating the leading role of the working class in the political struggle of the final years of the dictatorship. This type of press presents a wide range of variants, from the bulletins of the branches or regional organisations of the Workers'

can claim 44 years underground.

18. For stalinist language see *Langages totalitaires* by J. P. Faye, Paris, 1972; and "Propositions pour une approche du discours stalinien", Jean-Michel Brabant, a typed manuscript presented at Urbino, 1978.

19. The primitive Workers' Commissions which emerged in the mid-1960's as fruit of the collaboration between workers of widely differing tendencies cannot be identified with the present-day Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras, in spite of the fact that the latter appears to be in a direct line of descent from the hegemonic movement within the workers' anti-Franco struggle.

Commissions, to the factory or workshop bulletin, via the local or district publication. It is the factory press that one can find publications closest to the counter-informational model; that is printed material produced, distributed and read in close connection with the assembly, or workshop and inter-sectional organisations, and which belongs to an organisational development typical of the "autogestionario" ("self-management") tendencies.

Closely related to the workers' press is the neighbourhood press, which also appeared at the end of the 1960's, as a result of the activities of the labour movement in the "barrios" (local neighbourhoods), whether for motives of solidarity or for organisational reasons, resulting from the decision to organise the Worker's Commissions by geographical zones.<sup>20</sup> The essentially labour-oriented nature of these publications was soon lost in the face of the increasingly harsh conditions in the most downtrodden quarters of Spain's urban areas, and there occurred a reorientation towards a different sort of demand. Very soon, at the beginning of the 1970's, with the progressive, though tortuous process of legalisation for the neighbourhood associations (*asociaciones de vecinos*), the clandestine organisation and press tended to disappear. Their place was taken by the associations' bulletins, whose freedom was considerable so long as they were distributed internally.

Within the clandestine press as a whole, the university publications and others produced by students occupy a distinct category. Curiously enough, they followed a pattern which was the reverse of that followed by the neighbourhood publications. The beginnings of the student movement were channeled through the Spanish University Union [*Sindicato Español Universitario*], a Falangist organisation of which membership was obligatory, and which was subjected to assault, beginning with its directly elected posts, until it was totally destroyed in 1966, when the (illegal) democratic student unions were created. Up to that point a significant proportion of the students' desire to express themselves was channeled into course and faculty bulletins. But the destruction of the fascist union obliged the students to take up clandestine publication, which, although much more irregular and weak than in other sectors of society, was to follow a similar pattern of growth. The most interesting part of the student press is that which was produced in the years 1968-69, when the display of imagination clearly reflected the tendencies prevailing in the rest of Europe at the time. In general, however, it may be said that the student

20. *La lucha de barrios en Barcelona*, Equipos de Estudio, Madrid, 1976, especially pp. 24 and 25.

21. A good example of the political literature of the student movement can be read in the magazine *Materiales* (Barcelona), Special No. 1, 1977. There are also good references to these publications in *Els estudiants de Barcelona sota el franquisme* by Josep M. Colober, Barcelona, 1978.

22. *Les Revistes literaries clandestines de la postguerra (1939-1952)*, by Maria Carme Ribé in *L'Avenç* (Barcelona), 6 October 1977.

23. This is the case with the tram strike in Barcelona in 1951; see *La vaga de tramvies de Barcelona* by Félix Fanés, Barcelona, 1975.

press followed the model of pamphleteering publications, produced in a language accessible only to the initiated, combined with the unintelligible slang of schematic marxism.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to these major categories of publications—those of the parties, the workers, the neighbourhoods and the students—there are others which cut across this type of classification. These include literary publications, principally from the first half of the dictatorship, when even literature was practically proscribed if it did not fit strictly the ideals of fascism;<sup>22</sup> theoretical magazines, produced by collectives of independent militants; to which must be added the theoretical publications of the parties, which were normally of a higher intellectual level than their other organs of expression; information bulletins produced by unified solidarity commissions or by semi-professionalised collectives; and the publications of unitary bodies such as the Catalan Assembly or the Democratic Juntas, of an informative nature or in the form of political manifestoes.

In addition there is the large volume of pamphlets and non-periodical publications, which certainly represent the bulk of what appeared in print, but are also the most difficult to track down and classify. Their value was greatest in the periods of organisational vacuum, such as occurred in the 1950's, and they often depended on the initiatives of small groups if not of individuals. A large part of the political campaigns and mass mobilisations of this period were the result of propaganda operations based on the pamphlet, sometimes typed and copied innumerable times.

### III. AREAS AND NETWORKS OF RESISTANCE

The first area of clandestinity after the Republican defeat was undoubtedly the prison system. Immediately after the war there were more militants in jail than in the streets. They were the first who had the chance to reorganise their parties and unions. The first references to clandestine publications are to those produced by hand, or on tiny presses, in the prisons themselves. The Burgos jail was described at the height of the Franco era as the "marxist university", and from there a special programme was sent out for Radio España Independiente.<sup>23</sup> It may safely be said that the most solid party structure was formed in the jails, if one leaves aside that formed abroad by exiles.

Chronologically, the University was the second area which was opened up for clandestine organisation, in spite of the repressive activities of falangist students. The first generations of new militants were to emerge almost exclusively from the University, beginning with the reorganisation of the FUE around 1946 and the formation of the Front Universitari de Catalunya in 1945. The university arena must be thought of as a place of political training (self-taught in the early years, and later with the assistance of the liberal and marxist teachers), of agitation through cultural activities and—exceptionally, through political agitation as such—as a centre for organisational relations. But from the mid-1960's onwards it became the principal theatre of political, agitational

activity in the country: assemblies were held here, and there was political publicity work in the form of wall posters, slogans and the clandestine press. All this proliferated within the classrooms as nowhere else, the product of the hypersensibility of the students and their constant mobilisations.

The influence of university members in the opposition organisations, including trade unions, clearly reveals the role played by this arena of political activity in the organisational development of the opposition. It is interesting to note how the efforts of the last ministers of education under the dictator were directed towards putting a stop to political activity within the University, even reaching the extreme of creating a short-lived University Disciplinary Police (*Policía de Orden Universitario*) and of recruiting for it junior personnel from the ranks of the Police. It was all in vain. In spite of the crisis which overtook the student movement a few years before his death, Franco was never able to control the University.

The factory come into its own as a focus of clandestine activity in the 1960's, and not without difficulty. Exercising the right of association and expression within a firm is not easy even under democratic regimes. In spite of all the problems, however, the contacts made between workers in the same shop or production line on entering or leaving the factory, lunch-hour encounters, and the meeting in the washroom all played a decisive part in the organisational process. But this fragile form of communication was not enough, and there was a need for the external communications networks formed by the parties, unions and workers' commissions if coordination, strike calls and assemblies were to be possible — even more so if bulletins were to be produced. The task of organisation in the workers' movement is harder than in any other area, and very quickly requires a space free from repression. From the 1950's onwards this space was provided by the Church. Until the death of Franco religious buildings were to serve as venues for workers' meetings and as sites where their publications could be printed.

Under Franco, the church tended to take on (from the 1950's, and more especially the 1960's onwards) a role similar to that played at certain moments under feudalism, reviving institutions such as the right of asylum in church buildings. A model of this type of activity was provided by the Benedictine community of Montserrat, which became a genuine focus for anti-Franco culture and aid to the opposition. As proof of this role, Montserrat holds one of the best archives of the resistance press, built up through the innumerable contacts the community established with practically all the groups and organisations involved.

In latter years the task carried out by the parishes was assisted and complemented by the

24. The figure of the underground militant is dealt with in the now classic anti-Franco film *La guerre est finie* by Alain Resnais, based on a script by Jorge Semprún published under the same title, Paris 1966. There exists an infinite number of testimonies on the daily life of the militant in the underground in the interviews with militants carried out by the daily and weekly press after the death of Franco.

new legal and social centres and neighbourhood associations, which became new venues for meetings, and whose existence permitted militants a way of life very close to normal. In order to make a contact it was no longer necessary to wait for the lengthy period required to arrange a meeting on a street corner.

None of these clandestine arenas of activity would have been able to function without dense networks of contacts, formed mainly by the parties, which enabled them at any moment to put militants from different sectors in contact with one another, coordinate actions in widely separated locations, and, fundamentally, to inform—to report isolated actions to the rest of the opposition. The internal party bulletins, typewritten sheets in the form of internally circulated reports, thus became the means by which the opposition as a whole centralised information and formed a picture of the overall situation, though such bulletins were often only of use to the organisation's own cadres. From the point of view of the leaderships, the main problem was that of collecting sufficient good data to be able to follow developments in the opposition movement without a break. In a sense, the possession of power in an organisation is no more than the possession of the maximum amount of information and, as a consequence, the maximum authority to interpret "reality". The very possibility of publication for those organs with a coverage going beyond the strictly local depends to a large extent on the availability of networks of natural correspondents in the persons of the militants of the group. This fact has additional significance for the information published in party organs: it is assumed, even though it is not always true, that the party which reports a particular action is the party which has carried it out. It is at this level, and not at that of direct competition for information, where rivalry and competition also exist among the various publications.

Within these networks the most important element is normally the professional militant, whose characteristics have been amply explained from many different points of view, including the cinematographic.<sup>24</sup> The figure of the "liberado" is the most attractive object of study for those seeking a picture of communications in underground resistance: a person whose life is a continuous deception—false documents, a disguise rather than clothing—who is in a constant state of alert, watching every step and taking infinite precautions before contacting anyone; who writes in code, whether noting an appointment or a telephone number, or even communicating by telegram, letter or telephone; who spends almost the whole day transporting information, part of which is the political evaluation of the moment made by the leadership, when the militant is contacting the grass roots, or vice versa. With the exception of those militants who emerged during the Civil War, the majority of the professionals who worked during the Franco period were a product of the repression itself; militants who combined a legal and underground existence went over to a life lived wholly clandestinely as a result of the repression to which they were subjected.

#### IV. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The underground cannot be thought of as a closed system growing solely through generational and socio-economic change. Some of the most influential agents of change, as will be seen, also act directly as factors of politicisation inside the country. Thus, the principal sources of economic stability for the Franco regime, such as tourism and emigration, which had a decisive effect on the changing structure of the country, at the same time produced noteworthy ideological effects.

In the case of tourism, which was constantly subjected to dissuasive propaganda by the Spanish exile community, these effects came about indirectly, operating on cultural habits, the normal climate and also on political opinion. In the case of emigration, on the other hand, the political work which the Spanish parties and trade unions carried out in the countries of the European community resulted in the formation of broad sectors of politically aware workers who, when they returned to their country, would frequently join the most advanced elements of the working class, both in terms of their professional training, and their trade union and political experience.

Without this type of outside influence, to which one must add the study trips and tourism of the petty bourgeois—from which it was customary to bring back some anti-Franco "souvenir", bought in a bookshop or acquired through a contact in exile—the role of the underground itself would be quite different. In fact, exile and clandestinity, although in many respects contradictory, to the extent that they even produced splits within the organisations themselves, were two interconnected worlds which cannot be understood in isolation from one another. The most extensive literature to date has come from the world of the exiles, often as a result of the work of the exiles themselves.<sup>25</sup> But, in any case, it is necessary to understand both worlds as closely interrelated. To give as an example: it is impossible to understand fully the underground resistance without taking into account the role played by certain publishing houses set up in exile; nor is it possible to understand the experience of exile without the role played by the concept, both mythical and frightening, represented by the "interior", from which there frequently arrived escapees, more exiles and freed prisoners.

One of the keys to the continuity of tradition, to the preservation of some identifying signs, but also to the successive waves of international pressure on the

25. The most complete picture of republican exile is to be found in the six volumes of *El Exilio Español de 1939* edited under the direction of José Luis Abellán, Madrid, 1976, 1977, 1978. In the last volume there is a good bibliography on exile life.

26. This scheme is not valid for the Basque case or for the various armed Basque groups, which follow a very different pattern.

27. "Öffentlichkeit" could be translated as "what is public", but in fact expresses a more exact concept corresponding to the Spanish phrase "dar la publicidad" ("make public"). "Publicidad", however, is difficult to use because of its association with advertising, although it undoubtedly expresses perfectly the concept of "what is public".

Franco regime, must be sought in the continuous flow of information between exiles and the interior. Without this circuit, none of the historic political parties, and no institution or achievement of the II Republic, would exist today, and nor, we can be certain, would much of the historical awareness of the anti-Franco movement. In a sense, exile acted as an external bank, in which historical capital from the interior could be accumulated, even after the repression had completely obliterated a publication, an organisation or a movement.

#### V. A HOMEOSTATIC MODEL

By way of conclusion it is worth discussing some of the characteristics of the clandestine publicity machine in its relation to the opposed, repressive, machine of the state. The first simile which comes to mind is the homeostat, an apparatus for maintaining a constant balance of pressures. Effectively, the extent of the clandestine machine is a direct function of that of the repressive machine. When repression turns to tolerance, the clandestine becomes public, and thus the double pressure remains constant. When the repression increases, so does the underground resistance, although at times the effect takes a while to show itself clearly. In Spain, only the early years of dictatorship, which correspond to the military victories of the Axis, saw total war, a war of exterminations, against the remnants of the political structure of the Republic. Even at this time, as was also the case in the worst years of Nazi Germany, a certain degree of resistance continued.

The normal situation, then, was a war of positions. The resources invested by both sides to contain the other increased: police and communicational resources (tolerance or integration as regards communicative practice) on the part of the state; technical resources (improvements in security, improvements in communications technology, and, in the case of the Basque country, improvements in the military infrastructure); and communicational resources (improvements in persuasive efficiency) on the part of the opposition. In all cases the overall result was inefficiency: the police never succeeded in fully dismantling the clandestine structures even though they constantly claimed to have done so and the underground press never achieved persuasive efficiency in spite of the belief in persuasion which the clandestine organisations developed. The point of such efficiency lies in the constant demonstration of strength and of existence which results from perfecting the clandestine apparatus. The only way to combat this is politically, by integrating the underground into the legal structure. The final result is a new situation in which the competition between the police, with their efforts to repress, and the opposition, with its efforts to persuade, becomes obsolete, but in which the legal media play a role of the first importance, while at the same time the structure of parties and unions, strongly united through their lengthy experience of resisting repression,<sup>26</sup> expands into the public arena.

Publicity in the Germanic sense of the term<sup>27</sup> does not, then, function under a single-party regime as it does under democratic regimes, but takes place

at two levels or spheres of manifestation of opinions, the public, legal sphere of the authoritarian state, and the clandestine and illegal sphere of its opponents. The only mediation between the two spheres occurs either through their permissive dissolution or through the actions of the repressive apparatus—principally the police and the judiciary—who demarcate the boundaries between them in a vain effort to bring about the prevalence of the public sphere alone.

The public sphere, for its part, acts with the aim of ignoring the clandestine sphere and occupying its space. The clandestine sphere, meanwhile, aims to occupy the space of the public sphere, and to legitimise itself as authentic public opinion, and acts with these aims in view. In practice, it is a "laboratory" public opinion, limited to politicised elites. It tends to align itself with the classical model of public opinion typical of radical democracy: all militants have the means to intervene in the public debate—a simple duplicating machine is all that is needed, and there are no legal impediments other than the very uncertain ones presented by organisational discipline; "public" instances then respond by taking up positions with regard to other opinions or events, in a parody of the functioning of democratic legal systems; "public opinion" then manifests itself in effective actions; the institutions of authority do not penetrate the public, which acts in a relatively autonomous fashion.<sup>28</sup>

Public opinion, however, does not exist in this case because of the impassable border which separates these two great circuits of communication. There does exist to a certain extent, however, a mechanism for the identification of the citizen with one of the two spheres of publicity; a mechanism which tends to disappear as soon as one arrives, without any form of break, at the transformation of the homeostat of *franquismo* into the public opinion-without-opinion characteristic of the present democracies (described by authors such as Habermas<sup>29</sup> as "plebiscite democracies") as against the classical bourgeois revolutionary model of public opinion.

From the point of view of social communication and of public opinion, it is curious to observe the regression which has taken place, through which a press strongly marked by resistance to authority has been domesticated and the political debate and participation which existed in ever-widening circles of society under the dictatorship have been practically eliminated. The conclusions one could draw from this reflection are, however, outside the scope of this article, although there is clearly no better way of illuminating the future than to study the past as if it were the present. If these lines have served to any extent in helping to understand the past, and therefore to model the future, their author will be more than satisfied, for this alone is the desirable

28. *The Power Elite* by Wright Mills.

29. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* by Jürgen Habermas, Neuwied, 1971.

30. For the theme of the blind seer in Gramsci, see "Gramsci sobre Dante", by Rafael Argullol in *Materiales* (Barcelona), Special No. 2, 1977.

function of knowledge. Like Sophocles's old Tiresias or Gramsci,<sup>30</sup> blindness in the face of the present, with a desire for clear sightedness in the face of history: past and future.

## Ernesto "Che" Guevara

### PROPAGANDA, INFORMATION, TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION

(Cuba, 1960)

#### PROPAGANDA

The revolutionary idea should be diffused by means of appropriate media to the greatest depth possible. This requires complete equipment and an organization. This organization should be of two types which complement each other in covering the whole national area: for propaganda originating outside free territory, that is, from the national civil organization; and propaganda originating within, that is, from the base of the guerrilla army. In order to coordinate these two propagandas, the functions of which are strictly related, there should be a single director for the whole effort.

Propaganda of the national type from civil organizations outside free territory should be distributed in newspapers, bulletins, and proclamations. The most important newspapers will be devoted to general matters in the country and will inform the public exactly of the state of the guerrilla forces, observing always the fundamental principle that truth in the long run is the best policy. Besides these publications of general interest must be others more specialized for different sections of the population. A publication for the countryside should bring to the peasant class a message from their companions in all the free zones who have already felt the beneficial effects of the revolution; this strengthens the aspirations of the peasantry. A workers' newspaper will have similar characteristics with the sole difference that it cannot always offer a message from the combatant part of that class, since it is likely that workers' organizations will not operate within the framework of guerrilla warfare until the last stages.

The great watchwords of the revolutionary movement, the watchword of a general strike at an opportune moment, of help to the rebel forces, of unity, etc, should be explained. Other periodicals can be published; for example, one explaining the task of those elements in the whole island which are not combatants but which nevertheless carry out diverse acts of sabotage, of attempts, etc. Within the organization there can be periodicals aimed at the enemy's soldiers; these will explain facts of which they are

This text was originally written in 1960 as part of the author's writings on guerrilla warfare, and was published in Spanish in the author's *Obras 1957-1967*, Vol. I, Havana: Casa de las Americas, 1977. It was first published in English in the collection *Guerrilla Warfare*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1961. English Copyright Monthly Review Press 1961.

otherwise kept ignorant. News bulletins and proclamations about the movement are very useful.

The most effective propaganda is that which is prepared within the guerrilla zone. Priority will be given to the diffusion of ideas among natives of the zone, offering explanations of the theoretical significance of the insurrection, already known to them as a fact. In this zone there will also be peasant periodicals, the general organ of all the guerrilla forces, and bulletins and proclamations. There will also be the radio.

All problems should be discussed by radio—for example, the way to defend oneself from air attacks and location of the enemy forces, citing familiar names among them. Propaganda for the whole nation will use newspapers of the same type as those prepared outside free territory, but it can produce fresher and more exact news, reporting facts and battles that are extremely interesting to the reader. Information on international affairs will be confined almost exclusively to commentary on facts that are directly related to the struggle of liberation.

The propaganda that will be the most effective in spite of everything, that which will spread most freely over the whole national area to reach the reason and the sentiments of the people, is words over the radio. The radio is a factor of extraordinary importance. At moments when war fever is more or less palpating in everyone in a region of the country, the inspiring, burning word increases this fever, and communicates it to every one of the future combatants. It explains, teaches, fires and fixes the future positions of both friends and enemies. However, the radio should be ruled by the fundamental principle of popular propaganda, which is truth; it is preferable to tell the truth, small in its dimensions, than a large lie artfully embellished. On the radio news should be given, especially of battles, of encounters of all types, and assassinations committed by the repression; also, doctrinal orientations and practical lessons to the civil population; and, from time to time, speeches by the chiefs of the revolution. We consider it useful that the principle newspaper of the movement bear a name that recalls something great and unifying, perhaps a national hero or something similar. Also, it should explain in articles of depth where the armed movement is going. It ought to create a consciousness of the great national problems, besides offering sections of more lively interest for the reader.

#### INFORMATION

"Know yourself and your adversary and you will be able to fight a hundred battles without a single disaster." This Chinese aphorism is as valuable for guerrilla warfare as a biblical Psalm. Nothing gives more help to combatant forces than correct information. This arrives spontaneously from the local inhabitants, who will come to tell their friendly army, their allies, what is happening in various places; but in addition it should be completely systemized. As we saw, there should be a postal organization with necessary contacts both within and outside guerrilla zones for carrying messages and merchandise. An intelligence service also should be in direct contact with enemy fronts. Men and women, especially

women, should infiltrate; they should be in permanent contact with soldiers and gradually discover what there is to be discovered. The system must be coordinated in such a way that crossing the enemy lines into the guerrilla camp can be carried out without mishap.

If this is well done with competent agents the insurgent camps will be able to sleep more quietly.

This intelligence will be concerned principally, as I have already said, with the front line of fire or the forward enemy encampments that are in contact with no-man's-land; but it ought also to develop in the same measure as the guerrilla band develops, increasing its depth of operation and its potential to foresee larger troop movements in the enemy rear. Though all inhabitants are intelligence agents for the guerrilla band in the places where it is dominant or makes incursions, it is wise to have persons especially assigned to this duty. The peasants, not accustomed to precise battle language, have a strong tendency to exaggerate, so their reports must be checked. As the spontaneous forms of popular collaboration are moulded and organized, it is possible to use the intelligence apparatus not only as an extremely important auxiliary but also as a weapon of attack by using its personnel, for example, as "sowers of fear". Pretending to be on the side of the enemy soldiers, they sow fear and instability by spreading discouraging information. By knowing exactly the places where the enemy troop is going to attack, it is easy to avoid him or, when the time is ripe, to attack him at places where it is least expected. Mobility, the basic tactic, can be developed to the maximum.

### TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION

The fundamental training of the soldier of liberation is the life itself with the guerrilla band, and no one can be a chief who has not learned his difficult office in daily armed exercises. Life with some companions will teach something about the handling of arms, about principles of orientation, about the manner of treating the civil population, about fighting, etc.; but the precious time of the guerrilla band is not to be consumed in methodical teaching. This begins only when there is a large liberated area and a large number of persons are needed for carrying out a combat function. Schools for recruits will then be established.

These schools then perform a very important function. They are to form new soldiers from persons who have not passed through that excellent sieve of formidable privations, guerrilla combatant life. Other privations must be suffered at the outset to convert them into the truly chosen. After having passed through very difficult tests, they will arrive at incorporating themselves into the kingdom of an army that lives from day to day and leaves no traces of its path anywhere. They ought to perform physical exercises, mainly of two types: an agile gymnastic with training for war of a commando type, which demands agility in attack and withdrawal; and hikes that are hard and exhausting that will serve to toughen the recruit for this kind of existence. Above all, they should live in the open air. They should suffer all the inclemencies of the weather in close

contact with nature, as the guerrilla band does.

The school for recruits must have workers who will take care of its supply needs. For this there should be cattle sheds, grain sheds, gardens, dairy, everything necessary, so that the school will not constitute a charge on the general budget of the guerrilla army. The students can serve in rotation in the work of supply, either as punishment for bad conduct or simply as volunteers. This will depend upon characteristics proper to the zone where the school is being held. We believe that a good principle is to assign volunteers and to cover the remaining work quotas with those who have the poorest conduct and show the poorest disposition for learning warfare.

The school should have its small medical organization with a doctor or nurse, according to the possibilities; this will provide the recruits with the best possible attention.

Shooting is the basic apprenticeship. The guerrilla fighter should be carefully trained in this respect, so that he will try to expend the least possible amount of ammunition. He begins by practising what is called dry shooting. It consists of seating the rifle firmly on any kind of wooden apparatus, as shown in the picture. Without moving or firing the rifle the recruits direct the movement of a target until they think they have a hole at the centre exactly in the line of sight. A mark is made on a backboard that remains stationary. If the mark for three tries gives a single point, this is excellent. When circumstances permit, practice with 22-calibre rifles will begin; this is very useful. If there is an excess of ammunition or a great need for preparing soldiers, opportunity will be given to fire with bullets.

One of the most important courses in the school for recruits, one which we hold to be basic and which can be given in any place in the world, is in meeting attack from the air. Our school has been positively identified from the air and received attacks once or twice daily. The form in which the students resisted the impact of these continuous bombardments on their regular places of instruction virtually showed which of the young men had possibilities for becoming useful soldiers in battle.

The important thing, that which must never be neglected in a school for recruits, is indoctrination; this is important because the men arrive without a clear conception as to why they come, with nothing more than very diffuse concepts about liberty, freedom of the press, etc., without any clear foundation whatever. Therefore, the indoctrination should be carried out with maximum dedication and for the maximum amount of time possible. These courses should offer elementary notions about the history of the country, explained with a clear sense of the economic facts that motivate each of the historic acts; accounts of the national heroes and their manner of reacting when confronted with certain injustices; and afterwards an analysis of the national situation or of the situation in the zone. A short primer should be well studied by all members of the rebel army, so that it can serve as a skeleton of that which will come later.

There should also be a school for training teachers, where agreement can be reached on the

choice of texts to be used, taking as a basis the contribution that each book can make to the educational process.

Reading should be encouraged at all times, with an effort to promote books that are worthwhile and that enlarge the recruit's facility to encounter the world of letters and great national problems. Further reading will follow as a vocation; the surrounding circumstances will awaken new desires for understanding in the soldiers. This result will be produced when, little by little the recruits observe in their routine tasks the enormous advantages of men who have passed through the school over the remainder of the troop, their capacity for analysing problems, their superior discipline, which is another of the fundamental things that the school should teach.

This discipline should be internal, not mechanical but justified by reasons and designed to produce formidable benefits in moments of combat.

## Alexander Sibeko THE UNDERGROUND VOICE (South Africa, 1977)

"It is only the underground voice that can speak without inhibition and freely relate the mass struggle to the long-term needs of our revolution!"

SACP Central Committee Statement,  
December 1972

A comrade once told me about the impact of a slogan on his mind and the part this played in the development of his political consciousness. The slogan appeared overnight on a prominent wall near where he played football as a youth. The message declared in bold letters: "AN ATTACK ON COMMUNISM IS AN ATTACK ON YOU!" This was in 1950 when the Communist Party of South Africa was banned. The comrade was 12, his family was unconnected with politics and he knew nothing of the party or the general struggle. Yet the slogan stuck in his mind and as he grew up, and became politically aware, its full meaning dawned. He later joined the underground Party and coincidentally was delighted to meet the older generation of comrades who had painted the very slogan.

In the same vein five young pupils, ages 12 to 17, fresh from the Soweto uprising, related to a Dar Es Salaam press conference last September some of the factors responsible for their involvement. Michael Msimango explained:

Our parents used to tell us that there was an ANC and when we knew of all the things that had been started by the ANC we knew it was our duty to continue with the struggle.

He also said that they had seen pamphlets and leaflets about Nelson Mandela and commented: "When we read those leaflets we felt that now it was our time." (*Guardian*, 1/9/76)

### ROLE OF CLANDESTINE PROPAGANDA

The impact and influence of revolutionary propaganda is clearly inestimable. Important as propaganda activity is during "normal" times, it takes on a higher, qualitative value during illegal times and especially during periods of intense struggle. The two examples cited help to illustrate the point.

A period of illegality and repression can last for years, but the power of clandestine propaganda does not diminish. On the contrary, if the propaganda correctly reflects the needs of the struggle, the effect increases. The well-worn leaflet passes from hand to hand forging an invisible link between those who read it; an invisible link capable of being concretised into a

This text was first published in *The African Communist* (Inkululeko Publications, London), 68, First Quarter 1977. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

material force under a given set of circumstances! This is what we mean by the "qualitative" value of an item of propaganda, be it a leaflet, wall slogan, radio broadcast or clandestine journal.

This qualitative value of revolutionary propaganda increases when truth is at a premium. Jethro Ngani in a review of ANC propaganda inside South Africa (*Sechaba*, Vol.10, Fourth Quarter 1976) puts it this way:

In a situation reminiscent of the terror conditions of Nazi occupied Europe, a single leaflet or a slogan daubed on a wall brings hope and inspiration to the oppressed and breathes defiance of the tyrant.

If we stress the relative importance of clandestine propaganda during "abnormal" times as distinct from legal propaganda during "normal" times it is not to undervalue the latter, but during normal times a movement clearly has many more opportunities for expression open to it. During a period of repression where the reactionary forces seal off every opportunity for disclosing the truth about the general state of affairs and the progress of the struggle, the role of clandestine propaganda becomes more vital.

In such a period much of the burden of *educator*, *agitator* and *organiser* falls on the shoulders of the underground propaganda apparatus. The clandestine journal *Vukani* (July 1976 issue) defines the role of propaganda as follows:

Our freedom struggle is being waged on many fronts, one of the most important is in the field of propaganda. Propaganda counters the lies of the enemy, it develops political awareness, it inspires our people to greater efforts and it shows by concrete example that the fascist police can be outwitted in their own backyard.

## POST-RIVONIA PERIOD

In the exacting and gruelling period experienced by the liberation movement and our people, especially since the Rivonia arrests and the wave of repression and intimidation that followed, clandestine propaganda has played an active and significant part in furthering the struggle. At a time when our movement has been battling to reconstruct an underground apparatus, so seriously damaged by the mass arrests and "dispersal" of the 'sixties, our propaganda has often been the only visible expression that we survived the terror and continued to grow.

Indeed, as Jethro Ngani illustrates in his *Sechaba* article, it has been the distribution of clandestine propaganda, often in a spectacular way through nationally co-ordinated 'leaflet bombs' in company with street broadcasts, that nailed Vorster's oft repeated boast that he had finally "broken the back" of the ANC and Communist Party. While the enemy hoped to crush all spirit of resistance, eradicate all memory of past struggles, deceive the masses with lies, intrigues and provocations against the liberation movement, the underground voice has projected the truth to the people. Even in the period at the beginning of the 'seventies when a section of our people, particularly university students and professionals, were expressing themselves through the Black Consciousness movement, it was only the underground voice that was able to project the full-blooded view-

point of liberation. What is important to grasp too, is that this voice of liberation has carried forward, throughout the dark post-Rivonia days, the essential body of theory, principles and concept of struggle that is our past heritage.

This is not to claim that the ANC or Party are complacent about the scale and impact of their propaganda. In many statements both organisations have viewed this question critically and pledged themselves to more intensive effort. Making the point that "the voice of our organisation is still relatively weak" the National Executive of the ANC stated in 1973: "It is essential that at all times the liberation movement as a whole should continuously pay attention to the question of instilling into the masses confidence in their own strength and the conviction that they themselves will bring about their own liberation" (*Sechaba*, Vol. 7, No. 6). In 1970 an Augmented Party Meeting instructed the Central Committee "to direct its main efforts to the reconstruction of the Party at home as an organisation of professional revolutionaries closely in contact with the working class and peasantry and able to carry on the propaganda and organisation of the Party in the face of the police terror" (*The African Communist*, No. 43, 4th Quarter 1970). On this question, our Party Chairman, comrade Yusuf Dadoo, made the following statement to a Central Committee meeting at the end of 1973:

It is necessary for the underground to sharpen its propaganda weapons and to ensure that the message and guidelines of the liberation alliance reaches all sections of our people with increasing frequency." (*The African Communist*, No. 56, 1st Quarter 1974).

## VOICE OF THE PARTY

Just as the underground voice of the ANC has steadily grown, so too has that of the Party. The Party has striven to contribute its authoritative weight to the general voice of liberation as well as paying strict attention to its special role of organiser and leader of the working class, to its role of Marxist-Leninist educator, and to its championing of the ideas of socialism and communism and defence of the world socialist system.

As a measure of the increase and nature of propaganda over recent years the Cape Town trial of comrades Rabkin and Cronin last September is instructive. These courageous activists were sentenced to heavy jail terms of 10 and 7 years respectively for issuing Party and ANC propaganda material over a three year period. At their trial the judge described a garage out of which they secretly worked as being tantamount to "a propaganda factory". Among the items prepared and distributed were eight different issues of the Party paper *Inkululeko-Freedom*, an ANC leaflet on the MPLA's victory in Angola, and a leaflet issued immediately following the Soweto events entitled "Death to the Murderous Oppressors: Our Brothers and Sisters will be Avenged!" The comrades were also convicted of issuing the liberation journal *Vukani-Awake* as well as assisting in the distribution of the most recent Party leaflet "Message to the Workers" (a copy of which appeared in the last issue of *The African Communist*). In evidence at their trial a Special Branch "expert" on clandestine propa-

ganda stated that "the SACP and ANC literally bombarded the country with pamphlets which were inflammatory and attempted to prepare people for an armed struggle to remove the government by force and to institute a new regime."

Whilst paying much attention to the crucial question of the armed struggle, the ANC and Party have placed increasing importance on other aspects of the struggle, such as the growing strength of the Black working class, the Bantustans, the Black Consciousness movement, the "reforms" being offered by the Vorster regime, and practical aspects relating to organisation. The clandestine ANC journal *Amandla-Maatla* has been playing an exceptional role in this regard, together with *Inkululeko-Freedom* — organ of our Central Committee.

*Inkululeko-Freedom* has been indispensable in furthering the revolutionary tasks which face our people, as well as projecting the Party as the party of the most advanced class, and the propagandist of Marxism. When the first issue was launched in July 1971, marking the 50th anniversary of the Party's foundation, *Inkululeko* stated "a paper is a weapon" and continued:

In the new conditions which face us, organisation is everything. Without it all the undoubted anger of our people cannot be directed to deal effective blows to the enemy. The spreading of understanding is the very beginning of organisation. That is why a newspaper is an organiser.

One indication of *Inkululeko's* impact and the fear it arouses in enemy circles was a Johannesburg *Sunday Express* report (2/9/73) that the journal "was widely distributed in Natal and other major centres just before the recent work stoppage of 500 workers at the Frame Wentex mill near Durban."

The first issue of *Inkululeko* warned:

The ideas which will fill the pages of this journal are hated by the enemy because they are liberating ideas. The enemy will hound you and persecute you if they catch you spreading it. But your battle cannot be won without risk and without sacrifice.

Nineteen issues of *Inkululeko* have appeared since that pronouncement, providing a masterly analysis of the growing contradictions of the racist regime and the rising strength of the forces of revolution. The production and distribution of *Inkululeko* has not been an easy feat. We remember especially in this regard that outstanding son of the people Ahmed Timol, murdered by the Special Branch in October 1971, after 400 copies of *Inkululeko* had been discovered in the boot of his car. As the German communists came to say of their underground propagandists rooted out by the Nazis: "What is written in blood cannot be wiped out". One must single out too the contribution of another indefatigable activist, comrade Suttner, who like comrades Rabkin and Cronin and many other dedicated revolutionaries before them, went to prison with no regrets and with the "Amandla!" cry ringing through the courtroom. Giving an insight into the arduous and lonely life imposed by clandestine conditions, Raymond Suttner, stoutly defending his involvement in the underground apparatus, declared from the dock:

The work that I have done for the freedom movement made rigorous demands. It was not pleasant to spend my spare time licking envelopes, duplicating, typing, sticking on stamps. It is true that I need not have done this. But this was the course that I honestly concluded to be the best way of contributing to our future. The goals for which I worked warranted whatever sacrifices were required." (*African Communist*, No 65, 1976).

## MARXIST LITERATURE

Apart from its "Message to the Workers" the Party has issued numerous leaflets and items of literature over the past decade. These include leaflets such as "The Revolution that Changed the World" on the 50th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, "Lenin the Liberator" on the 1970 centenary of Lenin's birth, and "Africans will Defeat Vorster and Smith" on the ANC-ZAPU alliance and the fighting in Zimbabwe in 1967-68. *The African Communist* has played a particularly important role in projecting the Party's views and dispersing the fog of anti-communism and obscurantism which the racists have sought to sow in our people's minds. The first issue of the clandestine *African Communist*, a specially printed pocket-sized edition of issue No. 46 (Third Quarter 1971) was produced, like *Inkululeko*, to mark the Party's 50th anniversary. Every issue of *The African Communist* since then has circulated inside South Africa in this clandestine form, amounting to tens of thousands of copies since 1971.

What has particularly irked the authorities has been a series of pocket-sized Marxist classics, only 10 x 7 cms in size, issued under false covers and titles "accepted" by the South African censors. These include *The Communist Manifesto* under the title *What Animal Is It?*; *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* under the title *Landmarks of South African History; What Is To Be Done?*, *The State and Revolution* etc. A Xhosa-language edition of Lenin's biographical note on Marx, a Zulu-language edition of *Left Wing Communism*, and the Party Programme disguised as a popular South African "memo" book form part of this important library. There have been special pocketbook issues of significant Party statements such as "The Enemy Hidden Under the Same Colour" on the group of dissidents expelled from the ANC (*African Communist*, No. 65, 1976) and comrade Dadoo's report to the Central Committee in 1973 entitled "South Africa — A Time of Challenge" (*African Communist*, No. 56, 1974). Of note too is the special clandestine issue of the Party's history *Fifty Fighting Years* which has been widely distributed at home and helps to inform a whole new generation, which never had the opportunity of knowing the Party, about our proud record and role.

## CHALLENGE OF A NEW PERIOD

We have been considering the role of propaganda over a particularly difficult phase of our struggle: a decade of laborious recovery from the blows of 1963-65; a period variously referred to as a "hiatus" or "stalemate"; a period in which the revolutionary tide was at a relatively low ebb. Now with the great nationwide upsurge following the Soweto uprising of June 1976, also to be seen in relation to the strike

wave of 1973-74, the tide of struggle is in full flow. There are exceptional opportunities and challenges which have opened up for the liberation movement and our propaganda must meet the new demands.

One important indication of the changed conditions is reflected precisely in the propaganda field. The rise of mass action has been accompanied by a spectacular outpouring of agitational leaflets. The *Johannesburg Star* (16/10/76) comments on this material: "Circulating mainly in Black urban areas and varying widely in quality of writing, production and thinking, their very number sometimes gives the impression that everyone with access to a typewriter and a duplicating machine has rushed to propagate his own views". One of our own sources reports: "We have recently seen the power of leaflets. The September strike in Cape Town was initiated by leaflets. People are desperately searching for direction and leadership." Reports from the Transvaal indicate that leaflets have been playing a major role in coordinating strike action and demonstrations there.

Many of these leaflets are not issued by a specific organisation, but are rather the product of the part-spontaneous, semi-organised nature of the uprising. So much inflammable material for a revolutionary explosion has accumulated, that there is some truth in the *Star's* report. Since the propagandists are cloaked by the mass ferment and break-down in authority their appeals have been uninhibited by legality, and are often confused and anarchistic. The most authentic and appropriate leaflets are a consistent clarion call to struggle and stress the need for worker-parent-student unity. One such leaflet distributed widely in the Johannesburg-Pretoria area states:

Parent-workers, you should take note of the fact that if you go to work (on September 20-22nd) you will be inviting Vorster to slaughter us your children as he has already done in Soweto and Alexandra. Vorster and his gangsters have already claimed that this week's shootings were made to protect parents from their own children... We want to write exams, but we are not so selfish to write while our brothers are being killed at John Vorster Square. Parents, you should rejoice for having given birth to this type of a child... Aren't you proud of the soldiers of liberation you have given birth to? If you are proud support them! Do not go to work from Monday to Wednesday... Our slogan is "Away with Vorster! Down with oppression! Power to the People!" When have these criminals cared for you? Didn't Vorster order the killing of 12 workers at Carltonville? Were not dogs called in Croesus when people went on strike? Were not pregnant women strangled and battered by Vorster's police thugs at Heinemann Factory?

AZIKWELWA MADODA!!!

A virtual flood of strike leaflets was distributed in Cape Town during September of last year. One such leaflet declared:

The racists do not spare their bullets. Their guns try to cut down our march for freedom. But the march to freedom must not end. Reject all concessions that the racists grant us. Concessions are crumbs. We want freedom not crumbs. STRIKE! STRIKE!

WEDNESDAY 15TH-THURSDAY 16TH (September). Do not go to work or school. Your strike will hit the system where it hurts. Freedom comes with sacrifice. We shall overcome.

As usual the police have been active spreading their own crude anti-strike leaflets throughout the townships, often using helicopters. These leaflets flog the line: "Every day away from work is a day less pay. The skollies will not feed our children. Skollies burn and loot our shops"; and "Do not be misled by the actions of a few people who are using us for their own ends. Support our accepted and elected leaders in their negotiations for a better future." Some police leaflets are downright forgeries, such as one usurping the title *Vukani* and exhorting women to "take the trousers from our men" because "our men are kept away from work by children." Yet another leaflet purports to be the "Voice of the NC — Spear of the Nation" and calls on all "Azanians" to "burn down the shebeens" and "kill the whites if you can, burn their buildings, let their trains and their vehicles go up in flames."

### DRAWING LESSONS AND PROVIDING ANALYSIS

The voice of the liberation movement has not been quiet in this period, attempting to bring the authority of its experience and influence to bear on the course of events. A leaflet issued immediately after the June 16th bloodbath paid tribute to our youth for dealing "a massive blow to the white state" and appealed for "solidarity with the fighting youth of Soweto and with the families of those who have been killed." This leaflet, cited in the Rabkin-Cronin trial, called our people to "make this Freedom Day (June 26th) a day of dedication and solidarity with our brothers and sisters, let us honour those who have fallen." An ANC leaflet headed "Amandla Soweto" and distributed in Johannesburg by "leaflet bombs" during June-July announced:

The African National Congress calls on all our people in every walk of life — in the factories, townships, mines, schools, farms, to embark on massive protests, actions and demonstrations against white supremacy, against the murder of our children, against Bantu Education, Bantustans, the pass laws and all the hated policies of Apartheid. Now is the time to Act!

Sons and Daughters of Africa, stand together firm and united and show the oppressor that we will not be intimidated. We have the strength to hit back. Our organised strength, unity and militant actions will give us more power than Vorster and all his guns. Rally to the call of the ANC — the tried and trusted organisation of all our people that Vorster and his police can never crush! United in this task we will smash the brute force of the oppressor!

The journals *Vukani* and *Amandla-Maatla* were quick to provide the much needed analysis the situation demanded. The July issue of *Vukani* stated:

A number of valuable lessons have been learnt: solidarity actions in other locations and at black campuses showed the importance of spreading the struggle as widely as possible and the necessity of countryside organisation and co-ordination; because the protests were largely confined to the locations, damage to the economy, the heart of white power, was limited — the struggle must be taken into the cities, the factories, the mines... To maintain the militancy and keep the initiative, demands that unite and draw in the broadest mass of the people (Abolish Passes! Down with Bantustans and Group Areas!) must be advanced. Leadership and

co-ordination in a police state like South Africa means using both legal and illegal methods of struggle, linking mass protest, strikes and boycotts closely to the underground work of the liberation movement."

In an editorial *Amandla-Maatla* (Vol. 5, No. 2) proclaimed:

Comrades and Countrymen, this is not the time to weep over our fallen heroes. It is time to hit back at the enemy with everything we have got. It is time to be more skilful and strike at him in small groups so as to vanish quickly. It is time to hit where he is weak and least prepared. Let us disperse him and scatter his forces by hitting at the same time in Cape Town, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, East London, Maritzburg and other places. Let us make him confused so that he should not know where next we will attack. The African National Congress which leads the national liberation struggle in our country has created its military wing, Umkhonto weSizwe, to provide you with the art of fighting. Let us therefore join Umkhonto in even bigger numbers and train so as to become better fighters. Bloody Wednesday (June 16th) has shown the urgency of our task to smash Vorster's regime of terror and violence.

### EXERT A MORE POWERFUL INFLUENCE

It is clear that the struggle is at a newer, higher stage. Our youth, our people generally, are overcoming terrible ordeals and have not been cowed. Our people are rising for a revolutionary struggle against white supremacy and its backers, and are searching for the way forward. Our propaganda must meet the challenge. We must strive for more regular and wider dissemination of our leaflets and journals to exercise an ever stronger influence and raise the level of consciousness and agitation. We must do all we can to develop our radio broadcasts from friendly African states, for these have played a very important role in inspiring our people. Indeed many youngsters who have left the country to join the ANC and Umkhonto report the powerful stimulus they received from this source. We must strive to create a higher form of organisation by means of journals such as *Inkululeko*, *Vukani* and *Amandla-Maatla* which must contain a regular record of our people's grievances and struggles, and which must draw definite conclusions from these in accordance with the aims of the liberation movement and the political tasks of the workers and masses generally. Our propaganda must uphold our theory; help achieve a common understanding of the programmatic aims and tactical tasks of the Party and liberation movement, and of our practical methods of work.

The basis for all this has been laid by arduous work, incredible courage, sacrifice and devotion. Many comrades who helped with the spade work are in prison, some are dead. Flowers are blooming where they scattered the seeds. Their work will continue. As with Lenin's *Iskra* our propaganda must become a powerful instrument for organisation serving to unite all those groups, committees and cells already linked with the liberation movement, and all those activists who have been pushed into action by the stirring events of the past six months. Our propaganda must be geared even more powerfully to the battles ahead.

Ariel Dorfman

## THE INVISIBLE CHILE: THREE YEARS OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE (1977)

Cultural resistance? In Chile? In *today's* Chile? Does such a phenomenon exist?

Such are the doubts expressed by most people outside of Chile upon hearing of the present-day existence of a vast cultural movement which grows and develops under the nose of General Pinochet.

These same people are willing to admit that the generalized repression suffered by the Chilean people has taken on a particularly devastating brutality in the cultural field. Numerous international commissions, parliamentary groups, jurists, barristers, journalists and church representatives have succeeded in verifying throughout these three years that the military assault upon the Chilean nation (and hence all its forms of expression) has represented a brutality rarely seen in Latin America — this continent sadly accustomed to violence and barbarity. Cultural repression is an unconcealable fact. Everyone knows what has occurred in the realm of education (intervention of the armed forces in the university; massive and incessant expulsion of professors and students at all levels of learning; burning and prohibition of school texts), in the communications media (bombardment and shut-down of presses and radio stations which constitute potential opposition to the regime; death, imprisonment and detainment of journalists; effective censorship of books, newspapers and magazines), and in the realm of artistic creation (torture and imprisonment of outstanding cultural producers; destruction of murals, recordings, posters; suspension of hundreds of writers, musicians, actors).

Yet not a single international commission has confirmed the unquestionable presence of cultural resistance, nor even responded by carrying out such an investigation.

In spite of this, it is not difficult to demonstrate that the Chilean people have not passively accepted the efforts of the dictatorship to suffocate their spirit. The proof of this is provided by none other than the fascist government itself. In March 1976, it was decreed that in the future all cultural activities — public or private — must be made known to and approved by the National Youth Secretariat prior to their realization. This attests to the fact that the cultural acts that have been developing throughout

This text was written by the author while in exile in Europe, and was originally published in the review *Plural*. It was translated from the Spanish by Edward Taylor and published in *Praxis* (Santa Monica, Calif.), 4, 1978. Reprinted by permission of the author.



Chile are numerous and unsettling. Witness, as recently as April 1976, the prohibition of a large cultural manifestation which was undertaken by the Catholic Archbishop of Santiago with the aim of uniting scholars to aid needy secondary students. Doubtless, the Junta of Generals did not desire a repeat of the success of December 1975, when more than five-thousand people filled the Caupolicán (Santiago's main enclosed stadium where syndical and political meetings were conducted in democratic times) in order to promote children's food programs and to listen to dozens of professional and popular folkloric groups.

One year later an order signed by General Nil Floody was circulated through all the schools; among its many threats was found a clause stating that whoever tells an anti-government joke risks facing a prison term of three years. And barely three months after the overthrow of Salvador Allende it was announced to the public that all currency bearing handwritten words or slogans against the Junta was invalid and without cash value. Here was proof that innumerable hands were writing anonymous letters on the walls of their own money in order to overcome fear and isolation. And in the course of these three years, how many times has this same General Pinochet hysterically threatened the 'subversives' who insist upon propagating clandestine pamphlets, books and magazines? How many times have public transit owners been fined for not being able to keep



After the counter-revolutionary coup of 11 September 1973, murals were whitewashed in an attempt to destroy any reminders of the culture of the Popular Unity period.

their bus seats properly cleaned of anti-government slogans?

The first point that attracts the attention of anyone who tries to describe this resistance — whose existence the dictatorship itself recognizes — is the extraordinary wealth of levels and *vias*, channels and paths, spaces and breaches, which the Chileans have learned to open, utilize or invent in order to maintain contact. By these varied means they continue to work together — in the 'now' that precedes 'tomorrow' — for a democratic alternative. There are legal initiatives; there are others that border upon the prohibited and explore the permissible; there are still others that are simply underground. There are some artistic manifestations which spring forth in solitude or among small groups of friends. Many others unfold on a massive, public level. But these manifold efforts have one trait in common: they constitute the determination of a people to preserve their identity, to affirm their dignity, to fire up their consciousness.

It is evident that this culture hidden beneath the land can be seen to resemble seeds which await the proper moment to sprout — which wait and at the same time convoke spring. But this does not mean that there does not already exist a certain amount of vegetation, even bushes and trees, which strain to breathe in the public light. That is, one must not forget — and the Junta does not forget — that the Chilean resistance is a resistance of masses. Herein lies its force; it is the arm with which the dictatorship will be overthrown.

In Chile today there exists a brew of semi-legal initiatives, especially under the wing of the churches and their parishes or unfolding in the less-secure territory of the union federations which are barely tolerated by military mandate. There exist song festivals, concerts in churches and universities, neighborhood newspapers, painting and poetry workshops, folkloric *peñas* ('clubs'); artistic encounters, amateur theatrical works, books of carefully-drawn but insolent content. The mere act of joining together, of listening in a group, of contemplating one another's faces, of learning once again how to organize activities together, even if they are cultural or sporting, is a fundamental way for the people to exercise and legitimize their right to associate with one another, to move and to express themselves. It is precisely the popular, massive character of these manifestations which limits the possibilities of repressing or even of keeping watch over them. Nor is it easy for any regime — not even one like that of Chile, notorious for its stupidity and savageness — to prohibit the workers from singing or listening to song; from playing soccer to watching others play. Culture has an especially mobilizing and energizing effect upon a *pueblo* that has been subjected to a law of passivity determined to repress it. Shared art is one way of uniting mutilated hands, of sending forth a heart which never stopped beating but which has not been well heard by all. What's more, the mere organization of a cultural event is a victory, a preliminary step to further organizing, to making more contacts, to pushing one more inch beyond the limits which the authorities can tolerate.

The culture that expresses itself publicly is not

only a means of keeping a voice alive, of exercising the vocal chords, of preparing oneself for songs and messages to come; it is also the way in which to mount a counter-culture. For example, there are songs which through the use of double meanings have taken on an ambiguous heaviness, reflecting inexpressible desires, alluding to two things at a time. A vast secret language has thus been created; a language which the military knows but cannot admit or repress. Simultaneously, this language has been purging itself of rhetoric, perhaps with the desire to achieve a more direct dialogue, as though repulsed by the way in which the dictatorship degrades and shadows the idiom.

Here is one example, which does not come precisely from the Left. In *The History of Chile*, by the Christian-Democratic writer Guillermo Blanco, there is a chapter that recounts the Reconquest Period, when the Spanish, with blood and fire, recaptured the recently-liberated Chilean territory. The manner in which the author characterizes the invaders, who tortured and committed all sorts of atrocities, who catered increasingly to the interests of a wealthy minority, contrasts with the tranquil presence of what Blanco himself calls 'the resistance'. It could, naturally, be a matter of coincidence. And no one can accuse Blanco of being a Marxist agent. If his readers see in the present what has occurred in the past, well, such is the intimate privilege of the book's buyer.

Of course, the participation of cultural producers in any public event has its risks. Nuñez, a great Chilean painter, can attest to this: an exposition in the Chilean-French Cultural Centre (May 1975) which displayed caged birds, mirrors behind bars, and Chilean flags transformed into neckties, but in the shape of a noose, was shut down after twelve hours, and its creator was thrown into prison, only later to be expelled from the country. Oscar Castro, one of the most promising young actors in Latin America, has already spent two years in a concentration camp because his company (El Aleph) performed a theatrical work in which the captain refused to abandon his ship, preaching of better days in a speech which was suspiciously similar to the final one which made Salvador Allende a name never to be forgotten. At least this is assumed to be the motive, inasmuch as Castro has never been tried or accused of anything.

Thus, since the first days following the *coup*, jokes, anecdotes and allusive songs have proliferated: shouts have appeared on bathroom walls, chalkboards, and in the streets. Humorous stories have been especially notable, not only for exposing the pseudo-hygienic and solemn face of the regime, not only for re-establishing a code of linguistic fraternity among the supposedly defeated, not only for providing an outlet for the repressed ingenuity of the people, but fundamentally as a means by which each joker could mock the enemy in his own territory, and thus find among those who laugh accomplices and allies and — why not say it? — tomorrow's *compañeros*. Inside Chile there are those who gather this evidence of anonymous and general struggle, this spilled-out anger of the *pueblo* . . . the quotidian voices of those who live in an invisible, asphyxiated country — who live fascism day-to-day.

But more vital than this spontaneous culture

are the clandestine newspapers (*Unidad Antifascista*, *Pueblo Cristiano*, *Resistencia Democrata*, *El Rebelde*, *Unidad y Lucha*, *Solidaridad*, *Liberación*) disseminated by different illegal political organizations. Such publications keep the resister, the sympathizer, and the ever-growing groups of government opposition informed. They serve to break down the walls of fascist silence and its pretensions to an omnipotent reign. Through their regularity, through their informative responsibility, they demonstrate that the dictatorship has been incapable of liquidating the parties of the Chilean Left. But more than anything, they are one of the primordial means of organizing and extending clandestine networks and of magnifying illegal activities. Together these newspapers have monthly circulation of some 100,000 readers in Santiago.

It is interesting to note, beyond the immense political labor and infrastructural organizing effort, the novel collective intellectual labor which editing a paper of this nature implies. In the massive traditional media the *pueblo* is a passive receiver of news. Here, the readers have had to convert themselves forcefully into editors of what they live: their eyes are the cameras, their ears and tongues are exclusive teletype, and their hands are messengers. The *pueblo* is transformed into a massive communications media itself. It is the sole means of transmitting reality to the center within which it is compiled, organized, selected and redistributed. Workers, students, townspeople — all become conscious of the value of their own experiences; they realize that it is their own culture that must confront and defeat the Junta's propaganda machine. It is a new — and dangerous — means of participating in the expression of what is lived.

But in this land of the word-enterprise there have been and continue to be other equally fascinating initiatives. Pamphlets, posters, and murals bring to a more indiscriminate public the voice of those who have not allowed themselves to succumb.

A more sophisticated cultural resistance — the material and experimental basis for the activities of a more promising future — is manifested by two projects which have existed effectively in Chile for more than a year. The first is the news magazine *Umbral*, which has come out with at least three issues and, contrary to the newspapers, answers to no particular political party but rather to a 'Center of Democratic Studies'. Its circulation is fundamentally in university, professional and Christian circles. Along with analyses and essays, it contains some poems and short stories. The second is a clandestine publisher, *Nueva Democracia* (New Democracy), which prints and distributes books written entirely within the country — a task which lasts weeks and sometimes months due to security difficulties. This press has come out with two volumes to date: one, a self-critique of the Popular Unity Party, and another, of poetry. It is rumored to be preparing anthologies of resistance literature, testimonials and clandestine political documents. It is worthwhile to reproduce the page on which printed books normally bear the copyright, for it is a symptom of the climate in which one lives, thinks and works within Chile:

Copyright Nueva Democracia Editions  
voice

of the people without a voice  
of the whispering *pueblo*  
of the combat of shadows  
of the silent verse.

The Chilean people have suffered the penalty  
decreed by the law of the Dictator:

in a life assassinated  
in spilled blood  
in empty occupation  
in hungry childhood  
in pursued solidarity  
in violation of bodies  
creeds  
good will  
homes.

First Edition, 1976.

But other artists, writers and musicians continue to produce publicly. Many of them work in silence and solitude. Short stories, poems, plays, pamphlets, small paintings, and songs are circulated and collected. For the youngest there are clandestine graphic arts and literature workshops. Many of these works have made their way outside the country, where they are being published. One of the greatest problems faced by cultural workers who remain in the country is the pressure to emigrate, as so many others have done. The dominant atmosphere of mediocrity, the lack of jobs and opportunities, the absence of a public and of potential dialogue, the dangers of persecution — all contribute to this. In light of this, a plan has been started from the outside to grant scholarships to individual cultural workers and to certain musical groups, helping them to remain in the country in order to bear testimony to life in today's Chile.

Another place in which culture has become essential is in the concentration camps. Political prisoners have discovered the value and the dignity that art confers upon them: they write poems and short stories, perform songs and theatrical works, and make handicrafts, which are especially popular, from chicken bones, old wooden pieces, beads and seeds. In Chacabuco, a song festival was recorded secretly by Luis Alberto Corvalán; and, in the same place, Angel Parra composed a Mass using the most primitive musical instruments. The decision to express oneself with the most extremely impoverished means — the desire to create with the very minimum extracted from one's environment — is perhaps the most definite symbol of a Chile that has refused to get down on its knees: this is the unmistakable sign of an act of scarcity and hope.

But Chilean culture survives not only within the country. On the outside, where hundreds of artists have been forced into exile, the search for color, sound, images and words has continued. Along with the international success of the New Chilean Song (*Nueva Canción Chilena*, as presented by folk groups as such as *Quilapayún*, *Inti-Illimani*, *Los Parra Amerindios*, *Tiempo Nuevo*, *Charo Cofre*), mural painting brigades have become known, several films have received great acclaim (especially those of Miguel Littín and Patricio Guzmán), and new Chilean literary works have been produced and translated

(e.g., Antonio Skarmeta, Hernán Valsés, Jorge Díaz, Poli Delano, Armando Uribe and Gonzalo Rojas). Many of these exiled cultural workers have formed a Center for the Defense and Development of Chilean Culture (Centro por la Defensa y el Desarrollo de la Cultura Chilena), which has as its principal objective the support of multi-faceted work carried on within the country, keeping art in contact with the struggles of the *pueblo*. It tries at the same time not to lose the immense pluralistic experience of the Allende period and the years preceding it, thus furthering the renovation of Latin American art and linking it to the contemporary world. Hundreds of artists of the most diverse stylistic, generational and political tendencies collaborate and coexist within the Center, united solely through their declared anti-fascism and mutual respect. In this way they form a broad front which is as essential to the political realm as to the realm of art.

At the fall of the Chilean Junta, on that memorable day when its few achievements are weighed, it will be noted that in the cultural field the dictatorship was responsible for but one achievement: providing the Spanish — and other — languages with a new word of immediately recognizable proportions: the word 'Pinochet'. This will be the Chilean fascists' sad link to world civilization: to 'pinochet', 'pinocheted', 'don't be a pinochet'...

But the Chilean *pueblo* and its artists will demonstrate on that day that beneath what many believed was a wasteland, beneath what many proclaimed to be a desert, a message was being created for all of humanity, a message far more meaningful and permanent than the name of a brutal dictator who, in the end, was incapable of imposing his dark silence upon a people who knew how to sing — upon a people who knew how to resist with their song.

Frantz Fanon

## THIS IS THE VOICE OF ALGERIA

(Algeria, 1959)

We propose in this chapter to study the new attitudes adopted by the Algerian people in the course of the fight for liberation, with respect to a precise technical instrument: the radio. We shall see that what is being called into question behind these new developments in Algerian life is the entire colonial situation. We shall have occasion to show throughout this book that the challenging of the very principle of foreign domination brings about essential mutations in the consciousness of the colonized, in the manner in which he perceives the colonizer, in his human status in the world.

Radio-Alger, the French broadcasting station which has been established in Algeria for decades, a re-edition or an echo of the French National Broadcasting System operating from Paris, is essentially the instrument of colonial society and its values. The great majority of Europeans in Algeria own receiving sets. Before 1945, 95 per cent of the receivers were in the hands of Europeans. The Algerians who owned radios belonged mainly to the 'developed bourgeoisie', and included a number of Kabyles who had formerly emigrated and had since returned to their villages. The sharp economic stratification between the dominant and the dominated societies in large part explains the state of things. But naturally, as in every colonial situation, this category of realities takes on a specific coloration. Thus hundreds of Algerian families whose standard of living was sufficient to enable them to acquire a radio did not acquire one. Yet there was no rational decision to refuse this instrument. There was no organized resistance to this device. No real lines of counter-acculturation, such as are described in certain monographs devoted to underdeveloped regions, have been shown to exist, even after extensive surveys. It may be pointed out, nevertheless — and this argument may have appeared to confirm the conclusions of sociologists — that, pressed with questions as to the reasons for this reluctance, Algerians rather frequently give the following answer: 'Traditions of respectability are so important for us and are so hierarchical, that it is practically impossible for us to listen to radio programmes in the family. The sex allusions, or even the clownish situations meant to make people laugh, which are broadcast over the radio cause an unendurable strain in a family listening to these programmes.'

This text was originally published in France in 1959. Copyright François Maspero 1959. It was translated into English by Haaken Chevalier and published in the author's *A Study in Dying Colonialism*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1965. English translation Copyright Monthly Review Press 1965.

The ever possible eventuality of laughing in the presence of the head of the family or the elder brother, of listening in common to amorous words or terms of levity, obviously acts as a deterrent to the distribution of radios in Algerian native society. It is with reference to this first rationalization that we must understand the habit formed by the official Radio Broadcasting Services in Algeria of announcing the programmes that can be listened to in common and those in the course of which the traditional forms of sociability might be too severely strained.

Here, then, at a certain explicit level, is the apprehension of a fact: receiving sets are not readily adopted by Algerian society. By and large, it refuses this technique which threatens its stability and the traditional types of sociability; the reason invoked being that the programmes in Algeria, undifferentiated because they are copied from the Western model, are not adapted to the strict, almost feudal type of patrilineal hierarchy, with its many moral taboos, that characterizes the Algerian family.

On the basis of this analysis, techniques of approach could be proposed. Among others, the staggering of broadcasts addressed to the family as a whole, to male groups, to female groups, etc. As we describe the radical transformations that have occurred in this realm, in connexion with the national war, we shall see how artificial such a sociological approach is, what a mass of errors it contains.

We have already noted the accelerated speed with which the radio was adopted by the European society. The introduction of the radio in the colonizing society proceeded at a rate comparable to that of the most developed Western regions. We must always remember that in the colonial situation, in which, as we have seen, the social dichotomy reaches an incomparable intensity, there is a frenzied and almost laughable growth of middle-class gentility on the part of the nationals from the metropolis. For a European to own a radio is of course to participate in the external round of Western petty-bourgeois ownership, which extends from the radio to the villa, including the car and the refrigerator. It also gives him the feeling that colonial society is a living and palpitating reality, with its festivities, its traditions eager to establish themselves, its progress, its taking root. But especially, in the hinterland, in the so-called colonization centres, it is the only link with the cities, with Algiers, with the metropolis, with the world of the civilized. It is one of the means of escaping the inert, passive and sterilizing pressure of the 'native' environment. It is, according to the settler's expression, 'the only way still to feel like a civilized man'.

On the farms, the radio reminds the settler of the reality of colonial power and, by its very existence, dispenses safety, serenity. Radio-Alger is a confirmation of the settler's right and strengthens his certainty in the historic continuity of the conquest, hence of his farm. The Paris music, extracts from the metropolitan press, the French government crises, constitute a coherent background from which colonial society draws its density and its justification. Radio-Alger sustains the occupant's culture, marks it off from the non-culture, from the nature of the

occupied. Radio-Alger, the voice of France in Algeria, constitutes the sole centre of reference at the level of news. Radio-Alger, for the settler, is a daily invitation not to 'go native', not to forget the rightfulness of his culture. The settlers in the remote outposts, the pioneering adventurers, are well aware of this when they say that 'without wine and the radio, we should already have become Arabized'.<sup>1</sup>

In Algeria, before 1945, the radio as a technical news instrument became widely distributed in the dominant society. It then, as we have seen, became both a means of resistance in the case of isolated Europeans and a means of cultural pressure on the dominated society. Among European farmers, the radio was broadly regarded as a link with the civilized world, as an effective instrument of resistance to the corrosive influence of an inert native society, of a society without a future, backward and devoid of value.

For the Algerian, however, the situation was totally different. We have seen that the more well-to-do family hesitated to buy a radio set. Yet no explicit, organized and motivated resistance was to be observed, but rather a dull absence of interest in that piece of French presence. In rural areas and in regions remote from the colonization centres, the situation was clearer. There no one was faced with the problem, or rather, the problem was so remote from the everyday concerns of the native that it was quite clear to an inquirer that it would be outrageous to ask an Algerian why he did not own a radio.

A man conducting a survey during this period who might be looking for satisfactory answers would find himself unable to obtain the information he needed. All the pretexts put forth had of course to be carefully weighed. At the level of actual experience, one cannot expect to obtain a rationalization of attitudes and choices.

Two levels of explanation can be suggested here. As an instrumental technique in the limited sense, the radio receiving set develops the sensorial, intellectual and muscular powers of man in a given society. *The radio in occupied Algeria is a technique in the hands of the occupier which, within the framework of colonial domination, corresponds to no vital need in so far as the 'native' is concerned.* The radio, as a symbol of French presence, as a material representation of the colonial configuration, is characterized by an extremely important negative valence. The possible intensification and extension of sensorial or intellectual powers by the French radio are implicitly rejected or denied by the native. The technical instrument, the new scientific acquisitions, when they contain a sufficient charge to threaten a given feature of the native society, are never perceived in themselves, in calm objectivity. The technical instrument is rooted in the colonial situation where, as we know, the negative or

positive coefficients always exist in a very accentuated way.

At another level, as a system of information, as a bearer of language, hence of message, the radio may be apprehended within the colonial situation in a special way. Radiophonic technique, the press, and in a general way the systems, messages, sign transmitters, exist in colonial society, in accordance with a well-defined statute. Algerian society, the dominated society, never participates in this world of signs. The messages broadcast by Radio-Alger are listened to solely by the representatives of power in Algeria, solely by the members of the dominant authority, and seem magically to be avoided by the members of the 'native' society. The non-acquisition of receiver sets by this society has precisely the effect of strengthening this impression of a closed and privileged world that characterizes colonialist news. In the matter of daily programmes, before 1954, eulogies addressed to the occupation troops were certainly largely absent. From time to time, to be sure, there might be an evocation over the radio of the outstanding dates of the conquest of Algeria, in the course of which, with an almost unconscious obscenity, the occupier would belittle and humiliate the Algerian resister of 1930. There were also the commemorative celebrations in which the 'Moslem' veterans would be invited to place a wreath at the foot of the statue of General Bugeaud or of Sergeant Blandan, both heroes of the conquest and liquidators of thousands of Algerian patriots. But on the whole it could not be said that the clearly racist or anti-Algerian content accounted for the indifference and the resistance of the native. *The explanation seems rather to be that Radio-Alger is regarded by the Algerian as the spokesman of the colonial world. Before the war the Algerian, with his own brand of humour, had defined Radio-Alger as 'Frenchmen speaking to Frenchmen'.*

The year 1945 was to bring Algeria abruptly on to the international scene. For weeks, the forty-five thousand victims of Sétif and of Guelma<sup>2</sup> were matter for abundant comment in the newspapers and information bulletins of regions until then unaware of or indifferent to the fate of Algeria. The tragedy of their dead or mutilated brothers and the fervent sympathy conveyed to them by men and women in America, Europe and Africa left a deep mark on the Algerians themselves, foreshadowing more fundamental changes. The awakening of the colonial world and the progressive liberation of peoples long held in subjection involved Algeria in a process which reached beyond her and of which, at the same time, she became a part. The appearance of liberated Arab countries at this point is of exceptional importance. The first wholesale introduction of radio sets in Algeria coincided with the setting up of national broadcasting stations in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon.

After 1947-8 the number of radios grew, but at a moderate rate. Even then, the Algerian when he turned on his radio was interested exclusively in foreign and Arab broadcasts. Radio-Alger was listened to only because it broadcast typically Algerian music, national music. In the face of this budding Algerian market, European agencies began to look for 'native' representatives. The European firms were now convinced that the sale of radio sets depended on

the nationality of the dealer. Algerian intermediaries were increasingly solicited for the handling of radios. This innovation in the distribution system was accompanied by an intensification of the marketing of these sets. It was during this period that a certain part of the Algerian lower middle class became owners of radios.

But it was in 1951-2, at the time of the first skirmishes in Tunisia, that the Algerian people felt it necessary to increase their news network. In 1952-3 Morocco undertook its war of liberation, and on 1 November 1954 Algeria joined the anti-colonialist Maghreb Front. It was precisely at this time, while radio sets were being acquired, that the most important development occurred in the defining of new attitudes to this specific technique for the dissemination of news.

It was from the occupiers' reactions that the Algerian learned that something grave and important was happening in his country. The European, through the triple network of the press, the radio and his travels, had a fairly clear idea of the dangers threatening colonial society. The Algerian who read in the occupier's face the increasing bankruptcy of colonialism felt the compelling and vital need to be informed. The vague impression that something fundamental was happening was strengthened both by the solemn decision of the patriots which expressed the secret yearning of the people and which embodied the determination, still devoid of content even yesterday, to exist as a nation, and more especially by the objective and visible crumbling away of the settler's serenity.

The struggle for liberation, reflected in the settler's sudden affability or in his unexpected, unmotivated bursts of temper, obliged the Algerian to follow the evolution of the confrontation step by step. In this period of setting up the lines of conflict, the Europeans committed many errors. Thus on the farms, settlers would assemble agricultural workers to announce to them that a given 'gang of rebels', which was in fact unknown to the region, had been decimated in the Aurés Mountains or in Kabylia. At other times the servants would be offered a bottle of lemonade or a slice of cake because three or four suspects had just been executed a few kilometres from the property.

From the first months of the Revolution the Algerian, with a view to self-protection and in order to escape what he considered to be the occupier's lying manoeuvres, thus found himself having to acquire his own source of information. It became essential to know what was going on, to be informed both of the enemy's real losses and his own. The Algerian at this time had to bring his life up to the level of the Revolution. He had to enter the vast network of news; he had to find his way in a world in which things happened, in which events existed, in which forces were active. Through the experience of a war waged by his own people, the Algerian came in contact with an active community. The Algerian found himself having to oppose the enemy news with his own news. The 'truth' of the oppressor formerly rejected as an absolute lie, was now countered by another, an acted truth. The occupier's lie thereby acquired greater reality, for it was now a menaced lie,

put on the defensive. It was the defences of the occupier, his reactions, his resistances, that underscored the effectiveness of national action and made that action participate in a world of truth. The Algerian's reaction was no longer one of pained and desperate refusal. *Because it avowed its own uneasiness, the occupier's lie became a positive aspect of the nation's new truth.*

During the first months of the war, it was by means of the press that the Algerian attempted to organize his own news distribution system. The democratic press still existing in Algeria and the newspapers with an anti-colonialist tradition or a policy of objectivity were then avidly read by the native. It was in this sector of news distribution that the Algerian found balance-restoring elements. The power of the colonialist message, the systems used to impose it and present it as *the truth* were such that most of the time the colonized had only his own increasingly overshadowed inner conviction to oppose to the very traumatizing offensives of the French press and the spectacular manifestations of the military and police power. Confronted daily with 'the wiping out of the last remaining guerrilla bands', the civilian could fight off despair only by an act of faith, by an obstinate belief.

Progressively the moral (because objective) support provided by the democratic press ceased. The self-censorship of the local newspapers known for their traditional honesty strengthened this impression of incompleteness, of sketchiness, even of betrayal in the realm of news. It seemed to the Algerian that whole sections of truth were hidden from him. He felt the near-certainty that the colonialist power was crumbling before his eyes and that the progress of its dissolution was being kept from him. He fell prey to the sudden fear that this thing, so often hated, wounded to the death in the *djebel*, its days probably numbered, would disappear without his being able to see at close hand its power and its arrogance in the process of disintegration. During this period the Algerian experienced a sense of frustration. His aggressiveness remained in suspense because he could not keep the score, because he could not register the setbacks of the enemy hour by hour, because, finally, he could not measure centimetre by centimetre the progressive shrinking of the occupying power.

The European, on the whole, sized up the dimensions of the rebellion rather objectively. He did not really believe that some fine morning the revolutionary troops would take over in the city. But he knew more or less precisely how great the forces of the Revolution were and he was constantly comparing them with those represented by the French troops. Every plane that streaked the sky, every armoured tank advancing in the dawn were as many spots of sunlight in the settler's anxious and uncertain world. The European felt the shock, but in those first months of 1955 he believed that nothing was lost, that there was still a future for colonialism in Algeria. The official statements of the radio strengthened him in this position. The Algerian, on the other hand, especially if he lived in the rural areas, supplemented his absence of news by an absolutely irrational overestimation. Reactions occurred at that time which were

1. Radio-Alger is in fact one of the mooring-lines maintained by the dominant society. Radio-Monte-Carlo, Radio-Paris, Radio-Andorre likewise play a protective role against 'Arabization'.

2. Sétif and Guelma — two central points in a Moslem uprising that occurred in the region of Kabylia in May 1945. In the repression, which lasted some two weeks, aviation and artillery took a heavy toll of lives. (Translator's note.)

so disproportionate to objective reality that to an observer they assumed a pathological character. In the first months of 1955 there were rumours in Constantine to the effect that Algiers for example, was in the hands of the nationalists, or in Algiers that the Algerian flag was hoisted over Constantine, Philippeville, Batna...

In the small colonization centres the settlers could not always understand the *fellah's* fierce and sudden assurance, and there were times when they would telephone to the nearest city, only to have it confirmed that nothing unusual had happened in the country. The European became aware of the fact that the life he had built on the agony of the colonized people was losing its assurance.

Before the rebellion there was the life, the movement, the existence of the settler, and on the other side the continued agony of the colonized. Since 1954 the European has discovered that another life parallel to his own has begun to stir, and that in Algerian society, it seems, things no longer repeat themselves as they did before. The European, after 1954, knew that something was being hidden from him. This was the period in which the old pejorative expression, the *Arab telephone*, took on an almost scientific meaning.

In the Maghreb country, the Europeans use the term *Arab telephone* in speaking of the relative speed with which news travels by word of mouth in the native society. Never at any time was the expression intended to mean anything else. But in 1955 Europeans, and even Algerians, could be heard to refer confidentially, and as though revealing a state secret, to a technique of long-distance communication that vaguely recalled some such system of signalling, like the tom-tom, as is found in certain regions of Africa. The Algerian gave the isolated European the impression of being in permanent contact with the revolutionary high command. He showed a kind of amplified self-assurance which assumed rather extraordinary forms. There were cases of real 'running amuck'.

Individuals in a fit of aberration would lose control of themselves. They would be seen dashing down a street or into an isolated farm, unarmed, or waving a miserable jagged knife, shouting. 'Long live independent Algeria! We've won!' This aggressive kind of behaviour, which assumed violent forms, would usually end in a burst of machine gun bullets fired by a patrol. When a doctor was able to exchange words with one of these dying men, the usual kind of expression he heard would be something like, 'Don't believe them! We've got the upper edge, our men are coming. I've been sent to tell you they're coming! We're powerful and we'll smash the enemy!'

These hysterical cases were sometimes merely wounded and were given over to the police for questioning. The pathological nature of their behaviour would not be recognized, and the accused would be tortured for days until the press reported that he had been shot trying to escape while being transferred to another prison, or that he had died of a recurring ailment. In the dominant group, likewise, there were cases of mental hysteria; people would be seized with a collective fear and panicky settlers were seen to seek an outlet in criminal acts. What made the two cases

different was that, unlike the colonized, the colonizer always translated his subjective states into acts, real and multiple murders. We propose to deal with these different problems, arising out of the struggle for liberation, in a study directly based on psychopathology, its forms, its original features, its description.

On the level of news, the Algerian was to find himself caught in a network strictly confined in space. In a village everyone is informed of the numerical size and the equipment of the National Army of Liberation. On request, information as to its striking power and plan of operations can be obtained. No one, of course, can give the source of such information, but the reliability is unchallengeable. The description that has been given, when a national army collapses, of the rapidity with which alarming, catastrophic, disastrous news spreads among the people can serve as a system of reference to appraise the opposite phenomenon. In 1940 segments of a Fifth Column may have been discovered which were assigned to inject the French people with the virus of defeat, but it must not be overlooked that the ground was already prepared, that there was a kind of spiritual demobilization, due to the setbacks suffered by democracy in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, and especially at Munich. The defeatism of 1940 was the direct product of the defeatism of Munich.

In Algeria, on the contrary — and this is true for all colonial countries that undertake a national war — all the news is good, every bit of information is gratifying. The Fifth Column is an impossibility in Algeria. It is the recognition of this fact that leads sociologists to rediscover the old explanation according to which the 'native' is inaccessible to reason or to experience. War specialists observe more empirically that these men have an iron morale, or that their fanaticism is incomprehensible. The group considered as a whole gives the impression of supplementing what it gets in the way of news by an assurance more and more cut off from reality. These manifestations, these attitudes of total belief, this collective conviction, express the determination of the group to get as close as possible to the Revolution, to get ahead of the Revolution if possible, in short *to be in on it*.

At the same time, as we have seen, especially in the urban centres, more complex patterns of behaviour came to light. Avid for objective news, the Algerians would buy the democratic papers that arrived from France. This meant an undeniable financial benefit for these papers. *L'Express*, *France-Observateur*, *Le Monde* increased their sales three- and even five-fold in Algeria. The men running newspaper kiosks, almost all of them Europeans, were the first to point out the economic, and secondarily the political danger that these publications represented. In studying the problem of the press in Algeria, one must always bear in mind one peculiarity in the distribution system. The public criers, all young Algerians, sell only the local press. The European papers are not brought to the consumer. These papers have to be bought at the kiosks. The owners of the Algerian press immediately feel the competition of the press coming from France. Campaigns denouncing the press for being "in cahoots with the

enemy', and the repeated seizures of a certain number of these publications obviously assumed a special meaning. More and more newsdealers, when asked for these papers, would reply aggressively that the 's.o.b. papers haven't arrived today.'

Algerians in the cities, but especially in the rural centres, then discovered that showing concern over the arrival or non-arrival of the said press was sufficient to label them. In Algeria as in France, but of course more markedly, the newspaper kiosk dealer, like the office clerk, is sure to be a veteran with strong backing in ultra-colonialist circles. For the Algerian to ask for *L'Express*, *L'Humanité* or *Le Monde* was tantamount to confessing publicly — as likely as not to a police informer — his allegiance to the Revolution; it was in any case an unguarded indication that he had reservations as to the official, or 'colonialist' news; it meant manifesting his willingness to make himself conspicuous; for the kiosk dealer it was the unqualified affirmation by that Algerian of solidarity with the Revolution. The purchase of such a newspaper was thus considered to be a nationalist act. Hence it quickly became a dangerous act.

Every time the Algerian asked for one of these newspapers, the kiosk dealer, who represented the occupier, would regard it as an expression of nationalism, equivalent to an act of war. Because they were now really committed to activities vital to the Revolution, or out of understandable prudence, if one bears in mind the wave of xenophobia created by the French settlers in 1955, Algerian adults soon formed the habit of getting young Algerians to buy these newspapers. It took only a few weeks for this new 'trick' to be discovered. After a certain period the newsdealers refused to sell *L'Express*, *L'Humanité* and *Libération* to minors. Adults were then reduced to coming out into the open or else to falling back on *L'Echo d'Alger*. It was at this point that the political directorate of the Revolution gave orders to boycott the Algerian local press.

This decision had a double objective. First, to counter the offensive of the Algerian trusts by a measure having economic consequences. By depriving the Algerian papers of a large proportion of their native customers the revolutionary movement was dealing a rather effective blow to the market of the local press. But above all, the political directorate was convinced that having to depend solely on colonialist news, the Algerians would gradually succumb to the massive and baneful influence of those pages in which figures and photographs were complacently displayed and where in any case one could clearly read every morning about the elimination of the Revolution.

On the level of the masses, which had remained relatively uninvolved in the struggle since they couldn't read the press, the necessity of having radio sets was felt. It must not be forgotten that the people's generalized illiteracy left it indifferent to things writ-

3. *souk* — market or shop. (Translator's note.)

4. *mishta* — a hamlet. (Translator's note.)

5. In the realm of military communications, the same phenomenon is to be noted. In less than fifteen months the National Army of Liberation's 'liaison and telecommunications system' became equal to the best that is to be found in a modern army.

ten. In the first months of the Revolution, the great majority of Algerians identified everything written in the French language as the expression of colonial domination. The language in which *L'Express* and *L'Echo d'Alger* were written was the sign of the French presence.

The acquisition of a radio set in Algeria, in 1955, represented the sole means of obtaining news of the Revolution from non-French sources. This necessity assumed a compelling character when the people learned that there were Algerians in Cairo who daily drew up the balance-sheet of the liberation struggle. From Cairo, from Syria, from nearly all the Arab countries, the great pages written in the *djebels* by brothers, relatives, friends flowed back to Algeria.

Meanwhile, despite these new occurrences, the introduction of radio sets into houses and the most remote *duwars* proceeded only gradually. There was no enormous rush to buy receivers.

It was at the end of 1956 that the real shift occurred. At this time tracts were distributed announcing the existence of a *Voice of Free Algeria*. The broadcasting schedules and the wavelengths were given. This voice 'that speaks from the *djebels*', not geographically limited, but bringing to all Algeria the great message of the Revolution, at once acquired an essential value. In less than twenty days the entire stock of radio sets was brought up. In the *souks*<sup>3</sup> trade in used receiver sets began. Algerians who had served their apprenticeship with European radio-electricians opened small shops. Moreover, the dealers had to meet new needs. The absence of electrification in immense regions in Algeria naturally created special problems for the consumer. For this reason battery-operated receivers, from 1956 on, were in great demand on Algerian territory. In a few weeks several thousand sets were sold to Algerians, who bought them as individuals, families, groups of houses, *duwars*, *mishtas*.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1956 the purchase of a radio in Algeria has meant, not the adoption of a modern technique for getting news, but the obtaining of access to the only means of entering into communication with the Revolution, of living with it. In the special case of the portable battery set, an improved form of the standard receiver operating on current, the specialist in technical changes in underdeveloped countries might see a sign of a radical mutation. The Algerian, in fact, gives the impression of finding short cuts and of achieving the most modern forms of news-communication without passing through the intermediary stages.<sup>5</sup> In reality, we have seen that this 'progress' is to be explained by the absence of electric current in the Algerian *duwars*.

The French authorities did not immediately realize the exceptional importance of this change in attitude of the Algerian people with regard to the radio. Traditional resistances broke down and one could see in a *duwar* groups of families in which fathers, mothers, daughters, elbow to elbow, would scrutinize the radio dial waiting for the Voice of Algeria. Suddenly indifferent to the sterile, archaic modesty and antique social arrangements devoid of brotherhood, the Algerian family discovered itself to be immune to the off-colour jokes and the obscene references that the announcer occasionally let drop.

Almost magically — but we have seen the rapid and dialectical progression of the new national requirements — the technical instrument of the radio receiver lost its identity as an enemy object. The radio set was no longer a part of the occupier's arsenal of cultural oppression. In making of the radio a primary means of resisting the increasingly overwhelming psychological and military pressures of the occupant, Algerian society made an autonomous decision to embrace the new technique and thus tune itself in on the new signalling systems brought into being by the Revolution.

The Voice of Fighting Algeria was to be of capital importance in consolidating and unifying the people. We shall see that the use of the Arab, Kabyle and French languages which, as colonialism was obliged to recognize, was the expression of a non-racial conception, had the advantage of developing and of strengthening the unity of the people, of making the fighting Djurdjura area real for the Algerian patriots of Batna or of Nemours. The fragments and splinters of acts gleaned by the correspondent of a newspaper more or less attached to the colonial domination, or communicated by the opposing military authorities, lost their anarchic character and became organized into a national and Algerian political idea, assuming their place in an overall strategy of the reconquest of the people's sovereignty. The scattered acts fitted into a vast epic, and the Kabyles were no longer 'the men of the mountains', but the brothers who with Ouamrane and Krim made things difficult for the enemy troops.

Having a radio meant paying one's taxes to the nation, buying the right of entry into the struggle of an assembled people.

The French authorities, however, began to realize the importance of this progress of the people in the technique of news dissemination. After a few months of hesitancy legal measures appeared. The sale of radios was now prohibited, except on presentation of a voucher issued by the military security or police services. The sale of battery sets was absolutely prohibited, and spare batteries were practically withdrawn from the market. The Algerian dealers now had the opportunity to put their patriotism to the test, and they were able to supply the people with spare batteries with exemplary regularity by resorting to various subterfuges.<sup>6</sup>

*The Algerian who wanted to live up to the Revolution, had at last the possibility of hearing an official voice, the voice of the combatants, explains the combat to him, tell him the story of the Liberation on the march, and incorporate it into the nation's new life.*

Here we come upon a phenomenon that is sufficiently unusual to retain our attention. The highly trained French services, rich with experience acquired in modern wars, past masters in the practice of 'sound-wave warfare', were quick to detect the wavelengths of the broadcasting stations. The programmes

6. The arrival in Algeria by normal channels of new sets and new batteries obviously became increasingly difficult. After 1957 it was from Tunisia and Morocco, via the underground, that new supplies came. The regular introduction of these means of establishing contact with the official voice of the Revolution became as important for the people as acquiring weapons or munitions for the National Army.

were then systematically jammed, and the Voice of Fighting Algeria soon became inaudible. A new form of struggle had come into being. Tracts were distributed telling the Algerians to keep tuned in for a period of two or three hours. In the course of a single broadcast a second station, broadcasting over a different wave-length, would relay the first jammed station. The listener, enrolled in the battle of the waves, had to figure out the tactics of the enemy, and in an almost physical way circumvent the strategy of the adversary. Very often only the operator, his ear glued to the receiver, had the un hoped-for opportunity of hearing the Voice. The other Algerians present in the room would receive the echo of this voice through the privileged interpreter who, at the end of the broadcast, was literally besieged. Specific questions would then be asked of this incarnated voice. Those present wanted to know about a particular battle mentioned by the French press in the last twenty-four hours, and the interpreter, embarrassed, feeling guilty, would sometimes have to admit that the Voice had not mentioned it.

But by common consent, after an exchange of views, it would be decided that the Voice had in fact spoken of these events, but that the interpreter had not caught the transmitted information. A real task of reconstruction would then begin. Everyone would participate, and the battles of yesterday and the day before would be re-fought in accordance with the deep aspirations and the unshakeable faith of the group. The listener would compensate for the fragmentary nature of the news by an autonomous creation of information.

Listening to the Voice of Fighting Algeria was motivated not just by eagerness to hear the news, but more particularly by the inner need to be at one with the nation in its struggle, to recapture and to assume the new national formulation, to listen to and to repeat the grandeur of the epic being accomplished up there among the rocks and on the *djebels*. Every morning the Algerian would communicate the result of his hours of listening in. Every morning he would complete for the benefit of his neighbour or his comrade the things not said by the Voice and reply to the insidious questions asked by the enemy press. He would counter the official affirmations of the occupier, the resounding bulletins of the adversary, with official statements issued by the Revolutionary Command.

Sometimes it was the militant who would circulate the assumed point of view of the political directorate. Because of a silence on this or that fact which, if prolonged, might prove upsetting and dangerous for the people's unity, the whole nation would snatch fragments of sentences in the course of a broadcast and attach to them a decisive meaning. Imperfectly heard, obscured by an incessant jamming, forced to change wave-lengths two or three times in the course of a broadcast, the Voice of Fighting Algeria could hardly ever be heard from beginning to end. It was a choppy, broken voice. From one village to the next, from one shack to the next, the Voice of Algeria would recount new things, tell of more and more glorious battles, picture vividly the collapse of the occupying power. The enemy lost its density, and at the level of the consciousness of the

occupied, experienced a series of essential setbacks. Thus the Voice of Algeria, which for months led the life of a fugitive, which was tracked by the adversary's powerful jamming networks, and whose 'word' was often inaudible, nourished the citizen's faith in the Revolution.

This Voice whose presence was felt, whose reality was sensed, assumed more and more weight in proportion to the number of jamming wave-lengths broadcast by the specialised enemy stations. It was the power of the enemy sabotage that emphasized the reality and the intensity of the national expression. By its phantom-like character, the radio of the *mujahideen*,<sup>7</sup> speaking in the name of Fighting Algeria, recognized as the spokesman for every Algerian, gave to the combat its greatest reality.

Under these conditions, claiming to have heard the Voice of Algeria was, in a certain sense, distorting the truth, but it was above all the occasion to proclaim one's clandestine participation in the essence of the Revolution. It meant making a deliberate choice, though it was not explicit during the first months, between the enemy's congenital lie and the people's own lie, which suddenly acquired a dimension of truth.

This voice, often absent, physically inaudible, which each one felt welling up within himself, founded on an inner perception of the Fatherland, became materialized in an irrefutable way. Every Algerian, for this part, broadcast and transmitted the new language. The nature of this voice recalled in more than one way that of the Revolution: present 'in the air' in isolated pieces, but not objectively.<sup>8</sup>

The radio receiver guaranteed this true lie. Every evening, from nine o'clock to midnight, the Algerian would listen. At the end of the evening, not hearing the Voice, the listener would sometimes leave the needle on a jammed wave-length or one that simply produced static, and would announce that the voice of the combatants was here. For an hour the room would be filled with the piercing, excruciating din of the jamming. Behind each modulation, each active crackling, the Algerian would imagine not only words, but concrete battles. The war of the sound waves, in the *gourbi*, re-enacts for the benefit of the citizen the armed clash of his people and colonialism.

7. *mujahideen* — fighters (originally in Moslem Holy War).

8. Along the same line should be mentioned the manner in which programmes are listened to in Kabylia. In groups of scores and sometimes hundreds around a receiver, the peasants listen religiously to 'the Voice of the Arabs'. Few understand the literary Arabic used in these broadcasts. But the faces assume a look of gravity and the features harden when the expression *Istiqlal* (Independence) resounds in the *gourbi* (shack). An Arab voice that hammers out the word *Istiqlal* four times in an hour suffices at that level of heightened consciousness to keep alive the faith in victory.

9. The appearance of themes of morbid protection, their importance as a technique of self-defence and even of self-cure in the historic development of mental disease, have already been studied in classic psychiatry. Plagued by his accusing 'voices', the victim of hallucinations has no other recourse but to create friendly voices. This mechanism of transformation into its antithesis that we here point out has its counterpart in the disintegrating colonial situation.

As a general rule, it is the Voice of Algeria that wins out. The enemy stations, once the broadcast is completed, abandon their work of sabotage. The military music of warring Algeria that concludes the broadcast can then freely fill the lungs and the heads of the faithful. These few brazen notes reward three hours of daily hope and have played a fundamental role for months in the training and strengthening of the Algerian national consciousness.

On the psychopathological level, it is important to mention a few phenomena pertaining to the radio which made their appearance in connexion with the war of liberation. Before 1954, the monographs written on Algerians suffering from hallucinations constantly pointed out the presence in the so-called 'external action phase' of highly aggressive and hostile radio voices. These metallic, cutting, insulting, disagreeable voices all have for the Algerian an accusing, inquisitorial character. The radio, on the normal level, already apprehended as an instrument of the occupation, as a type of violent invasion on the part of the oppressor, assumes highly alienating meanings in the field of the pathological. The radio, in addition to the somewhat irrational magical elements with it is invested in the majority of homogeneous societies, that is to say societies from which all foreign oppression is absent, has a particular valence in Algeria. We have seen that the voice heard is not indifferent, is not neutral; it is the voice of the oppressor, the voice of the enemy. The speech delivered is not received, deciphered, understood, but rejected. The communication is never questioned, but is simply refused, for it is precisely the opening of oneself to the other that is organically excluded from the colonial situation. Before 1954, in the psychopathological realm, the radio was an evil object, anxiogenic and accursed.

After 1954, the radio assumed totally new meanings. The phenomena of the wireless and the receiver set lost their coefficient of hostility, were stripped of their character of extraneousness, and became part of the coherent order of the nation in battle. In hallucinatory psychoses, after 1956, the radio voices became protective, friendly. Insults and accusations disappeared and gave way to words of encouragement. The foreign technique, which had been 'digested' in connexion with the national struggle, had become a fighting instrument for the people and a protective organ against anxiety.<sup>9</sup>

Still on the level of communication, attention must be called to the acquisition of new values by the French language. The French language, a language of occupation, a vehicle of the oppressing power, seemed doomed for eternity to judge the Algerian in a pejorative way. Every French expression referring to the Algerian had a humiliating content. Every French speech heard was an order, a threat or an insult. The contact between the Algerian and the European is defined by these three spheres. The broadcasting in French of the programmes of Fighting Algeria was to liberate the enemy language from its historic meanings. The same message transmitted in three different languages unified the experience and gave it a universal dimension. The French language lost its accursed character, revealing itself to be capable also of transmitting, for the benefit of the

nation, the messages of truth that the latter awaited. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is the Algerian Revolution, it is the struggle of the Algerian people, that is facilitating the spreading of the French language in the nation.

In psychopathology, sentences in French lost their automatic character of insult and malediction. When they hear French voices, Algerians suffering from hallucinations quote words that are less and less aggressive. It is not uncommon, at a later stage, to note that hallucinations in the language of the occupier assume a friendly character of support, of protection.<sup>10</sup>

The occupation authorities have not measured the importance of the new attitude of the Algerians towards the French language. Expressing oneself in French, understanding French, was no longer tantamount to treason or to an impoverishing identification with the occupier. Used by the Voice of the Combatants, conveying in a positive way the message of the Revolution, the French language also becomes an instrument of liberation. Whereas formerly, in psychopathology, any French voice, to one in a delirium, expressed rejection, condemnation and opprobrium, with the struggle for liberation we see the initiation of a major process of exorcizing the French language. The 'native' can almost be said to assume responsibility for the language of the occupier.<sup>11</sup>

It was after the Congress of the Soummam, in August 1956, that the French became aware of this phenomenon. It will be remembered that on this occasion, the political and military leaders of the Revolution met in the Valley of the Soummam, precisely in the sector of Amirouche, the then Commander, to lay the doctrinal foundations of the struggle and to set up the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA). The fact that the discussions were carried on in French suddenly revealed to the occupation forces that the traditional general reticence of the Algerian with regard to using French within the colonial situation might no longer exist, when a decisive confrontation brought the will to national independence of the people and the dominant power face to face.

The French authorities were curiously baffled by this phenomenon. They first saw in it the proof of what they had always claimed — i.e., the incapacity

10. What is involved here is not the emergence of an ambivalence, but rather a mutation, a radical change of valence, not a back-and-forth movement but a dialectical progression.

11. On the other hand, the Voice of Algeria was imagined by certain Algerian collaborators to be pronouncing death sentences. Suffering from serious fits of depression, these men, who usually belonged to the police services, would be attacked, insulted, convicted by the 'rebel' radio. Likewise, European women as well as European men in outbreaks of anxiety would very clearly hear threats or condemnations in the Arabic language. Such phenomena were practically unknown before 1954.

12. At the same period the political directorate decided to destroy the French radio in Algeria. The existence of a national voice led the heads of the movement to contemplate silencing Radio-Alger. Considerable damage was inflicted on technical facilities by the explosion of time bombs. But the broadcasts were soon resumed.

of the Arabic language to handle the operational concepts of a modern revolutionary war. But at the same time, the decisions reached in the occupier's linguistic system forced the occupier to realize the relative character of his signs and created confusion and disorder in his defence system.

The advocates of integration, for their part, here saw a new opportunity to promote a 'French Algeria' by making the occupier's language the sole practical means of communication available to Kabyles, Arabs, Chaouias, Mozabites, etc. This thesis, on the level of language, went back to the very basis of colonialism: it is the intervention of the foreign nation that puts order into the original anarchy of the colonized country. Under these conditions, the French language, the language of the occupier, was given the role of *Logos*, with ontological implications within Algerian society.

In either case, using the French language was at the same time domesticating an attribute of the occupier and proving oneself open to the signs, the symbols, in short to a certain influence of the occupier. The French have not made a sufficiently thorough study of this new behaviour of the Algerian with regard to their language. Before 1954, most of the work of the congresses of the nationalist parties was carried on in Arabic. More precisely, the militants of Kabylia or the Aurès would learn Arabic in connexion with their national activities. Before 1954, speaking Arabic, refusing French as a language and as a means of cultural oppression, was a distinct and daily form of differentiation, of national existence. Before 1954, the nationalist parties sustained the hope of the militants and developed the political consciousness of the people by singling out and explaining, one by one, the value of the different configurations, the different characteristics of the occupied nation. The Arabic language was the most effective means that the *nation's* being had of unveiling itself.<sup>12</sup>

In August 1956, the reality of combat and the confusion of the occupier stripped the Arabic language of its sacred character, and the French language of its negative connotations. The new language of the nation could then make itself known through multiple meaningful channels.

The radio receiver as a technique of disseminating news and the French language as a basis for a possible communication became almost simultaneously accepted by the fighting nation.

We have seen that with the creation of the Voice of Fighting Algeria, radio sets multiplied to an extraordinary degree. Before 1954, the receiving instrument, the radiophonic technique of long-distance communication of thought was not, in Algeria, a mere neutral object. Looked upon as a transmission belt of the colonialist power, as a means in the hands of the occupier by which to maintain his stranglehold on the nation, the radio was frowned upon. Before 1954, switching on the radio meant giving asylum to the occupier's words; it meant allowing the colonizer's language to filter into the very heart of the house, the last of the supreme bastions of the national spirit. Before 1954, a radio in an Algerian house was the mark of Europeanization in progress, of vulnerability. It was the conscious opening to the influence of

the dominator, to his pressure. It was the decision to *give voice to the occupier*. Having a radio meant accepting being besieged from within by the colonizer. It meant demonstrating that one chose cohabitation within the colonial framework. It meant, beyond any doubt, surrendering to the occupier.

We have mentioned the reasons invoked by the people to explain their reticence with respect to the radio. The desire to keep intact the traditional forms of sociability and the hierarchy of the family was then the main justification.

'We never know what programme we are going to pick up'. 'There's no telling what they're going to say next.' Sometimes a religious argument of a peremptory nature appears: 'It's the infidels' radio.' We have seen that such rationalizations are arbitrarily created to justify the rejection of the occupier's presence.

With the creation of a Voice of Fighting Algeria, the Algerian was vitally committed to listening to the message, to assimilating it, and soon to acting upon it. Buying a radio, getting down on one's knees with one's head against the speaker, was no longer just wanting to get the news concerning the formidable experience in progress in the country, it was *hearing* the first words of the nation.

Since the new Algeria on the march had decided to tell about itself, and to make itself heard, the radio had become indispensable. It was the radio that enabled the Voice to take root in the villages and on the hills. Having a radio seriously meant *going to war*.

By means of the radio, a technique rejected before 1954, the Algerian people decided to relaunch the Revolution. Listening in on the Revolution, the Algerian existed with it, made it exist.

The memory of the 'free' radios that came into being during the Second World War underlines the unique quality of the Voice of Fighting Algeria. The Polish, Belgian, French people, under the German occupation, were able, through the broadcasts transmitted from London, to maintain contact with a certain image of their nation. Hope, the spirit of resistance to the oppressor, were then given daily sustenance and kept alive. For example, it will be remembered that listening to the voice of Free France was a mode of national existence, a form of combat. The fervent and well-nigh mystical participation of the French people with the voice from London has been sufficiently commented upon to need no amplification. In France, from 1940 to 1944, listening to the voice of Free France was surely a vital, sought-for experience. But listening to the radio was not a new phenomenon of behaviour. The voice from London had its place in the vast repertory of transmitting stations which already existed for the French before the war. From the global conflict, a pre-eminent figure emerges through the agency — that of occupied France receiving the message of hope from Free France. In Algeria things took on a special character. First of all, there was the stripping from the instrument its traditional burden of taboos and prohibitions. Progressively the instrument not only acquired a category of neutrality, but was endowed with a positive coefficient.

Accepting the radio technique, buying a receiver

set, and participating in the life of the fighting nation, all these coincided. The frenzy with which the people exhausted the stock of radio sets gives a rather accurate idea of its desire to be involved in the dialogue that began in 1955 between the combatant and the *nation*.

In the colonial society, Radio-Alger was not just one among a number of voices. *It was the voice of the occupier*. Tuning in Radio-Alger amounted to accepting domination; it amounted to exhibiting one's desire to live on good terms with oppression. It meant giving in to the enemy. Switching on the radio meant validating the formula, 'This is Algiers, the French Radio Broadcast.' The acquiring of a radio handed the colonized over to the enemy's system and prepared for the banishing of hope from his heart.

The existence of the Voice of Fighting Algeria, on the other hand, profoundly changed the problem. Every Algerian felt himself to be called upon and wanted to become a reverberating element of the vast network of meanings born of the liberating combat. The war, daily events of military or political character, were broadly commented on in the news programmes of the foreign radios. In the foreground the voice of the *djebels* stood out. We have seen that the phantom-like and quickly inaudible character of this voice in no way affected *its felt reality and its power*. Radio-Alger, Algerian Radio-Broadcasting, lost their sovereignty.

Gone were the days when mechanically switching on the radio amounted to an invitation to the enemy. For the Algerian the radio, as a technique, became transformed. The radio set was no longer directly and solely tuned in on the occupier. To the right and to the left of Radio-Alger's broadcasting band, on different and numerous wave-lengths, innumerable stations could be tuned in to, among which it was possible to distinguish the friends, the enemies' accomplices and the neutrals. Under these conditions, having a receiver was neither making oneself available to the enemy, nor giving him a voice, nor yielding on a point of principle. On the contrary, on the strict level of news, it was showing the desire to keep one's distance, to hear other voices, to take in other prospects. It was in the course of the struggle for liberation and thanks to the creation of a Voice of Fighting Algeria that the Algerian experienced and concretely discovered the existence of voices other than the voice of the dominator which formerly had been immeasurably amplified because of his own silence.

The old monologue of the colonial situation, already shaken by the existence of the struggle, disappeared completely by 1956. The Voice of Fighting Algeria and all the voices picked up by the receiver now revealed to the Algerian the tenuous, very relative character, in short, the imposture of the French voice presented until now as the only one. The occupier's voice was stripped of its authority.

The nation's *speech*, the nation's spoken *words* shape the world while at the same time renewing it.

Before 1954, native society as a whole rejected the radio, turned a deaf ear to the technical development of methods of news dissemination. There was a non-receptive attitude before this import brought in

by the occupier. In the colonial situation, the radio did not satisfy any need of the Algerian people.<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, the radio was considered, as we have seen, a means used by the enemy to quietly carry on his work of depersonalization of the native.

The national struggle and the creation of Free Radio Algeria have produced a fundamental change in the people. The radio has appeared in a massive way at once and not in progressive stages. What we have witnessed is a radical transformation of the means of perception, of the very world of perception. Of Algeria it is true to say that there never was, with respect to the radio, a pattern of listening habits, of audience reaction. In so far as mental processes are concerned, the technique had virtually to be invented. The Voice of Algeria, created out of nothing, brought the nation to life and endowed every citizen with a new status, *telling him so explicitly*.

After 1957, the French troops in operation formed the habit of confiscating all the radios in the course of a raid. At the same time listening in on a certain number of broadcasts was prohibited. Today things have progressed. The Voice of Fighting Algeria has multiplied. From Tunis, from Damascus, from Cairo, from Rabat, programmes are broadcast to the people. The programmes are organized by Algerians. The French services no longer try to jam these powerful and numerous broadcasts. The Algerian has the opportunity every day of listening to five or six different broadcasts in Arabic or in French, by means of which he can follow the victorious development of the Revolution step by step. As far as news is concerned, the word of the occupier has been seen to suffer a progressive devaluation. After having imposed the national voice upon that of the dominator, the radio welcomes broadcasts from all the corners of the world. The 'Week of Solidarity with Algeria', organized by the Chinese people, or the resolutions of the Congress of African Peoples on the Algerian war, link the *fellah* to an immense tyranny-destroying wave.

Incorporated under these conditions into the life of the nation, the radio will have an exceptional importance in the country's building phase. After the war a disparity between the people and what is intended to speak for them will no longer be possible. The revolutionary instruction on the struggle for liberation must normally be replaced by a revolutionary instruction on the building of the nation. The fruitful use that can be made of the radio can well be imagined. Algeria has enjoyed a unique experience. For several years, the radio will have been, for many, one of the means of saying 'no' to the occupation and of believing in the liberation. The identification of the voice of the Revolution with the fundamental truth of the nation has opened limitless horizons.

13. In this connexion may be mentioned the attitude of the French authorities in present-day Algeria. As we know, television was introduced into Algeria several years ago. Until recently, a simultaneous bilingual commentary accompanied the broadcasts. Some time ago, the Arabic commentary ceased. This fact once again confirms the aptness of the formula applied to Radio-Alger: 'Frenchmen speaking to Frenchmen'.

## Fernando Solanas Octavio Getino

### TOWARD A THIRD CINEMA (Argentina, 1969)

Just a short time ago it would have seemed like a Quixotic adventure in the colonialized, neocolonialized, or even the imperialist nations themselves to make any attempt to create *films of decolonization* that turned their back on or actively opposed the System. Until recently, film had been synonymous with show or amusement: in a word, it was one more *consumer good*. At best, films succeeded in bearing witness to the decay of bourgeois values and testifying to social injustice. As a rule, films only dealt with effect, never with cause; it was cinema of mystification or anti-historicism. It was *surplus value* cinema. Caught up in these conditions, films, the most valuable tool of communication of our times, were destined to satisfy only the ideological and economic interests of the *owners of the film industry*, the lords of the world film market, the great majority of whom were from the United States.

Was it possible to overcome this situation? How could the problem of turning out liberation films be approached when costs came to several thousand dollars and the distribution and exhibition channels were in the hands of the enemy? How could the continuity of work be guaranteed? How could the public be reached? How could System-imposed repression and censorship be vanquished? These questions, which could be multiplied in all directions, led and still lead many people to skepticism or rationalization: "revolutionary films cannot be made before the revolution"; "Revolutionary films have been possible only in the liberated countries"; "without the support of revolutionary political power, revolutionary films or art is impossible." The mistake was due to taking the same approach to reality and films as did the bourgeoisie. The models of production, distribution, and exhibition continued to be *those of Hollywood* precisely because, in ideology and politics, films had not yet become the vehicle for a clearly drawn differentiation between bourgeois ideology and politics. A reformist policy, as manifested in dialogue with the adversary, in coexistence, and in the relegation of national contradictions to those between two supposedly unique blocs — the USSR and the USA — was and is unable to produce anything but a cinema within the System itself. At best, it can be the *'progressive' wing of establishment cinema*. When all is said and done, such cinema was doomed to wait until the world conflict was resolved peacefully in

This text was first published in the Cuban review *Tricontinental* (Havana), 3, 1969, and reprinted in *Cineaste* (New York), IV, 3, Winter 1970-1. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

favour of socialism in order to change qualitatively. The most daring attempts of those filmmakers who strove to conquer the fortress of official cinema ended, as Jean-Luc Godard eloquently put it, with the filmmaker's themselves "trapped inside the fortress."

But the questions that were recently raised appeared promising; they arose from a new historical situation to which the filmmaker, as is often the case with the educated strata of our countries, was rather a late-comer: ten years of the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnamese struggle, and the development of a worldwide liberation movement whose moving force is to be found in the Third World countries. *The existence of masses on the worldwide revolutionary plane was the substantial fact without which those questions could not have been posed*. A new historical situation and a new man born in the process of the anti-imperialist struggle demanded a new, revolutionary attitude from the filmmakers of the world. The question of whether or not militant cinema was possible before the revolution began to be replaced, at least within small groups, by the question of *whether or not such a cinema was necessary to contribute to the possibility of revolution*. An affirmative answer was the starting point for the first attempts to channel the process of seeking possibilities in numerous countries. Examples are Newsreel, a US New Left film group, the *cinegiornali* of the Italian student movement, the films made by the *Etats Generaux du Cinema Français*, and those of the British and Japanese student movements, all a continuation and deepening of the work of a Joris Ivens or a Chris Marker. Let it suffice to observe the films of a Santiago Alvarez in Cuba, or the cinema being developed by different filmmakers in "the homeland of all", as Bolivar would say, as they seek a revolutionary Latin American cinema.

A profound debate on the role of intellectuals and artists before liberation today is enriching the perspectives of intellectual work all over the world. However, this debate oscillates between two poles: one which proposes to *relegate* all intellectual work capacity to a *specifically* political or political-military function, denying perspectives to all artistic activity with the idea that such activity must ineluctably be absorbed by the System, and the other which maintains an inner duality of the intellectual. On the one hand, the 'work of art', 'the privilege of beauty', an art and a beauty which are not necessarily bound to the needs of the revolutionary political process, and, on the other, a political commitment which generally consists in signing certain anti-imperialist manifestoes. In practice, this point of view means the *separation of politics and art*.

This polarity rests, as we see it, on two omissions: first, the conception of culture, science, art, and cinema as univocal and universal terms, and, second, an insufficiently clear idea of the fact that the revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie, but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense the need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change *through activities on different fronts*.

Culture, art, science and cinema always respond to conflicting class interests. In the neocolonial situation two concepts of culture, art, science, and cinema compete: *that of the rulers and that of the nation*. And this situation will continue, as long as the national concept is not identified with that of the rulers, as long as the status of colony or semi-colony continues in force. Moreover, the duality will be overcome and will reach a single and universal category only when the best values of man emerge from proscription to achieve hegemony, when the liberation of man is universal. In the meantime, there exists *our* culture and *their* culture, *our* cinema and *their* cinema. Because our culture is an impulse towards emancipation, it will remain in existence until emancipation is a reality: *a culture of subversion* which will carry with it an art, a science, and a *cinema of subversion*.

The lack of awareness in regard to these dualities generally leads the intellectual to deal with artistically and scientific expressions as they were universally conceived by the classes that rule the world, at best introducing some correction into these expressions. We have not gone deeply enough into developing a revolutionary theatre, architecture, medicine, psychology, and cinema; into developing a culture *by and for us*. The intellectual takes each of these forms of expression as a unit to be corrected *from within the expression itself, and not from without, with its own new methods and models*.

An astronaut or a Ranger mobilizes all the scientific resources of imperialism. Psychologists, doctors, politicians, sociologists, mathematicians, and even artists are thrown into the study of everything that serves, *from the vantage point of different specialties*, the preparation of an orbital flight or the massacre of Vietnamese; in the long run, all of these specialties are equally employed to satisfy the needs of imperialism. In Buenos Aires the army eradicates *villas miseria* [urban shanty towns] and in their place puts up "strategic hamlets" with urbanized setups aimed at facilitating military intervention when the time comes. The revolutionary organizations lack specialized fronts in *the Establishment's* medicine, engineering, psychology, and art — not to mention the development of *our own revolutionary* engineering, psychology, art, and cinema. In order to be effective, all these fields must recognize the *priorities* of each stage; those required by the struggle for power or those demanded by the already victorious revolution. Examples: creating a political sensitivity as awareness of the need to undertake a political-military struggle in order to take power; intensifying all the modern resources of medical science to prepare people with optimum levels of health and physical efficiency, ready for combat in rural or urban zones; or elaborating an architecture, a city planning, that will be able to withstand the massive air raids that imperialism can launch at any time. The specific strengthening of each specialty and field subordinate to collective priorities can fill the empty spaces caused by the struggle for liberation and can delineate with greatest efficacy the role of the intellectual in our time. It is evident that revolutionary mass-level culture and awareness can only be achieved after the taking of political power, but it is no less true that the use of scientific and

artistic means, together with political-military means, prepares the terrain for the revolution to become reality and facilitates the solution of the problems that will arise with the taking of power.

The intellectual must find through his action the field in which he can rationally perform the most efficient work. Once the front has been determined, his next task is to find out *within that front* exactly what is the enemy's stronghold and where and how he must deploy his forces. It is in this harsh and dramatic daily search that a culture of the revolution will be able to emerge, the basis which will nurture, *beginning right now*, the *new man* exemplified by Che — not man in the abstract, not the "liberation of man", but *another man*, capable of arising from the ashes of the old, alienated man that we are and which the new man will destroy — by starting to stoke the fire *today*.

The anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the Third World and of their equivalents inside the imperialist countries constitutes today the axis of the world revolution. *Third cinema* is, in our opinion, the cinema that *recognizes in that struggle of the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time*, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point — in a word, the decolonization of culture.

The culture, including the cinema, of a neocolonialized country is just the expression of an overall dependence that generates models and values born from the needs of imperialist expansion.

In order to impose itself, neocolonialism needs to convince the people of a dependent country of their own inferiority. Sooner or later, the inferior man recognizes Man with a capital M; this recognition means the destruction of his defenses. If you want to be a man, says the oppressor, you have to be like me, speak my language, deny your own being, transform yourself into me. As early as the 17th Century the Jesuit missionaries proclaimed the aptitude of the [South American] native for copying European works of art. Copyist, translator, interpreter, at best a spectator, the neocolonialized intellectual will always be encouraged to refuse to assume his creative possibilities. Inhibitions, uprootedness, escapism, cultural cosmopolitanism, artistic imitation, metaphysical exhaustion, betrayal of country — all find fertile soil in which to grow.<sup>1</sup>

Culture becomes bilingual not due to the use of two languages but because of the conjuncture of two cultural patterns of thinking. One is national, that of the people, and the other is estranging, that of the classes subordinated to outside forces. The admiration that the upper classes expresses for the US or Europe is the highest expression of their subjection. With the colonialization of the upper classes the culture of imperialism indirectly introduces among the masses knowledge which cannot be supervised.<sup>2</sup>

Just as they are not masters of the land upon which they walk, the neocolonialized people are not masters of the ideas that envelop them. A knowledge

1. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, *La hora de los hornos: Neocolonialismo y violencia*, 1967.

2. Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*.

3. René Zavaleta Mercado, *Bolivia: Crecimiento de la idea nacional*.

4. *La hora de los hornos*, op. cit.

5. *Ibid.*

of national reality presupposes going into the web of lies and confusion that arise from dependence. The intellectual is obliged to *refrain from spontaneous thought*; if he does think, he generally runs the risk of doing so in French or English — never in the language of a culture of his own which, like the process of national and social liberation, is still hazy and incipient. Every piece of data, every concept that floats around us, is part of a framework of mirages that it is difficult to take apart.

The native bourgeoisie of the port cities such as Buenos Aires, and their respective intellectual elites, constituted, from the very origins of our history, the transmission belt of neocolonial penetration. Behind such watchwords as "Civilization or barbarism!", manufactured in Argentina by Europeanizing liberalism, was the attempt to impose a civilization fully in keeping with the needs of imperialist expansion and the desire to destroy the resistance of the national masses, which were successively called the "rabble", a "bunch of blacks", and "zoological detritus" in our country and "the unwashed hordes" in Bolivia. In this way the ideologists of the semi-countries, past masters in "the play of big words, with an implacable, detailed, and rustic universalism"<sup>3</sup> served as spokesmen of those followers of Disraeli who intelligently proclaimed: "I prefer the rights of the English to the rights of man."

The middle sectors were and are the best recipients of cultural neocolonialism. Their ambivalent class condition, their buffer position between social polarities, and their broader possibilities of access to *civilization* offer imperialism a base of social support which has attained considerable importance in some Latin American countries.

It serves to institutionalize and give a normal appearance to dependence. The main objective of this cultural deformation is to keep the people from realizing their neocolonialized position and aspiring to change it. In this way pedagogical colonialization is an effective substitute for the colonial police.<sup>4</sup>

Mass communications tend to complete the destruction of a national awareness and of a collective subjectivity on the way to enlightenment, a destruction which begins as soon as the child has access to these media, the education and culture of the ruling classes. In Argentina 26 television channels; one million television sets; more than 50 radio stations; hundreds of newspapers, periodicals, and magazines; and thousands of records, films, etc., join their acculturating role of the colonialization of taste and consciousness to the process of neocolonial education which begins in the university. "Mass communications are more effective for neocolonialism than napalm. What is real, true, and rational is to be found on the margin of the Law, just as are the people. Violence, crime, and destruction come to be Peace, Order, and Normality."<sup>5</sup> *Truth, then, amounts to subversion*. Any form of expression or communication that tries to show national reality is *subversion*.

Cultural penetration, pedagogical colonization, and mass communications all join forces today in a desperate attempt to absorb, neutralize, or eliminate any expression that responds to an attempt at decolonization. Neocolonialism makes a serious attempt to

castrate, to digest, the cultural forms that arise beyond the bounds of its own aims. Attempts are made to remove from them precisely what makes them effective and dangerous, their *politicization*. Or, to put it another way, to separate the cultural manifestation from the fight for national independence.

Ideas such as "Beauty in itself is revolutionary" and "All new cinema is revolutionary" are idealistic aspirations that do not touch the neocolonial condition, since they continue to conceive of cinema, art, and beauty as universal abstractions and not as an integral part of the national processes of decolonization.

Any dispute, no matter how virulent, which does not serve to mobilize, agitate, and politicize sectors of the people to arm them rationally and perceptibly, in one way or another, for the struggle is received with indifference or even with pleasure. Virulence, non-conformism, plain rebelliousness, and discontent are just so many more products on the capitalist market; they are *consumer goods*. This is especially true in a situation where the bourgeoisie is in need of a daily dose of shock and exciting elements of controlled violence<sup>6</sup> — that is, violence which absorption by the System turns into pure stridency. Examples are the works of a socialist-tinged painting and sculpture which are greedily sought after by the new bourgeoisie to decorate their apartments and mansions; plays full of anger and avant-gardism which are noisily applauded by the ruling classes; the literature of progressive writers concerned with semantics and man on the margin of time and space, which gives an air of democratic broadmindedness to the System's publishing houses and magazines; and the cinema of 'challenge', of 'argument', promoted by the distribution monopolies and launched by the big commercial outlets.

In reality the area of 'permitted protest' of the System is much greater than the System is willing to admit. This gives the artists the illusion that they are acting 'against the system' by going beyond certain narrow limits; they do not realize that even anti-System art can be absorbed and utilized by the System, as both a brake and a necessary self-correction.<sup>7</sup>

Lacking an awareness of how to *utilize what is ours for our true liberation* — in a word, lacking *politicization* — all of these 'progressive' alternatives come to form the Leftish wing of the System, the improvement of its cultural products. They will be doomed to carry out the best work on the Left that the Right is able to accept today and will thus only serve the survival of the latter. "Restore words, dramatic actions, and images to the places where they can carry out a revolutionary role, where they will be useful, where they will become *weapons in the struggle*."<sup>8</sup> Insert the work as an original fact in the process of liberation, place it first at the service of life itself, ahead of art; *dissolve aesthetics in the life of society*: only in this way, as Fanon said, can

6. Observe the new custom of some groups of the upper bourgeoisie from Rome and Paris who spend their weekends travelling to Saigon to get a close-up view of the Vietcong offensive.

7. Irwin Silber, "USA: The Alienation of Culture", *Tricontinental* (Havana), 10.

8. The Argentine organization "Plásticos de Vanguardia".

9. *La hora de los hornos*, op. cit.

decolonization become possible and culture, cinema, and beauty — at least, what is of greatest importance to us — become *our culture, our films, and our sense of beauty*.

The historical perspectives of Latin America and of the majority of the countries under imperialist domination are headed not towards a lessening of repression but towards an increase. We are heading not for bourgeois-democratic regimes but for dictatorial forms of government. The struggles for democratic freedoms, instead of seizing concessions from the System, move it to cut down on them, given its narrow margin for manoeuvring.

The bourgeois-democratic facade caved in some time ago. The cycle opened during the last century in Latin America with the first attempts at self-affirmation of a national bourgeoisie differentiated from the metropolis (examples are Rosa's federalism in Argentina, the Lopez and Francia regimes in Paraguay, and those of Bengido and Balmaceda in Chile) with a tradition that has continued well into our century: national-bourgeois, national-popular, and democratic-bourgeois attempts were made by Cardenas, Yrigoyen, Haya de la Torre, Vargas, Aguirre Cerda, Peron, and Arbenz. But as far as revolutionary prospects are concerned, the cycle has definitely been completed. The lines allowing for the deepening of the historical attempt of each of those experiences today pass through the sectors that understand the continent's situation as one of war and that are preparing, under the force of circumstances, to make that region the Viet-Nam of the coming decade. A war in which national liberation can only succeed when it is simultaneously postulated as social liberation — socialism as the only valid perspective of any national liberation process.

At this time in Latin America there is room for neither passivity nor innocence. The intellectual's commitment is measured in terms of risks as well as words and ideas; what he does to further the cause of liberation is what counts. The worker who goes on strike and thus risks losing his job or even his life, the student who jeopardizes his career, the militant who keeps silent under torture: each by his or her action commits us to something much more important than a vague gesture of solidarity.<sup>9</sup>

In a situation in which the 'state of law' is replaced by the 'state of facts', the intellectual, who is *one more worker*, functioning on a cultural front, must become increasingly radicalized to avoid denial of self and to carry out what is expected of him in our times. The impotence of all reformist concepts has already been exposed sufficiently, not only in politics but also in culture and films — and especially in the latter, *whose history is that of imperialist domination — mainly Yankee*.

While, during the early history (or prehistory) of the cinema, it was possible to speak of a German, an Italian, or a Swedish cinema clearly differentiated and corresponding to specific national characteristics, today such differences have disappeared. The borders were wiped out along with the expansion of US imperialism and the film model that it imposed: *Hollywood movies*. In our times it is hard to find a film within the field of commercial cinema, including what is known as 'author's cinema', in both the capitalist and socialist countries, that manages to avoid the models of Hollywood pictures. The latter have such a fast hold that monumental works such as the USSR's Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* are also monumental



examples of the submission to all the propositions imposed by the US movie industry (structure, language, etc.) and, consequently, to its concepts.

The placing of the cinema within US models, even in the formal aspect, in language, leads to the adoption of the ideological forms that *gave rise to precisely that language and no other*. Even the appropriation of models which appear to be only technical, industrial, scientific, etc., leads to a conceptual dependency situation, due to the fact that the cinema is an industry, but differs from other industries in that it has been created and organized in order to *generate certain ideologies*. The 35mm camera, 24 frames per second, arc lights, and a commercial place of exhibition for audiences were conceived not to gratuitously transmit any ideology, but to satisfy, in the first place, the cultural and surplus value needs of a *specific ideology, of a specific world-view: that of US financial capital*.

The mechanistic takeover of a cinema conceived as a show to be exhibited in large theatres with a standard duration, hermetic structures that are born and die on the screen, satisfies, to be sure, the *commercial interests* of the production groups, but it also leads to the *absorption of forms of the bourgeois world-view* which are the continuation of 19th Century art, of bourgeois art: man is accepted only as a passive and consuming object; *rather than having his ability to make history recognized, he is only permitted to read history, contemplate it, listen to it, and undergo it*. The cinema as a spectacle aimed at a digesting object is the highest point that can be reached by bourgeois filmmaking. The world, experience, and the historic process are enclosed within the frame of a painting, the same stage of a theatre, and the movie screen; man is viewed as a *consumer of ideology*, and not as the creator of ideology. This notion is the starting point for the wonderful interplay of bourgeois philosophy and the obtaining of surplus value. The result is a cinema studied by motivational analysts, sociologists and psychologists, by the endless researchers of the dreams and frustrations of the masses, all aimed at selling *movie-life*, reality as it is conceived by the ruling classes.

The first alternative to this type of cinema, which we could call the *first cinema*, arose with the so-called 'author's cinema', 'expression cinema', '*nouvelle vague*', '*cinema novo*', or, conventionally, the *second cinema*. This alternative signified a step forward inasmuch as it demanded that the filmmaker be free to express himself in non-standard language and inasmuch as it was an attempt at cultural decolonization. But such attempts have already reached, or about to reach, the outer limits of what the system permits. The *second cinema filmmaker* has remained "trapped inside the fortress" as Godard put it, or is on his way to becoming trapped. The search for a market of 200,000 moviegoers in Argentina, a figure that is supposed to cover the costs of an independent local production, the proposal of developing a mechanism of industrial

10. Mao Tse-tung, *On Practice* (1937). [Reprinted, in part, in Volume 1 of this anthology (*1. Capitalism, Imperialism*), pp. 105-7.]

11. Rodolfo Pruiross, *El proletariado en la revolución nacional*.

production parallel to that of the System but which would be distributed by the System according to its own norms, the struggle to better the laws protecting the cinema and replacing 'bad officials' by 'less bad', etc., is a search lacking in viable prospects, unless you consider viable the prospect of becoming institutionalized as 'the youthful, angry wing of society' — that is, of neocolonialized or capitalist society.

Real alternatives differing from those offered by the System are only possible if one of two requirements is fulfilled: *making films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System*. Neither of these requirements fits within the alternatives that are still offered by the *second cinema*, but they can be found in the revolutionary opening towards a cinema outside and against the System, in a cinema of liberation: the *third cinema*.

One of the most effective jobs done by neocolonialism is its cutting off of intellectual sectors, especially artists, from national reality by lining them up behind 'universal art and models'. It has been very common for intellectuals and artists to be found at the tail end of popular struggle, when they have not actually taken up positions against it. The social layers which have made the greatest contribution to the building of a national culture (understood as an impulse towards decolonization) have not been precisely the enlightened elites but rather the most exploited and uncivilized sectors. Popular organizations have very rightly distrusted the 'intellectual' and the 'artist.' When they have not been openly used by the bourgeoisie or imperialism, they have certainly been their indirect tools; most of them did not go beyond spouting a policy in favour of "peace and democracy", fearful of anything that had a national ring to it, afraid of contaminating art with politics and the artists with the revolutionary militant. They thus tended to obscure the inner cause determining neocolonialized society and placed in the foreground the outer causes, which, while "they are the condition for change, they can never be the basis for change";<sup>10</sup> in Argentina they replaced the struggle against imperialism and the native oligarchy with the struggle of democracy against fascism, suppressing the fundamental contradiction of a neocolonialized country and replacing it with "a contradiction that was a copy of the world-wide contradiction."<sup>11</sup>

This cutting off of the intellectual and artistic sectors from the processes of national liberation — which, among other things, helps us to understand the limitations in which these processes have been unfolding — today tends to disappear in the extent that artists and intellectuals are beginning to discover the impossibility of destroying the enemy without first joining in a battle for their common interests. The artist is beginning to feel the insufficiency of his nonconformism and individual rebellion. And the revolutionary organizations, in turn, are discovering the vacuums that the struggle for power creates in the cultural sphere. The problems of filmmaking, the ideological limitations of a filmmaker in a neocolonialized country, etc., have thus far constituted objective factors in the lack of attention paid to the cinema by the people's organizations. Newspapers and other

printed matter, posters and wall propaganda, speeches and other verbal forms of information, enlightenment, and politicization are still the main means of communication between the organizations and the vanguard layers of the masses. But the new political positions of some filmmakers and the subsequent appearance of films useful for liberation have permitted certain political vanguards to discover the importance of movies. This importance is to be found in the specific meaning of films as a form of communication and because of *their particular characteristics*, characteristics that allow them to draw audiences of different origins, many of them people who might not respond favorably to the announcement of a political speech. Films offer an effective pretext for gathering an audience, in addition to the ideological message they contain.

The capacity for synthesis and the penetration of the film image, the possibilities offered by the living document and naked reality, and the power of enlightenment of audio visual means make the film far more effective than any other tool of communication. It is hardly necessary to point out that those films which achieve an intelligent use of the possibilities of the image, adequate dosage of concepts, language and structure that flow naturally from each theme, and counterpoints of audiovisual narration achieve effective results in the politicization and mobilization of cadres and even in work with the masses, where this is possible.

The students who raised barricades on the *Avenida 18 de Julio* in Montevideo after the showing of *Me gustan los estudiantes* (I Like Students) (Mario Handler); those who demonstrated and sang the "Internationale" in the Merida and Caracas after the showing of *La hora de los hornos* (The Hour of the Furnace), the growing demand for films such as those made by Santiago Alvarez and the Cuban documentary film movement, and the debates and meetings that take place after the underground or semipublic showing of *third cinema* films are the beginning of a twisting and difficult road being traveled in the consumer societies by the mass organizations (*Cinegiornali liberi* in Italy, *Zengakuren* documentaries in Japan, etc.). For the first time in Latin America, organizations are ready and willing to employ films for political-cultural ends: the Chilean *Partido Socialista* provides its cadres with revolutionary film material, while Argentina revolutionary Peronist and non-Peronist groups are taking an interest in doing likewise. Moreover, OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America) is participating in the production and distribution of films that contribute to the anti-imperialist struggle. The revolutionary organizations are discovering the need for cadres who, among other things, know how to handle a film camera, tape recorders, and projectors in the most effective way possible. The struggle to seize power from the enemy is the meeting ground of the political and artistic vanguards engaged in a common task which is *enriching to both*.

Some of the circumstances that delayed the use of films as a revolutionary tool until a short time ago were lack of equipment, technical difficulties, the compulsory specialization of each phase of work, and

high costs. The advances that have taken place within each specialization; the simplification of movie cameras and tape recorders; improvements in the medium itself, such as rapid film that can be printed in a normal light; automatic light meters; improved audiovisual synchronization; and the spread of know-how by means of specialized magazines with large circulations and even through nonspecialized media, have helped to demystify filmmaking and divest it of that almost magic aura that made it seem that films were only within the reach of 'artists', 'geniuses', and 'the privileged.' Filmmaking is increasingly within the reach of larger social layers. Chris Marker experimented in France with groups of workers whom he provided with 8mm equipment and some basic instruction in its handling. The goal was to have the worker film *his way of looking at the world, just as if he were writing it*. This has opened up unheard-of prospects for the cinema; above all, *a new conception of filmmaking and the significance of art in our time*.

Imperialism and capitalism, whether in the consumer society or in the neocolonialized country, veil everything behind a screen of images and appearances. *The image of reality* is more important than reality itself. It is a world peopled with fantasies and phantoms in which what is hideous is clothed in beauty, while beauty is disguised as the hideous. On the one hand, fantasy, the imaginary bourgeois universe replete with comfort, equilibrium, sweet reason, order, efficiency, and the possibility to 'be someone.' And, on the other, the phantoms, we the lazy, we the indolent and underdeveloped, we who cause disorder. When a neocolonialized person accepts his situation, he becomes a Gungha Din, a traitor at the service of the colonialist, an Uncle Tom, a class and racial renegade, or a fool, the easy-going servant and bumpkin; but, when he refuses to accept his situation of oppression, then he turns into a resentful savage, a cannibal. Those who *lose sleep from fear of the hungry*, those who comprise the System, see the revolutionary as a bandit, robber, and rapist; the first battle waged against them is thus not on a political plane, but rather in the police context of law, arrests, etc. The more exploited a man is, the more he is placed on a plane of insignificance. The more he resists, the more he is viewed as a beast. This can be seen in *Africa Addio*, made by the fascist Jacopetti: the African savages, killer animals, wallow in abject anarchy once they escape from white protection. Tarzan died, and in his place were born Lumumbas and Lobegulas, Nkomos, and the Madzimbamutos, and this is something that neocolonialism cannot forgive. Fantasy has been replaced by phantoms and man is turned into an extra who dies so Jacopetti can comfortably film his execution.

*I make the revolution; therefore, I exist*. This is the starting point for the disappearance of fantasy and phantom to make way for living human beings. The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of *destruction and construction*: destruction of the image that neocolonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions.

The restitution of things to their real place and meaning is an eminently subversive fact both in the

neocolonial situation and in the consumer societies. In the former, the seeming ambiguity or pseudo-objectivity in newspapers, literature, etc., and the relative freedom of the people's organizations to provide their own information cease to exist, giving way to overt restriction, when it is a question of television and radio, the two most important System-controlled or monopolized communications media. Last year's May events in France are quite explicit on this point.

In a world where the unreal rules, artistic expression is shoved along the channels of fantasy, fiction, language in code, sign language, and messages whispered between the lines. Art is cut off from the concrete facts — which, from the neocolonialist standpoint, are accusatory testimonies — to turn back on itself, strutting about in a world of abstractions and phantoms, where it becomes 'timeless' and history-less. Viet-Nam can be mentioned, but only far from Viet-Nam; Latin America can be mentioned, but only far enough away from the continent to be ineffective, *in places where it is depoliticized* and where it does not lead to action.

The cinema known as documentary, with all the vastness that the concept has today, from educational films to the reconstruction of a fact or a historical event, is perhaps the main basis of revolutionary filmmaking. Every image that documents, bears witness to, refutes or deepens the truth of a situation is something more than a film image or purely artistic fact; it becomes something which the System finds indigestible.

Testimony about a national reality is also an inestimable means of dialogue and knowledge on the world plane. No internationalist form of struggle can be carried out successfully if there is not a mutual exchange of experiences among the people, if the people do not succeed in breaking out of the Balkanization on the international, continental, and national planes which imperialism is striving to maintain.

There is no knowledge of a reality as long as that reality is not acted upon, *as long as its transformation is not begun on all fronts of struggle*. The well-known quote from Marx deserves constant repetition: *it is not sufficient to interpret the world; it is now a question of transforming it*.

With such an attitude as his starting point, it remains to the filmmaker to discover his own language, a language which will arise from a militant and transforming world-view and from the theme being dealt with. Here it may well be pointed out that certain political cadres still maintain old dogmatic positions, which ask the artist or filmmaker to provide an apologetic view of reality, *one which is more in line with wishful thinking than with what actually is*. Such positions, which at bottom mask a lack of confidence in the possibilities of reality itself, have in certain cases led to the use of film language as a mere idealized illustration of a fact, to the desire to remove reality's deep contradictions, its dialectic richness, which is precisely the kind of depth which can give a film beauty and effectiveness. The reality of the revolutionary processes all over the world, in spite of their confused and negative aspects, possesses a

dominant line, a synthesis which is so rich and stimulating that it does not need to be schematized with partial or sectarian views.

Pamphlet films, didactic films, report films, essay films, witness-bearing films — any militant form of expression is valid, and it would be absurd to lay down a set of aesthetic work norms. *Be receptive to all that the people have to offer, and offer them the best; or, as Che put it, respect the people by giving them quality*. This is a good thing to keep in mind in view of those tendencies which are always latent in the revolutionary artist to lower the level of investigation and the language of a theme, in a kind of *neopopulism*, down to levels which, while they may be those upon which the masses move, do not help them to get rid of the stumbling blocks left by imperialism. The effectiveness of the best films of militant cinema show that social layers considered backward are able to capture the exact meaning of an association of images, an effect of staging, and any linguistic experimentation placed within the context of a given idea. Furthermore, revolutionary cinema is not fundamentally one which illustrates, documents, or passively establishes a situation: *rather, it attempts to intervene in the situation as an element providing thrust or rectification*. To put it another way, it provides *discovery through transformation*.

The differences that exist between one and another liberation process make it impossible to lay down supposedly universal norms. A cinema which in the consumer society does not attain the level of the reality in which it moves can play a stimulating role in an underdeveloped country, just as a revolutionary cinema in the neocolonial situation will not necessarily be revolutionary if it is mechanically taken to the metropolis country.

Teaching the handling of guns can be revolutionary where there are potentially or explicitly viable layers ready to throw themselves into the struggle to take power, but ceases to be revolutionary where the masses still lack sufficient awareness of their situation or where they already have learned to handle guns. Thus, a cinema which insists upon the denunciation of the effects of neocolonial policy is caught up in a reformist game if the consciousness of the masses has already assimilated such knowledge; then the revolutionary thing is to examine the causes, to investigate the ways of organizing and arming for the change. That is, imperialism can sponsor films that fight illiteracy, and such pictures will only be inscribed within the contemporary need of imperialist policy, but, in contrast, the making of such films in Cuba after the triumph of the Revolution was clearly revolutionary. Although their starting point was just the fact of teaching reading and writing, they had a goal which was radically different from that of imperialism: the training of people for liberation, not for subjection.

The model of the perfect work of art, the fully rounded film structured according to the metrics imposed by bourgeois culture, its theoreticians and critics, has served to inhibit the filmmaker in the dependent countries, especially when he has attempted to erect similar models in a reality which *offered him neither the culture, the techniques, nor the most primary elements for success*. The culture of the

metropolis kept the age-old secrets that had given life to its models; the transposition of the latter to the neocolonial reality was always a mechanism of alienation, *since it was not possible for the artist of the dependent country to absorb, in a few years, the secrets of a culture and society elaborated through the centuries in completely different historical circumstances*. The attempt in the sphere of filmmaking to match the pictures of the ruling countries generally ends in failure, given the existence of two disparate historical realities. And such unsuccessful attempts lead to feelings of frustration and inferiority. Both these feelings arise in the first place from the fear of taking risks along completely new roads *which are almost a total denial of 'their cinema'*. A fear of recognizing the particularities and limitations of a dependency situation in order to discover the *possibilities inherent in that situation* by finding ways of overcoming it *which would of necessity be original*.

The existence of a revolutionary cinema is inconceivable without the constant and methodical exercise of practice, search, and experimentation. It even means committing the new filmmaker to take chances on the unknown, to leap into space at times, exposing himself to failure as does the guerrilla who travels along paths that he himself opens up with machete blows. The possibility of discovering and inventing film forms and structures that serve a more profound vision of our reality resides in the ability to place oneself on the outside limits of the familiar, to make one's way amid constant dangers.

Our time is one of hypothesis rather than of thesis, a time of works in process — unfinished, unordered, violent works made with the camera in one hand and rock in the other. Such works cannot be assessed according to the traditional theoretical and critical canons. The ideas for *our* film theory and criticism will come to life through inhibition-removing practice and experimentation. "Knowledge begins with practice. After acquiring theoretical knowledge through practice, it is necessary to return to practice."<sup>12</sup> Once he has embarked upon this practice, the revolutionary filmmaker will have to overcome countless obstacles; he will experience the loneliness of those who aspire to the praise of the System's promotion media only to find that those media are closed to him. As Godard would say, he will cease to be a bicycle champion to become an anonymous bicycle rider, Vietnamese style, submerged in a cruel and prolonged war. But he will also discover that there is a receptive audience that looks upon his work as something of its own existence, and that is ready to defend him in a way that it would never do with any world bicycle champion.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

In this long war, with the camera as our rifle, we do in fact move into a guerrilla activity. This is why the work of a *film-guerrilla* group is governed by strict disciplinary norms as to both methods and security. A revolutionary film group is in the same situation as a guerrilla unit: it cannot grow strong without military structures and command concepts. The group exists

12. Mao Tse-tung, *op. cit.*

13. Che Guevara, *La guerra de guerrillas* (1960), in: *Obras*, Volume 1, Havana, Casa de las Americas, 1970.

as a network of complementary responsibilities, as the sum and synthesis of abilities, inasmuch as it operates harmonically with a leadership that centralizes planning work and maintains its continuity. Experience shows that it is not easy to maintain the cohesion of a group when it is bombarded by the System and its chain of accomplices frequently disguised as 'progressives', when there are no immediate and spectacular outer incentives and the members must undergo the discomforts and tensions of work that is done underground and distributed clandestinely. Many abandon their responsibilities because they underestimate them or because they measure them with values appropriate to System cinema and not underground cinema. The birth of internal conflicts is a reality present in any group, whether or not it possesses ideological maturity. The lack of awareness of such an inner conflict on the psychological or personality plane, etc., the lack of maturity in dealing with problems of relationships, at times leads to ill feeling and rivalries that in turn cause real clashes going beyond ideological or objective differences. All of this means that a basic condition is an awareness of the problems of inter-personal relationships, leadership and areas of competence. What is needed is to speak clearly, mark off work areas, assign responsibilities and take on the job as a rigorous militancy.

Guerrilla filmmaking proletarianizes the film worker and breaks down the intellectual aristocracy that the bourgeoisie grants to its followers. In a word, it *democratizes*. The filmmaker's tie with reality makes him more a part of his people. Vanguard layers and even masses participate collectively in the work when they realize that it is the continuity of their daily struggle. *La hora de los hornos* shows how a film can be made in hostile circumstances when it has the support and collaboration of militants and cadres from the people.

The revolutionary filmmaker acts with a radically new vision of the role of the producer, teamwork, tools, details, etc. Above all, he supplies himself at all levels in order to produce his films, he equips himself at all levels, he learns how to handle the manifold techniques of his craft. His most valuable possessions are the tools of his trade, which form part and parcel of his need to communicate. The camera is the inexhaustible *expropriator of image-weapons*; the projector, *a gun that can shoot 24 frames per second*.

Each member of the group should be familiar, at least in a general way, with the equipment being used: he must be prepared to replace another in any of the phases of production. The myth of irreplaceable technicians must be exploded.

The whole group must grant great importance to the minor details of the production and the security measures needed to protect it. A lack of foresight which in conventional filmmaking would go unnoticed can render virtually useless weeks or months of work. And a failure in guerrilla cinema, just as in the guerrilla struggle itself, can mean the loss of a work or a complete change of plans. "In a guerrilla struggle the concept of failure is present a thousand times over, and victory a myth that only a revolutionary can dream."<sup>13</sup> Every member of the group must

have an ability to take care of details; discipline; speed; and, above all, the willingness to overcome the weaknesses of comfort, old habits, and the whole climate of pseudonormality behind which the warfare of everyday life is hidden. Each film is a different operation, a different job requiring variations in methods in order to confuse or refrain from alerting the enemy, especially as the processing laboratories are still in his hands.

The success of the work depends to a great extent on the group's ability to remain silent, on its permanent wariness, a condition that is difficult to achieve in a situation in which apparently nothing is happening and the filmmaker has been accustomed to telling all and sundry about everything that he's doing because the bourgeoisie has trained him precisely on such a basis of prestige and promotion. The watchword 'constant vigilance, constant wariness, constant mobility' has profound validity for guerrilla cinema. You have to give the appearance of working on various projects, split up the materials, put it together, take it apart, confuse, neutralize, and throw off the track. All of this is necessary as long as the group doesn't have its own processing equipment, no matter how rudimentary, and there remain certain possibilities in the traditional laboratories.

Group-level cooperation between different countries can serve to assure the completion of a film or the execution of certain phases of work that may not be possible in the country of origin. To this should be added the need for a reception center for file materials to be used by the different groups and the perspective of coordination, on a continent-wide or even worldwide scale, of the continuity of work in each country: periodic regional or international gatherings to exchange experiences, contributions, joint planning of work, etc.

At least in the earliest stages, the revolutionary filmmaker and the work groups will be the sole producers of their films. They must bear the responsibility of finding ways to facilitate the continuity of work. Guerrilla cinema still doesn't have enough experience to set down standards in this area; what experience there is has shown, above all, the *ability to make use of the concrete situation of each country*. But, regardless of what these situations may be, the preparation of a film cannot be undertaken without a parallel study of its future audience and, consequently, a plan to recover the financial investment. Here, once again, the need arises of closer ties between political and artistic vanguards, since this also serves for the joint study of forms of production, exhibition, and continuity.

A guerrilla film can be aimed only at the distribution mechanisms provided by the revolutionary organizations, including those invented or discovered by the filmmaker himself. Production, distribution, and economic possibilities for survival must form part of a single strategy. The solution of the problems

14. The Uruguayan weekly *Marcha* organized late night and Sunday morning screenings that are widely and well-received.

15. The raiding of a Buenos Aires union and the arrest of dozens of persons resulted from a bad choice of projection site and the large number of people invited.

faced in each of these areas will encourage other people to join in the work of guerrilla filmmaking, which will enlarge its ranks and thus make it less vulnerable.

The distribution of guerrilla films in Latin America is still in swaddling clothes, while System reprisals are already a legalized fact. Suffice it to note in Argentina the raids that have occurred during some showings and the recent film suppression law of a clearly fascist character, in Brazil the ever-increasing restrictions placed upon the most militant comrades of *Cinema Novo*, and in Venezuela the banning and license cancellation of *La hora de los hornos*; almost all over the continent censorship prevents any possibility of public distribution.

Without revolutionary films and a public that asks for them, any attempt to open up new ways of distribution would be doomed to failure. But both of these already exist in Latin America. The appearance of the films opened up a road which in some countries, such as Argentina, occurs through showings in apartments and houses to audiences of never more than 25 people; in other countries, such as Chile, films are shown in parishes, universities, or cultural centers (of which there are fewer every day); and, in the case of Uruguay, showings were given in Montevideo's biggest movie theater to an audience of 2500 people, who filled the theater and made every showing an impassioned anti-imperialist event.<sup>14</sup> But the prospects on the continental plane indicate that the possibility for the continuity of a revolutionary cinema rests upon the *strengthening of rigorously underground base structures*.

Practice implies mistakes and failures.<sup>15</sup> Some comrades will let themselves be carried away by the success and impunity with which they present the first showings and will tend to relax security measures, while others will go in the opposite direction of excessive precautions or fearfulness, to such an extent that distribution remains circumscribed, limited to a few groups of friends. Only concrete experience in each country will demonstrate which are the best methods there, which do not always lend themselves to application in other situations.

In some places it will be possible to build infrastructures connected to political, student, worker, and other organizations, while in others it will be more suitable to sell prints to organizations which will take charge of obtaining the funds necessary to pay for each print (the cost of the print plus a small margin). This method, wherever possible, would appear to be the most viable, because it permits the decentralization of distribution; makes possible a more profound political use of the film; and permits the recovery, through the sale of more prints, of the funds invested in the production. It is true that in many countries the organizations still are not fully aware of the importance of this work or, if they are, may lack the means to undertake it. In such cases other methods can be used: the delivery of prints to encourage distribution and a box-office cut to the organizers of each showing, etc. The ideal goal to be achieved would be producing and distributing guerrilla films with funds obtained from expropriations of the bourgeoisie — that is, *the bourgeoisie would be*

*financing guerrilla cinema with a bit of the surplus value that it gets from the people*. But, as long as the goal is no more than a middle or long-range aspiration, the alternatives open to revolutionary cinema to recover production and distribution costs are to some extent similar to those obtained for conventional cinema: every spectator should pay the same amount as he pays to see System cinema. Financing, subsidizing, equipping, and supporting revolutionary cinema are political responsibilities for revolutionary organizations and militants. A film can be made, but if its distribution does not allow for the recovery of the costs, it will be difficult or impossible to make a second film.

The 16mm film circuits in Europe (20,000 exhibition centers in Sweden, 30,000 in France, etc.) are not the best example for the neocolonialized countries, but they are nevertheless a complement to be kept in mind for fund raising, especially in a situation in which such circuits can play an important role in publicizing the struggles in the Third World, increasingly related as they are to those unfolding in the metropolis countries. A film on the Venezuelan guerrillas will say more to a European public than 20 explanatory pamphlets, and the same is true for us with a film on the May events in France or the Berkeley, USA, student struggle.

*A Guerrilla Films International?* And why not? Isn't it true that a kind of new International is arising through the Third World struggles; through OSPAAAL and the revolutionary vanguards of the consumer societies?

A guerrilla cinema, at this stage still within the reach of limited layers of the population, is, nevertheless, *the only cinema of the masses possible today*, since it is the only one involved with the interests, aspirations, and prospects of the vast majority of the people. Every important film produced by a revolutionary cinema will be, explicit or not, *a national event of the masses*.

This *cinema of the masses*, which is prevented from reaching beyond the sectors representing the masses, provokes with each showing, as in a revolutionary military incursion, a liberated space, *a decolonized territory*. The showing can be turned into a kind of political event, which, according to Fanon, could be "a liturgical act, a privileged occasion for human beings to hear and be heard."

Militant cinema must be able to extract the infinity of new possibilities that open up for it from the conditions of proscription imposed by the System. The attempt to overcome neocolonial oppression calls for the invention of forms of communication; it *opens up the possibility*.

Before and during the making of *La hora de los hornos* we tried out various methods for the distribution of revolutionary cinema — the little that we had made up to then. Each showing for militants middle-level cadres, activists, workers, and university students became — without having set ourselves this aim beforehand — a kind of enlarged cell meeting of which the films were a part but not the most important factor. We thus discovered a new facet of cinema: the *participation* of people who, until then, were considered *spectators*. At times, security

reasons obliged us to try to dissolve the group of participants as soon as the showing was over, and we realized that the distribution of that kind of film had little meaning if it was not complemented by the participation of the comrades, if a debate was not opened on the themes suggested by the films.

We also discovered that every comrade who attended such showings did so with full awareness that he was infringing the System's laws and exposing his personal security to eventual repression. This person was no longer a spectator; on the contrary, from the moment he decided to attend the showing, *from the moment he lined himself up on this side* by taking risks and contributing his living experience to the meeting, he became an actor, a more important protagonist than those who appeared in the films. Such a person was seeking other committed people like himself, while he, in turn, became committed to them. *The spectator made way for the actor, who sought himself in others*.

Outside this space which the films momentarily helped to liberate, there was nothing but solitude, noncommunication, distrust, and fear; within the freed space the situation turned everyone into accomplices of the act that was unfolding. The debates arose spontaneously. As we gained in experience, we incorporated into the showing various elements (a stage production) to reinforce the themes of the films, the climate of the showing, the 'disinhibiting' of the participants, and the dialogue: recorded music or poems, sculpture and paintings, posters, a program director who chaired the debate and presented the film and the comrades who were speaking, a glass of wine, a few *mates*, etc. We realized that we had at hand three very valuable factors:

- 1) *The participant comrade*, the man-actor-accomplice who responded to the summons;
- 2) *The free space* where that man expressed his concerns and ideas, became politicized, and started to free himself; and
- 3) *The film*, important only as a detonator or pretext.

We concluded from these data that a film could be much more effective if it were fully aware of these factors and took on the task of subordinating its own form, structure, language, and propositions to that act and to those actors — to put it another way, *if it sought its own liberation in the subordination and insertion in the others, the principal protagonists of life*. With the correct utilization of the *time* that the group of actor-personages offered us with their diverse histories, the use of the *space* offered by certain comrades, and of the *films* themselves, it was *necessary to try to transform time, energy, and work into freedom-giving energy*. In this way the idea began to grow of structuring what we decided to call the *film act*, the *film action*, one of the forms which we believe assumes great importance in affirming the line of a *third cinema*. A cinema whose first experiment is to be found, perhaps on a rather shaky level, in the second and third parts of *La hora de los hornos* ("Acto para la liberación"; above all, starting with "*La resistencia*" and "*Violencia y liberación*");

Comrades [we said at the start of "*Acto para la liberación*"], this is not just a film showing, nor is it a show; rather, it is, above all, A MEETING — an act of anti-imperialist unity; this is a place only for those who feel identified with this struggle, because here there is no room for spectators or for accomplices of the enemy; here there is room only for the authors and protagonists of the process to which the film attempts to bear witness and to deepen. The film is the pretext for dialogue, for the seeking and finding of wills. It is a report that we place before you for your consideration, to be debated after the showing.

The conclusions [we said at another point in the second part] to which you may arrive as the real authors and protagonists of this history are important. The experiences and conclusions that we have assembled have a relative worth; they are of use to the extent that they are useful to you, who are the present and future of liberation. But most important of all is the action that may arise from these conclusions, the unity on the basis of the facts. This is why the film stops here; it opens out to you so that you can continue it.

The film act means an open-ended film; it is essentially a way of learning.

The first step in the process of knowledge is the first contact with the things of the outside world, the stage of sensations [in a film, the living fresco of image and sound]. The second step is the synthesizing of the data provided by the sensations; their ordering and elaboration; the stage of concepts, judgements, opinions, and deductions [in the film, the announcer, the reportings, the didactics, or the narrator who leads the projection act]. And then comes the third stage, that of knowledge. The active role of knowledge is expressed not only in the active leap from sensory to rational knowledge, but, and what is even more important, in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. ... The practice of the transformation of the world... This, in general terms, is the dialectical materialist theory of the unity of knowledge and action.<sup>16</sup> [in the projection of the film act, the participation of the comrades, the action proposals that arise, and the actions themselves that will take place later].

Moreover, each projection of a film act presupposes a *different setting*, since the space where it takes place, the materials that go to make it up (actors-participants), and the historic time in which it takes place are never the same. This means that the results of each projection act will depend on those who organize it, on those who participate in it, and on the time and place; the possibility of introducing variations, additions, and changes is unlimited. The screening of a film act will always express in one way or another the historical situation in which it takes place; its perspectives are not exhausted in the struggle for power but will instead continue after the taking of power to strengthen the revolution.

The man of the third cinema, be it guerrilla cinema or a film act, with the infinite categories that they contain (film letter, film poem, film essay, film pamphlet, film report, etc.), above all counters the film industry of a cinema of characters with one of themes, that of individuals with that of masses, that of the author with that of the operative group, one of neocolonial misinformation with one of information, one of escape with one that recaptures the truth, that

16. Mao Tse-tung, *op. cit.*

of passivity with that of aggressions. To an institutionalized cinema, he counterposes a guerrilla cinema; to movies as shows, he opposes a film act or action; to a cinema of destruction, one that is both destructive and constructive; to a cinema made for the old kind of human being, for them, he opposes a *cinema fit for a new kind of human being, for what each one of us has the possibility of becoming.*

The decolonization of the filmmaker and of films will be simultaneous acts to the extent that each contributes to collective decolonization. The battle begins without, against the enemy who attacks us, but also within, *against the ideas and models of the enemy to be found inside each one of us.* Destruction and construction. Decolonizing action rescues with its practice the purest and most vital impulses. It opposes to the colonialization of minds the revolution of consciousness. The world is scrutinized, unraveled, rediscovered. People are witness to a constant astonishment, a kind of second birth. They recover their early ingenuity, their capacity for adventure; their lethargic capacity for indignation comes to life.

Freeing a forbidden truth means setting free the possibility of indignation and subversion. Our truth, that of the new man who builds himself by getting rid of all the defects that still weigh him down, is a bomb of inexhaustible power and, at the same time, *the only real possibility of life.* Within this attempt, the revolutionary filmmaker ventures with *his subversive observation, sensibility, imagination, and realization.* The great themes — the history of the country, love and unlove between combatants, the efforts of a people that awakens — all this is reborn before the lens of the decolonized camera. The filmmaker feels free for the first time. He discovers that, within the System, nothing fits, while outside of and against the System, everything fits, *because everything remains to be done.* What appeared yesterday as a preposterous adventure, as we said at the beginning, is posed today as an *inescapable need and possibility.*

Thus far, we have offered ideas and working propositions, which are the sketch of a hypothesis arising from our personal experience and which will have achieved something positive even if they do no more than serve to open a heated dialogue on the new revolutionary film prospects. The vacuums existing in the artistic and scientific fronts of the revolution are sufficiently well known so that the adversary will not try to appropriate them, while we are still unable to do so.

Why films and not some other form of artistic communication? If we choose films as the center of our propositions and debate, it is because that is our work front and because the birth of a *third cinema* means, at least for us, *the most important revolutionary artistic event of our times.*

## Hassan Abû Ghanima

### THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN CINEMA

(Palestine, 1975)

#### A. THE BIRTH OF PALESTINIAN CINEMA AND ITS MAIN CURRENTS

In the framework of the activities of the PLO, Palestinian cinema expresses the struggle of our people to recover their stolen homeland as well as our people's determination to defeat the Zionist enemy in order to establish a democratic state on the whole of Palestinian territory. It's still a young cinema. In fact, it was only in 1967-68 that a film section called "Unity Cinema" was founded in the Fatah movement — historically, the first film group to work together with an armed Palestinian organization. Unity began by filming all the revolutionary events related to the Palestinian resistance, beginning with the battle of Karameh which aroused a great deal of enthusiasm among the people. Its work consisted for the most part of collecting as much film and photographic archive material in order to put it to use at the right moment.

In 1969, Unity acquired a 16mm camera and a tape recorder with which it was able to shoot a documentary entitled *No to a Defeatist Solution.* In 1970 it made *With All My Soul and My Blood.* This, their first important film, showed the way for the cinema which was to follow.

In all, by 1975 Unity had produced fifteen short and medium-length films. In 1973 it took part in the foundation of the "Palestinian Cinema Group," which was affiliated with the Palestinian Research Center, and was born of the convergence between the cinematographic experiences of several different Palestinian organizations. It brought together members of these groups as well as progressive Arab filmmakers sharing the will to set up a cinema at the service of the Palestinian cause. However, the Group only managed to make one film — *Scenes from the Gaza Occupation* — after which it dissolved itself, with each movement reestablishing its autonomy.

Unity then recommenced its activities under the name "Films of Palestine" (Palestinian cinema organism).

Despite its precocity, its limited number of films and the lack of variety in its productions, this cinema is of major importance in as much as it reflects a special experience within Arab cinema from which it clearly distinguishes itself (with the exception of the Algerian cinema). Born of the armed struggle, it is

This text was first published in Arabic in the author's *Le cinéma palestinien*, 1975, and was published in French in *La Palestine et le cinéma*, Guy Hennebelle, Khemaïf Khayati, editors; Paris: "E.100", 1977. It was translated by Theo Blomquist. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

deeply marked by a people's war of long duration and thus has certain specific characteristics.

Until now, three tendencies can be seen:

1. *News films:* From the outset, Palestinian cinema has been interested in recording specific events and analysing their causes and consequences. With regard to the Palestinian revolution, the most important facts are: The Rogers plan in 1969 and its results; 1970's repression in Jordan; the savage bombings in 1972 (after the Munich operation); those of 1974 (after the Maalot operation) and the military results launched against the Resistance in 1971 in South Lebanon and later in 1974 in Kafr Chuba.

The Palestinian Cinema Organization recorded the most documentary material, producing most notably the "Palestinian News" films. But the FDPLP film service shot such films as well.

2. *Documentary films:* this second current subdivides into two trends.

— *the total or partial usage of archival films*, regardless of their source. Among the films made in this manner were the Syrian *All Goes Well* and *Scenes from the Gaza Occupation*; as well as the French film *Palestine Will Win* and *Sirhane Story* from Lebanon which were based on stills.

— *the illustration of the life of the Palestinian people and the Resistance in the bases and the camps.* Examples: *Life in the Nahr el Bared Camp* and *Our Little Homes*, two FPLP films, or *Far From the Homeland* and *Why?* respectively Syrian and Egyptian productions.

Films made from tableaux and songs should also be mentioned: *Memories and Fire* and *The Urgent Call* were produced by the PLO's Cultural Section, and *Children's Wartime Testimony* was a Syrian production.

3. *Fiction films:* With the exception of *Sanaoud*, coproduced by the PLO and Algeria in 1973, all fiction films are the work of non-Palestinian Arab directors, the Palestinians not having had the means to shoot fiction. Nevertheless, several attempts are presently being made.

In Europe: Some Dutch filmmakers had proposed to the PLO (which refused) the making of a feature-length film that would have told the story of the hijacking of an airplane carrying Miss World contestants... There aren't any Western fiction films on Palestine.

In the Arab countries: Here we should distinguish two genres among fiction films:

— the commercial genre, made up of films deliberately turning their backs on the truth and exploiting all tricks of the imagination possible in order to profit from the Arab movie-goer's sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Such is the case with *We Are All Fedayin*, *Liberation Struggle*, *The Bells of Return*, and *The Palestinian in Revolt*.

— the serious genre, unfortunately only represented by a small number of films: Twefig Sahah's *The Dupes*, Borhan Alaouie's *Kafr Kassem*, and Slim Riadh's *Sanaoud* ("We Shall Return"); to which we can add *Shadows on the Other Bank* by Ghaleb Chaath which, while it's concerned with a problem not purely Palestinian, nevertheless draws attention to the Palestinian question.

In 1972, Unity tried to make an animated film

called *The Red Flowers* but their effort failed due to a weak technical grounding. Later, in 1975, it was financial means that were lacking.

## B. DISTRIBUTION

As it is, the PLO doesn't actually have a movie theater in the common sense of the term, but film showings nevertheless take place anywhere that Palestinians are concentrated together — in the camps, the Resistance's military bases — wherever possible. These showings are clearly "people's events" bringing together men as well as women, children as well as the aged, and the illiterate as well as the educated. Base screenings are specifically for combatants and are often attended by key military personnel.

Not simply restricted to Palestinian views, the screenings are also open to the inhabitants of the Arab villages that surround the military bases whether they be in Jordan, Syria or Lebanon. University students and workers from the unions attend as well. And besides this, the work of the PLO in distributing films among progressive elements throughout the world should be mentioned.

Most of the films are projected in 16mm, sometimes in 35mm. Most of the time the films are concerned with the Palestinian Revolution itself whether they be produced by Palestinian organizations, Arab countries or non-Arab friends. Films on various other national liberation struggles are also shown.

In most cases, these screenings are followed by political discussions. Abroad they are used to make the reality and objectives of the Resistance known to a sympathetic public.

Some movie theaters are commercially run by Palestinians but we don't have specific information on their functioning in the territory occupied by Israel in 1948, and in 1967.

The film distribution by "Films of Palestine" is political in nature and not intended for commercial profit. It involves PLO representatives all over the world as well as progressive political parties and groups wishing to show Palestinian films to their members. Some films are also distributed through the Arab League.

As a general rule, Palestinian films may be acquired by one of the following two means:

- pay the price of a copy plus a minimal (generally ridiculously minimal) sum to pay a part of the production costs;
- exchange a progressive film on another struggle for a Palestinian film.

Generally, 100 copies of Palestinian films are printed. At present, the catalogue consists of several dozen different titles.

## THE ARCHIVES PROBLEM

The archives/records problem is a very important one for the Palestinian Resistance. It has yet to be satisfactorily resolved. Specific obstacles with regard to sources, maintenance, conservation, financing of purchases and ongoing accumulation have yet to be surmounted.

The strong points of the archival collection on the Palestinian question are: The Balfour declara-

tion, the Sykes-Picot treaty, the struggle against England and against Zionism, the Zionist immigration, the division of Palestine and the Palestinian condition before 1948 (in the towns, the country, daily life, etc.).

It is these archives that, most notably, enable the films to expose the plots which the Palestinian people have been a victim of for a half century.

These archives can be divided into three sections based on three major historical periods:

- the 1900-48 period,
- the 1948-65 period, and
- the period from 1965 to the present.

For the first period, it's above all the British archives that must be consulted. For the second period, it's the UNRWA, and the third period's best source is the Palestinian cinema itself.

The "Films of Palestine" group is also setting up archives of writings on cinema and Palestine, both Arab and foreign. The foreign works have often been translated into Arabic and published in specialized journals and Palestinian newspapers. We have also published documents on militant cinema throughout the world, the papers of the Third World Filmmakers Congress in Algiers 1973, for example.

## C. PRODUCTION

At the present, there is no PLO production company, though studies have been made with this end in mind as the Resistance hopes to produce and commercially distribute documentary and fiction films on the Palestinian question. It also hopes to distribute films on liberation movements in general.

At the moment, four sectors produce films within the framework of the PLO:

1. "Films of Palestine," the Palestinian cinema organism, founded in 1968 under the name "Unity Cinema" and headquartered in Beirut.
2. The PLO's "Culture and Arts" section, which produced its first film in 1972 and is also headquartered in Beirut.
3. The artistique commission of the FDPLP which produced its first film in 1973.
4. The FPLP information commission, which produced its first film in 1971.

Each of these sectors produce and distribute their own works. "Films of Palestine" also distribute films made by foreign groups and have participated in the making of films shot by foreign friends such as the Italian Communist Party work *Fatah* by Luigi Pirelli, the American Newsreel's *Revolution Until Victory*, the Vincennes (France) Cinema Group's *The Olive Tree* and another twenty or so other works of this kind (not counting a large number of television programs). I've already mentioned that Unity Cinema collaborated on the Algerian feature by Slim Riadh *Sanaoud*, and also helped Jean-Luc Godard shoot a film that, after several years of waiting, was finally realized under the title *Here and There*.

## D. RESEARCH AND STUDIES ON REVOLUTIONARY CINEMA

I would like to relate the experience of Unity Cinema which, as I said before, came into being in 1968 before the others, in order to point out certain lessons

that we can draw from it.

From the beginning, the members of Unity were well aware of the fact that they were working within the framework of a long-lasting people's war and armed revolution and that they had to define the particular nature and specific circumstances of their activity in order to respond correctly to the people's needs and avoid doing any harm to them. There were three members: two (Hany Jawhariyya and Muçtapha Abû Ali), had studied film in London; the third — a woman comrade (Sulafa Jadallah) — had studied in Cairo. They immediately asked themselves if artistic standards studied elsewhere actually corresponded to Palestinian aspirations at a time when the armed struggle was beginning to develop. Should they speak to their audience in forms learned in London and Cairo or rather should they be looking for an original style capable of touching the Palestinian and Arab masses? Even more: Could they possibly express our armed revolution in forms that were foreign to it? Should they imitate styles invented and used by filmmaking allied to colonialism or should they create and develop new modes of expression — a new cinematographic language linked to the Arab patrimony in general and the Palestinian Resistance in particular?

This was the important question that marked the nature and work of the Unity group from its inception. It was clear from the beginning that the road would be long and difficult and that it would lead us to evolve as well. It was a question of find the road by which the people's cinema would express the people's war.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FILM WITH ALL MY HEART AND MY BLOOD

The answer to this question was provided in the making of Muçtapha Abû Ali's film *With All My Soul and My Blood*. During the events of September 1970 in Jordan, Unity managed to film several sequences in synchronized sound. In adding to some scenes that had been shot previously, we had some special material indeed for putting our ideas about militant cinema to the test. Unfortunately, after September 1970, all the work of Unity landed on the shoulders of just one of its three members: Sulâfa Jadallah was hit by a bullet which caused her partial paralysis and Hany Jawhariyya found himself cut off from and unable to rejoin the group. Muçtapha Abû Ali had felt the necessity of offering a political analysis of the Jordanian events but he was asked to restrict his work to the sequences already recorded. It was only after several discussions that agreement was finally reached on the necessity of putting the sequences together based on a thorough political analysis.

Thus it was no longer just a question of making a documentary, but rather one of making a militant film. For us, the difference between the two lies in the fact that a militant film uses documentary footage and other materials in order to formulate an elaborated political statement whereas a documentary generally just sticks to the simple juxtaposition of documents. Hence, political analysis became the principle axis of film work, in a certain sense replacing the scenario. The analysis was established with the participation of

as many Resistance cadres as possible, the director confining himself to translating it into technical and material terms. The interaction between the political element and the cinematographic element lasted four months, during which time several means of editing were tried based generally on two tempos — fast and slow — particularly in the work on the first sequence where drawings were used as a means of better illustrating the content. Each editing tempo was tried in camp screenings and it was in this way that it was decided to abandon the fast tempo. This also led to the decision to give up the drawings and replace them with instructive sketches performed by children. The author felt that the sketch would be closer to reality than the drawings and more easily understood by our audience.

But following this, after further consultation with the people, Unity decided to give up the symbolic style of the film's beginning for good.

## PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIONS

Among the various surveys effected by Unity, one was found to be particularly interesting as a means of learning the Palestinian people's reactions. These surveys, which were carried out in the camps, on the bases, and in schools of higher learning, concern the reception of films made by Unity, films by foreign friends about Palestine, and films illustrating the action of national liberation movements thought-out the world. Unity put together a series of questions and distributed them to the viewers before the screenings. The responses were either handed back directly after the showings, submitted at another projection, or sent back by whatever means possible. After a certain amount of time, we found ourselves sitting on top of some very important documentation/data, most of it coming from Palestinians in Lebanon or Syria. All of the screenings had included, among other films, *With All My Soul and My Blood*.

Six impressions were unavoidable:

1. The warm welcome and applause that the films received confirmed the concern that our people have for their primary interest: the revolution.
2. The concern proves the significance of cinema as a popular medium and underlines the necessity for a filmmaker to have a strong political consciousness.
3. The reactions to the Vietnamese, Algerian and Cuban films, and generally any film concerned with armed struggle, are not unlike the reactions brought on by the Palestinian films. This confirms that our people are aware that their combat against Zionism fits clearly into the more general context of the struggle against international imperialism.
4. The viewers prefer realism to all other artistic styles.
5. Those viewers accustomed to commercial movies tend to manifest defeatism in their reactions to certain films, most noticeably *With All My Soul and My Blood*, which surprise them. Unfamiliar with militant cinema, they are incapable of forming a clear opinion. However, discussions and a second screening often help them to understand.
6. The insistence which people show in asking for other film showings clearly demonstrates their need to discuss their preoccupations and discover the

struggles of other peoples. The Unity group members became firmly convinced that, whatever the question, it must be referred to the masses, as they are always the first concerned.

Furthermore, Unity met with all the foreign filmmakers who came to shoot films or reportage on the Palestinian resistance, holding discussions with them that were most fruitful in terms of the evolution of thought regarding militant cinema in the Middle East and in the world. Unity also gained a great deal from contact with progressive filmmakers at the various international festivals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Unity drew several conclusions from its experiences:

1. Militant cinema constitutes a new experience in the world of film. It can be seen that it really took off with the armed, people's revolutions in Vietnam, Cuba, Algeria and Palestine. It is also emerging in the combats of Latin America, and with the struggles in North America and Europe where collectives are making films denouncing imperialism and celebrating the people's resistance. It is from people's war that our militant cinema draws its standards as well as its inspiration.

## A MANIFESTO

The Arab cinema has been happily dealing with subjects unrelated to reality in a superficial way for too long. This stereotype-based approach has finally ended in producing terrible habits among Arab spectators for whom cinema has become a kind of opium. Effectively dimming their lucidity and conscience, this cinema has helped turn its audience away from real problems.

Of course there have been moments in the history of Arab cinema where serious efforts were made to express our world's reality and its difficulties but these were shortly smothered by the champions of reaction who have ferociously contested the slightest emergence of a new cinema.

While appreciating the interest of these serious efforts, it must be noted that more often than not they hesitated and stuttered with regard to content and were always insufficient in terms of form. They never managed to escape the burdensome limitations of traditional cinema.

However, the defeat of June 1967 provoked so deep a disturbance in our world that it set off fundamental reconsiderations. At last we saw the emergence of young talent specifically motivated by the desire to promote a truly new kind of cinema in the Arab world; young talent convinced that the upheaval should effect content as well as form.

The films illustrating this new current ask about the causes of our defeat and translate themselves into courageous positions in favor of the resistance. It is most important indeed that we develop a Palestinian cinema capable of properly supporting our people's combat by uncovering the basis for our present situation and describing the various stages of the Arab and Palestinian struggle to liberate our land. The cinema

2. The militant film collective should, we believe, discharge all operations itself from the writing of the scenario to the film's actual projection. At each stage it should consider itself a cell strategically and tactically involved with the problem which it is concerned with in the film.

3. The production of a militant film has a double nature as its authors have to keep two factors in mind: provisional tactics and long-term strategy in the struggle. In any event, the militant film should be "useful like bread and not superfluous like perfume."

4. Militant work in cinema cannot achieve its ends without projection of the film before the masses involved in the struggle at hand. The filmmaker should therefore move about in order to present the film himself, whether such screenings be above or underground, depending on the stage and nature of the struggle. Relations between the filmmaker and the masses should be continuous throughout all stages of the film's making.

5. Finally, the militant film should possess a certain number of qualities. It should have a truly revolutionary content; a serious approach; take into consideration the real receptivity of the audience at which it's aimed; and be capable of successfully countering the cinema emanating from the imperialist world.

of our aspirations should devote itself to expressing the present as well as the past and the future. A regrouping of individual efforts will be necessary for this cinema to effectively take flight. In effect, personal initiatives — whatever be their value — are unalterably insufficient and inefficient.

It's to this end that we, men of cinema or of literature, distribute this Manifesto and call for the creation of a Palestinian Cinema Group.

There are six tasks it should undertake:

1. Produce films made by Palestinians on the Palestinian cause and its objectives; films solidly based in the Arab context and inspired by a democratic, progressive content.

2. Work for the emergence of a new aesthetic to replace the old one and coherently express this new content.

3. Put this cinema, in its entirety, at the service of the Palestinian revolution and the Arab cause.

4. Conceive its films with an eye towards presenting the Palestinian cause to the whole world.

5. Create a film library bringing together film and photographic archives on the Palestinian people's struggle; retracing its various stages.

6. Strengthen relations with groups of revolutionary and progressive filmmakers throughout the world; participate in film festivals as representatives of Palestine; and aid fraternal teams who are also working for the realisation of the objectives of the Palestinian revolution.

The Palestinian Cinema Group considers itself an integral part of the institutions of the Palestinian revolution.

*The Palestinian Cinema Group, 1973*

## FINAL PAPER: MASS COMMUNICATIONS

(Costa Rica, 1972)

### 1. Introduction

The common physiognomy of all Latin America is its structural underdevelopment. In each country this underdevelopment is characterised by internal dependence on elite classes which monopolise economic and political power and by a marked external dependence imposed by metropolitan power centres.

The principal responsibility for the survival of obsolete economic and political structures lies with oligarchical and bourgeois national groupings which, together with their international allies, prevent any accelerated and sustained socioeconomic development, thereby keeping the mass of Latin Americans submerged in backwardness, unable fully to realise themselves politically, economically, socially and culturally.

The role played by the mass communications media in defending the ideologies and patterns of behaviour imposed by these dominant classes is of fundamental importance. This is particularly true at the present moment, when the confrontation between old and new social forces has become very acute and the majority of Latin American societies are struggling to achieve authentic development. Analysis of the power-structure of the mass communications media is, therefore, of extraordinary relevance.

The general changes brought about in the structure of the media in Cuba have not been analysed in this seminar.

### 2. Internal Aspects of the Power Structure

2.1 *Pattern of ownership.* In most countries in the region the most important communications media are in the hands either of the oligarchy, the new commercial and industrial bourgeoisies, or those intermediary groups which act on behalf of external power-centres. In the great majority of cases these groups of proprietors are fully integrated into the dominant economic sector, closely linked to the commanding heights of national and hegemonic political power.

Concentration of ownership of the communications media is very high, resulting in commensurately great ability to create in these countries models of behaviour which conform with ruling interests.

This text was first presented as the closing statement at the International Seminar on "El Papel Sociopolítico de los Medios de Comunicación Colectiva para la Sociedad de Cambio en América Latina" held in La Catalina, Costa Rica, 19-25 November 1972. It was translated from the Spanish by Malcolm Coad. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

2.2 *The function assigned to the communications media by the ruling groups.* These groups make use of the communications media for two fundamental, and linked, purposes. On the one hand, they use them as vehicles for the propagation of dominant ideology, whose object is to maintain the economic and political *status quo*, and, on the other hand, they manipulate them as commercial tools for the promotion of consumption and the development of the capitalist market system. In this way, the media promote a favourable environment for the maintenance of both political and cultural dependence and domination from outside.

2.3 *The state and the communications media.* The role of the state in relation to the socio-political function of the communications media in Latin American society varies from country to country. In some countries its actions are limited to creating an infrastructural framework in which the media can operate as normal capitalist enterprises. In such cases the state itself plays no part in the media's fulfilment of their social function, doing no more than support the activities of the elite and hegemonic social forces who use the media to promote their own interests against genuinely national collective interests. In some other countries the state plays an interventionist role in order to exclude certain cultural models, but without actually bringing about any modification of the power-structure of the communications apparatus. In other countries there is a real restructuring of power, as in Peru, without this necessarily or automatically implying any change in the function of the media.

Finally, there are a few cases, as, for example, in Cuba and, to some extent, Chile, where the state has carried out measures aimed at transforming the communications media into agents of social change, breaking the elite groups' monopoly control in this field, and thereby creating indispensable conditions, as in Chile, for the discovery of true alternatives to the conservative media whose function would be to help bring about proposed socio-economic change.

2.4 *The communicator as intermediary between those who transmit and those who receive.* In present circumstances, the role of the communicator in Latin America is generally predicated ideologically, politically, economically and culturally upon the interests of the owners of the communications media. The communicator has to submit to open or hidden censorship and, in most countries, to an institutionalised self-censorship which prevents him acting as spokesman for popular interests and as an agent of social change, which should be his true function in our dependent societies.

### 3. External Aspects of the Power Structure

The structure and function of mass communications in the dependent societies of Latin America is very largely defined from outside by the system of domination controlled by the supranational industrial and financial conglomerates. The influence of these conglomerates and external power centres is manifested in various ways, but always means the imposition of values and ideological systems generated by the world capitalist system, which ensure

domination by a mass culture which inhibits the growth of consciousness among the great majority and the active integration of that majority into the process of change.

3.1 *International news agencies.* The communications media in all Latin American countries are highly dependent upon the information services of the great international monopoly agencies. The operations of these agencies are conditioned by the interests of both the transnational consortia and metropolitan political centres. They are the spokesmen of foreign ideological models which are generally in open conflict with the idiosyncracies, interests and social needs of Latin American societies.

The danger represented by these agencies is even greater given their monopoly of the flow of news not only into the region from outside, but also within the region, even within countries, and from the region to other areas of the world. They act as a filter, as do the communications media themselves, functioning on behalf of dominant foreign interests:

3.2 *The role of advertising agencies.* Advertising agencies, whether locally owned or subsidiaries of the big international agencies, are fundamental links in the chain of foreign domination. As the principal sources of finance for the media they act as propagators not only of the patterns of consumption required by the capitalist system for its operation, but also of the political and cultural myths peculiar to this system. They thereby prevent the articulation of demands, and the development of a collective consciousness, inspired by authentically national and Latin American values compatible with the creation of a society based on solidarity.

3.3 *Systems of production and distribution of material to be transmitted by the mass communications media.* A considerable proportion of the material transmitted by the mass communications media in Latin America is produced and distributed by metropolitan power centres. The monopoly held by the metropolis and the enterprises closely tied to them reinforces the imposition of dominant ideologies, cultural models and patterns of social behaviour compatible with the interests of external power groups and contrary to the search for modes of thought, methods and procedures which accord with Latin American needs.

3.4 *Foreign investment in the communications media.* On the one hand, foreign investment in the technology of communications systems means that the interests of the transnational conglomerates which manufacture this equipment are favoured. At the same time, the presence of foreign capital in the communications media, which is to be seen in the majority of the countries in the region, means the exercise in these media of a strong influence from external decision centres.

As the great international consortia intensify their control over scientific and technological advance in the field of communications, so also there is a notable increase in their power to dominate and influence mass culture in Latin American countries which grow ever more technologically dependent on them.

#### 4. The Internal and External Aspects of the Power Structure of the Communications Media Form Part of a Total System of Domination.

The reports presented and discussions held in this conference have shown that it would be incorrect to consider these two sets of factors as separate from each other. They are dialectically inter-related and coupled together in an integrated system which helps maintain internal and external dependence in most Latin American countries. There is a fundamental identity of interests between the economically and politically dominant classes in each country, of which the owners of the communication media are members, and the transnational consortia and hegemonic power centres. This joint interest is, to a greater or lesser extent, translated into strategies and policies for communications which are either common or which complement each other to a high degree.

#### THE IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE MEDIA

1. Except for a small minority of media the general aims of the messages transmitted are:

1.1 To maintain in operation the existing system of production through the greatest possible consumption of commodities produced, the anticipated exhaustion of stocks, and, generally speaking, the creation of needs for new, unnecessary and alienating commodities;

1.2 To sustain the structure of political power, and thus strengthen the reigning economic and social order, obscuring its inherent contradictions;

1.3 The reinforcement of an individualistic and atomized overall vision of society, which is generated by the system of production itself and diffused by the expansion both of the system and of the media. From this vision are derived the various sets of alienating values which operate in every sphere of social life (sex, the family, culture, success);

1.4 To reduce the consumers' critical capacity through the constant saturation of the market for messages, the intentional distortion of any rational equilibrium between messages, and the manipulation of feeling.

2. All these ends are achieved through the ever more deliberate and systematic manipulation of the messages' ideological content. The forms of manipulation used to achieve each of the above aims are, respectively:

2.1 The fabrication of false news-items usually intended to discredit popular governments, parties or movements; or to sow confusion among popular classes which oppose the current system;

2.2 The deliberate omission or mutilation of information;

2.3 The partial absorption of ideologies and values opposed to the *status quo* in order to create an apparent identification of the media with popular interests, thereby simultaneously diluting these interests and promoting greater consumption by the public of the ruling classes' cultural products.

2.4 The edification of an ideology of neutrality and objectivity aimed not at providing better information but at the alienation of the receiver from

the social reality which surrounds him and the suffering imposed on the popular classes and society as a whole by their economic and political dependence.

3. Finally, it would be appropriate to devote a paragraph specifically to advertising given that although this is not the only function of the mass communications system, it is a fundamental aspect of it, not only in relation to the messages transmitted, but also because it is the principal source of finance for the media.

#### TOWARDS A CHANGE IN COMMUNICATIONS

1. *Ruling class practice and prospects.* The communications media are not an independent force, capable, as the ideologues of the 'free press' would have us believe, of bringing about a 'revolution' alone. They are one component of the social system and, as such, are subject to the factors which condition that system. If we are to analyse and change the media, we must determine their function in society.

1.1 At the present time the great multinational monopoly corporations are mastering the new technologies of communication. Simultaneously they produce television series and educational programmes, and the most modern and dangerous armaments. This can only mean an intensification of the electronic invasion of the Third World, with consumerism and the accumulation of weapons twin aspects of the same policy.

1.2 The development of modern communications technology (satellites, video cassettes, laser beams, cable television) will lead to the creation of new consumer markets and widen the field of action for cultural invasion. Educational series, such as *Sesame Street*, become weapons in this new cultural offensive. They are produced by foundations which are controlled by banking consortia and big corporations whose experts elaborate their contents.

1.3 The world capitalist system tries to present itself in a progressive light. It is pretending to dismantle Hollywood. The public relations departments of great corporations produce films with a leftist tinge. At the same time, the system intensifies more traditional psychological warfare through the publication of magazines, giving newspapers financial aid, and other activities carried out through the United States Information Service.

1.4 The empire of the monopolies does not renew itself merely metabolically, making adjustments to take into account new practices evolved by the dominated classes. It plans its opposition to the forces of change, using fabulously expensive marketing campaigns (e.g. the creation of the myth of the 'Brazilian miracle', or the fostering of a contradictory image of Chilean socialism as dangerous and chaotic).

1.5 The ruling classes of the Latin American countries are also constantly bringing their methods of recovery up to date in the face of popular efforts to achieve change. Such shifts of strategy and tactics conform to the specific character of each country.

1.6 Mass culture, predominantly foreign and reformulated by the local bourgeoisies, cannot be reduced simply to the so-called cultural products

transmitted by the communications media. It is the imposition of a complete and everyday way of life, which is often lived by the subordinate classes without their realising that the culture they are reproducing is responsible for their own alienation.

2. *A counter-reply.* The transformation of the communications media is not a merely technical problem. It is intimately bound up with the overall project, strategy and tactics proposed by the forces of change.

2.1 The rhythms and forms of transformation achieved will depend on the level of struggle and consciousness reached by the masses in their political practice. Levels of confrontation vary between Latin American countries, with consequent variations in the intensity of class struggle.

2.2 No radical transformation of the communication apparatus can be achieved unless communications are understood as a both integral and multiple. The apparatus must be considered in all its aspects (e.g. property relations, professionalisation, verticality of relations between transmitter and receiver, etc). Nevertheless, in practice variations of levels of confrontation will determine different tactics to be adopted in bringing about greater or lesser alterations in the overall system.

2.3 Only if we start from the principle that communications are a political matter will we be able genuinely to face up to their revolutionary mission as a further means of mobilising the masses on the basis of their own daily practice.

2.4 Of course, discussion of the way in which individuals can be mobilised in this way leads us, at the end of the day, to the link which must exist between the masses and their political and trade union organisations. Inevitably, any divorce between the masses and the leadership of their organisations will be reflected in the structure of communications.

2.5 In bringing about a transformation of the mode of production of messages we must consider the following points:

2.5.1 A new view of the training of communicators (from journalists to community leaders). The need here is to eradicate any quasi-professionalising tendency. Such tendencies will only ultimately contribute to maintaining the status of those who have exclusive power over the production and transmission of messages. Cultural creation, in the broadest sense, cannot be the prerogative of a professional group. (Indeed, recent developments in communications technology, such as the video cassette, open up the possibility of an unlimited increase in the number of transmitters.)

2.5.2 Essential conditions for counteracting the ruling classes' communications media are:

(a) the development of new forms of communication separate from the traditional systems (community journalism, for example). Such a development implies, of course, a close connection between the training of journalists and their rank-and-file organisations. These organisations are fundamental to the achievement of unrestricted democratisation of the communications process;

(b) the proposal of new ways of framing messages within the traditional media. As we have

emphasised previously, many progressive communicators work in newspapers and other media belonging to the ruling class, with all the risks that this brings with it of contradicting their own principles;

(c) the linking of such rethinking with the activities of such communicators in their professional associations, unions and work-places.

2.5.3 To be consistent with this political project, research work, as well as training, must integrate theory with practice. This requires a change of attitude towards scientific practice, or ways of carrying out scientific work, and towards methods used to apprehend reality and evaluate both the effects of the ruling class's media and the results obtained by the subordinate classes' own forms of communication. Such a new vision of research must necessarily follow an anthropological-political method, separating itself from the methods of empiricism. If based on this prescription, research into the power structure of the media will achieve its fullest potential.

## Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania

### KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION

(Malaysia, February 1979)

We, the representatives of the governments of the States of Asia and Oceania, members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco),

Meeting at the first Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania, convened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 5 to 14 February 1979,

Hereby declare that:

I  
People and individuals have the right to acquire an objective picture of reality by means of accurate and comprehensive information through a diversity of sources and means of information available to them, as well as to express themselves through various means of culture and communication.

No human community worth the name can be created and maintained without effective communication among its members, for the social essence of every human being is determined by his ability to communicate with his fellow human beings.

Communication between persons, groups of persons and nations has been, is and will continue to be vital for man's survival, liberation and growth.

In the years ahead the socio-economic and cultural development of mankind, the improvement of the living and cultural standards of nations, as well as their international relations will be increasingly influenced by the proper use of communication potential.

Consequently, since each nation has the right to determine its own communication policies, we call for the elaboration, by States and citizens together, of comprehensive national policies and programmes based on a global vision of communication and on the goals of economic and social development. Countries planning the implementation of these policies and programmes should do it as an integral part of overall national planning.

This text was first presented on 14 February 1979 as the concluding statement at the meeting and was unanimously approved by its 23 delegations (Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USSR and Vietnam). It was first published by UNESCO in June 1979.

II

The region of Asia and Oceania, as the cradle of ancient civilizations, religions and systems of thought and as one of the richest treasure houses of culture in the world, is an inexhaustible source that has much to offer to the world as a whole.

We, and all mankind, have inherited from our ancestors not only masterpieces of art and thought but also an age-old tradition of living together as well as highly developed forms of interpersonal communication. We now have to strengthen our heritage with its wealth of traditional interpersonal forms of communication and harmonize these with the new but more impersonal forms of modern communication. We must do everything possible to ensure that the best features of our traditional interpersonal communications and of our forms of living together are not harmed or destroyed by the new techniques which we need.

We must find, individually and collectively, some means of combining modern science and technology with a cultural continuity that will avoid any break with the wealth of our traditions. Culture disseminated through the intermediary of mass communications attuned to the needs and values of a society can bring about not only a new dimension in interrelations between States in the region, but also generate greater understanding and tolerance about our different ways of life.

Given the richness of the cultural heritage in this part of the world and the enlightenment which comes from it, together with the vastness of the region of Asia and Oceania and the size of the population in many of our countries, it is indispensable that all forms of communications — from the most traditional to the highly sophisticated, from interpersonal to mass communication — should be adopted, maintained, harmonized and expanded.

The mass media of the developing countries bear a responsibility for contributing to the common task of nation-building and to the further development of the cultural identity of peoples and ethnic minorities, so ensuring national cohesion and creating abilities to derive the utmost benefit from enriching influences coming from outside.

III

National communication systems and practices are of necessity different from each other in view of the varying traditions, cultural values and political options which governments and peoples exercise.

The basic criteria for judging the value of the communication media should be whether they serve the interests of the people and whether they disseminate true and accurate messages without outside interference and with respect of the dignity of all. Such an aim can be attained only if ideas and information, standards and values, are disseminated as widely as possible and in all directions, vertically and horizontally, from the periphery to the centre, within communities and peoples, so that individuals, groups and peoples are involved more actively and meaningfully in shaping their common destiny.

We therefore call for greater participation of people and individuals in the communication process

and for more freedom and autonomy for and the assumption of greater social responsibility by mass information media and at the same time for greater individual responsibility by and protection of those who run the media and prepare messages for circulation.

IV

In the world of today the maintenance of world peace and security, the strengthening of international co-operation, the assurance of social progress, the raising of living and educational standards, the promotion of human rights and freedom of thought, and the establishment of a new economic order are among the prerequisites for effective communication.

At the same time, within the national communication systems freedom of expression and freedom of information are also prerequisites for the effective communication between peoples and individuals.

Various obstacles still prevent the full realization of these prerequisites.

So long as some are powerful in and others lack the means or potential of communication, and so long as conditions have not been created for just and equitable international relations, with all nations living in peaceful coexistence, respecting each other's sovereign equality and abiding by the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, there can be no equity in communication flows and exchanges.

We urge therefore that every effort be made to eliminate the many obstacles impeding the exchange and circulation of information; we urge also that every effort be made to ensure that the mass media contribute to the strengthening of peace and international understanding, and the promotion of progress and development; we also call for a reduction of existing imbalances as well as current disparities in the facilities available for communication both within countries and between countries.

V

Communication messages and programmes in many countries are too often disproportionately at the service of the educated strata and élite in the more affluent parts of more advanced environments and urban and industrialized centres.

At the present time a considerable imbalance of technological development and inadequate provision of the broad masses with the messages transmitted by communication media are typical features in many countries.

Consequently greater attention should be focused on communication activities which cater to the broad masses of people, including those belonging to ethnic and linguistic communities and people living in distant areas, and all others who are isolated from the outside world and unaware of the achievements and events taking place in it. The poor and underprivileged groups should be given the opportunity to give expression to their aspirations and hopes.

We call for the exploration of ways and means to get news, information and ideas across to those people who are still on the fringes of communication circuits.



## VI

In the region of Asia and Oceania all material and human resources should be pooled in order to achieve such urgent objectives as higher food output, lower child mortality, increased production rates, a planned population growth, the spread of literacy, faster modernization, an end to violence and the preservation of cultural identity.

*We call for greater awareness on the part of the communication media of their potential as catalysts of socio-economic progress and reform.*

## VII

In developing countries of Asia and Oceania, as in other developing parts of the world, there is both a qualitative and a quantitative imbalance in the flow of information: generally, the inflow of information is strong and powerful while the outflow is feeble; mutual exchanges between our countries are still irregular and inadequate.

This shows that the developing countries of our region are still suffering from a dependence upon colonial legacies which have resulted in imbalances in communication structures and information flows.

Our efforts and achievements need to be better known. Our life patterns and aspirations need to be better appreciated. Our difficulties and failures need to be better understood with empathy and accuracy.

This has to be accompanied by a firm determination to increase our own capacities to produce and disseminate messages around the world in order to communicate better our own perceptions of reality, national and international.

*We therefore state that the elimination of such imbalances and the equalization of access to news sources are our next priority tasks, to which States, non-governmental bodies, public and private media, information agencies and enterprises, professionals and private citizens could all make an effective contribution.*

## VIII

We call for a higher degree of solidarity and co-operation, on both a bilateral and multi-lateral basis, in the field of communication and information, at the regional and international level, as a testimony of and a contribution to the interdependence of nations.

We call for broader, more efficient and diversified co-operation among all the countries of Asia and Oceania.

We call for a constant exchange of experiences in the establishment of communication policies and in the implementation of such policies.

We call for greater mutual assistance to overcome the disparities in technical and economic levels among the countries of the region.

We call for a wider network of regional bodies for the research in all aspects of communication, training of information specialists, the dissemination of news, the collection and exchange of media programmes, book and film production.

## IX

We call for more contacts and exchanges of

experience between countries in Asia and Oceania and those in other regions of the world.

A new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, the basis of good neighbourliness, demands in turn an opening to the world. Professional, cultural and scientific collaboration between groups, nations and regions must be a vital element of the order we seek to establish.

We believe that international solidarity should be put into practice through co-operation for broader research and training at national levels, transfer of technology, creation of national infrastructures, joint use of communication satellites and greater technical and financial assistance, through mutual friendship and respect for each people's sovereignty and dignity, and, finally, through the establishment and observance of mutually acceptable norms and the elimination of disparities affecting the circulation of messages especially in regard to disproportions in telecommunication tariffs, the scarcity of transmitting facilities and the problems of radio frequency channels.

*We urge the United Nations system as a whole, and more specifically Unesco, to support these objectives, promote various forms of regional and international co-operation and thus pave the way for a new, more just and more effective world communication and information order which is an integral part of the efforts to achieve a new international economic order.*

*We believe that such a new communication and information order would be one of the most vivid contemporary manifestations of the ideals of justice, independence and equality between men and nations.*

## G. SOCIALIST COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

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Resolution On Documentation

V.I. Lenin

THE CHARACTER  
OF OUR NEWSPAPERS

(USSR, 1918)

Far too much space is being allotted to political agitation on outdated themes — to political ballyhoo — and far too little to the building of the new life, to the facts about it.

Why, instead of turning out 200-400 lines, don't we write twenty or even ten lines on such simple, generally known, clear topics which the people are already fairly well acquainted, like the foul treachery of the Mensheviks — the lackeys of the bourgeoisie — the Anglo-Japanese invasion to restore the sacred rights of capital, the American multimillionaires baring their fangs against Germany, etc., etc.? We must write about these things and note every new fact in this sphere, but we need not write long articles and repeat old arguments; what is needed is to convey in just a few lines, "in telegraphic style", the latest manifestation of the old, known and already evaluated politics.

The bourgeois press in the "good old bourgeois times" never mentioned the "holy of holies" — the conditions in privately-owned factories, in the private enterprises. This custom fitted in with the interests of the bourgeoisie. We must radically break with it. We have *not* broken with it. So far our type of newspaper has *not* changed as it should in a society in transition from capitalism to socialism.

Less politics. Politics has been "elucidated" fully and reduced to a struggle between the two camps: the insurrectionary proletariat and the handful of capitalist slaveowners (with the whole gang, right down to the Mensheviks and others). We may, and, I repeat, we must, speak very briefly about these politics.

More economics. But not in the sense of "general" discussions, learned reviews, intellectual plans and similar piffle, for, I regret to say, they are all too often just piffle and nothing more. By economics we mean the gathering, *careful checking* and study of facts of the actual organisation of the new life. Have *real* successes been achieved by big factories, agricultural communes, the Poor Peasants' Committees, and local Economic Councils in building up the new economy? What, precisely, are these successes? Have they been verified? Are they not fables, boasting, intellectual promises ("things are moving", "the plan has been drawn up", "we are getting under way", "we now vouch for", "there is undoubted improvement", and other charlatan phrases of which "we" are such masters)? How have the successes been achieved? What must be done to extend them?

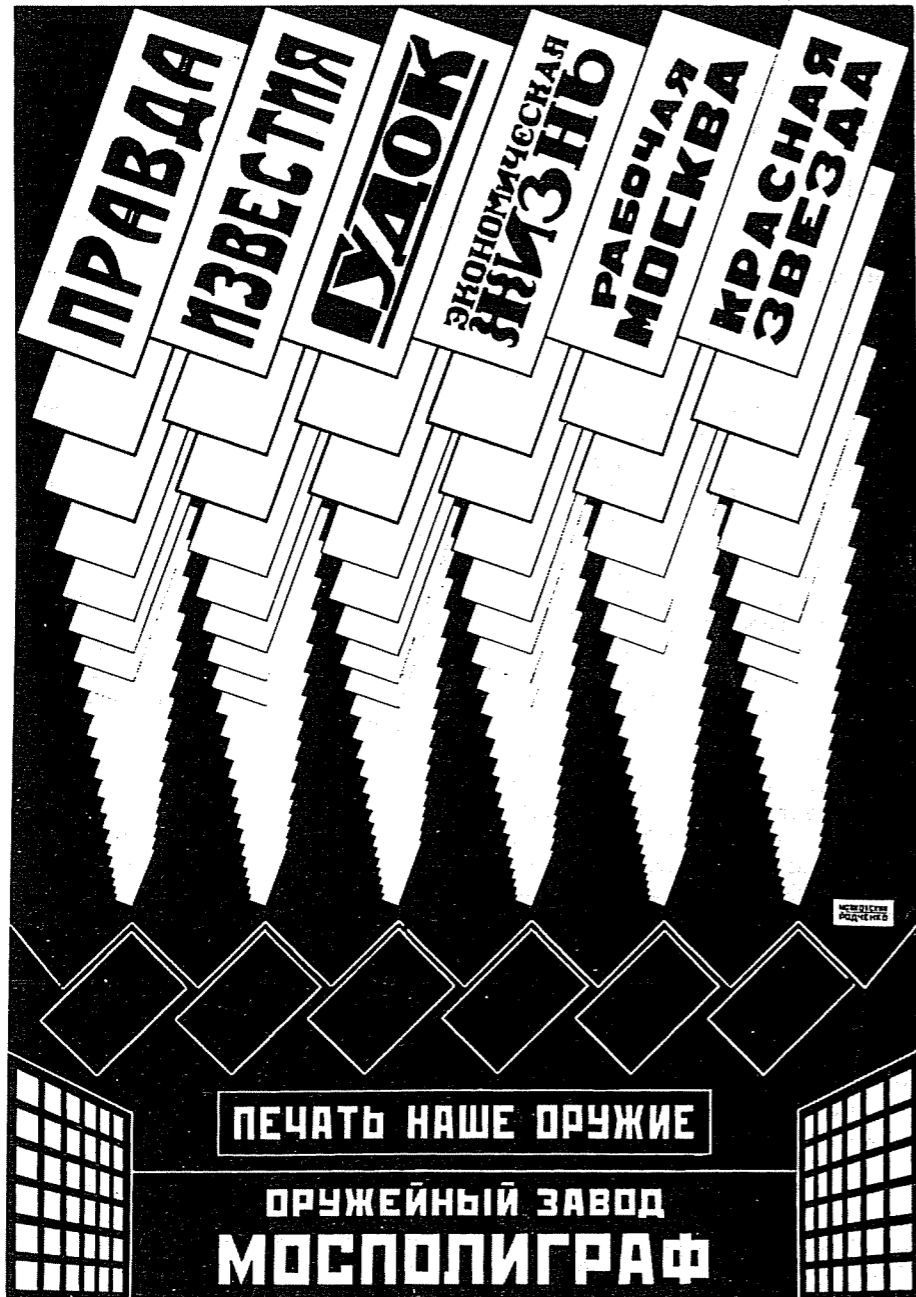
Where is the black list with the names of the lagging factories which since nationalisation have

remained models of disorder, disintegration, dirt, hooliganism and parasitism? Nowhere to be found. But there *are* such factories. We shall not be able to do our duty unless we wage *war* against these "guardians of capitalist traditions". We shall be jelly-fish, not Communists, as long as we tolerate such factories. We have not learned to wage the class struggle in the newspapers as skilfully as the bourgeoisie did. Remember the skill with which it *hounded its* class enemies in the press, ridiculed them, disgraced them, and tried to sweep them away. And we? Doesn't the class struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism take the form of safeguarding the interests of the working *class* against the few, the groups and sections of workers who stubbornly cling to capitalist traditions and continue to regard the Soviet state in the old way: work as little and as badly as they can and grab as much money as possible from the state. Aren't there many such scoundrels, even among the compositors in Soviet printing works, among the Sormovo and Putilov workers, etc.? How many of them have we found, how many have we exposed and how many have we pilloried?

The press is silent. And if it mentions the subjects at all it does so in a stereotyped, official way, not in the manner of a *revolutionary* press, not as an organ of the *dictatorship* of a class demonstrating that the resistance of the capitalists and of the parasites — the custodians of capitalist traditions — will be crushed with an iron hand.

The same with the war. Do we harass cowardly or inefficient officers? Have we denounced the really bad regiments to the whole of Russia? Have we "caught" enough of the bad types who should be removed from the army with the greatest publicity for unsuitability, carelessness, procrastination, etc.? We are not yet waging an effective, ruthless and truly revolutionary *war* against the *specific* wrongdoers. We do very little to *educate the people* by living, concrete examples and models taken from all spheres of life, although that is the chief task of the press during the transition from capitalism to communism. We give little attention to that aspect of *everyday* life inside the factories, in the villages and in the regiments where, more than anywhere else, the new is being built, where attention, publicity, public criticism, condemnation of what is bad and appeals to learn from the good are needed most.

Less political ballyhoo. Fewer highbrow discussions. Closer to life. More attention to the way in which the workers and peasants are *actually* building the *new* in their everyday work, and more *verification* so as to ascertain the extent to which the new is *communistic*.



Poster, "The Press Is Our Weapon", 1923 (by Alexander Rodchenko).

## V.I. Lenin

THE WORK OF THE  
PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT  
FOR EDUCATION

(USSR, 1921)

*Pravda*, No. 25 of February 5 carried "Instructions of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. to Communists Working in the People's Commissariat for Education (in connection with the reorganisation of the Commissariat)".

Unfortunately, there are three misprints in Point 1 distorting the meaning: the text said "political" instead of "polytechnical" education.

I should like to draw our comrades' attention to these instructions and to call for an exchange of opinion on some of the more important points.

A five-day Party Conference on educational questions was held in December 1920. It was attended by 134 delegates with voice and vote, and 29 with voice. A report of its proceedings is given in a *Supplement to the Bulletin of the Eighth Congress of Soviets on the Party Conference on Education* (published by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, January 10, 1921). The resolutions of the Conference, the report of the proceedings, all the articles published in the above-mentioned *Supplement* — except for the introductory article by Comrade Lunacharsky and the article by Comrade Grinko — reveal a wrong approach to polytechnical education. They suffer from the very defect on combating which the Central Committee in its instructions urges the People's Commissar and the Collegium to concentrate their attention, namely, too many general arguments and abstract slogans.

The question of polytechnical education has in the main been settled by our Party Programme in its paragraphs 1 and 8 of the section dealing with the people's education. It is these paragraphs that are dealt with in the Central Committee's Instructions. Paragraph 1 deals with *polytechnical education* up to the age of seventeen; and Paragraph 8 speaks of "the extensive development of vocational training for persons of the age of seventeen and upwards *in conjunction with general polytechnical education*."

Thus, the Party Programme puts the question squarely. The arguments about "*polytechnical or monotekhnicheskaya* education" (the words I have put in quotes and italics, monstrously absurd though they are, are the very words that we find on page 4 of the *Supplement*) are fundamentally wrong and downright impermissible for a Communist; they betray ignorance of the Programme and an idle inclination for abstract slogans. While we are *temporarily* compelled to lower the age (for passing from general polytechnical education to polytechnical vocational train-

This text was first published in *Pravda* (Moscow), 28, 9 February 1921.

ing) from seventeen to fifteen, the "*Party must regard*" this lowering of the age "as only" (point 1 of the Central Committee's Instructions) a practical expedient necessitated by the "*country's poverty and ruin*".

General arguments with futile efforts to "substantiate" this lowering are claptrap. Let us stop this game of general arguments and "theorising"! Attention must be concentrated on the "recording and verification of *practical* experience" and the "*systematic application of its lessons*".

We may have very few competent people with knowledge and *practical* pedagogical experience but we do have some. We suffer from our inability to find them, install them in the proper executive posts, and join them in *studying* the practical experience of Soviet state development. Now this is precisely what the Party Conference in December 1920 failed to do, and if this was not done at a conference of 163 — one hundred and sixty-three! — educational workers, it is quite evident that there must be a general, fundamental flaw in the organisation of this work, which made it necessary for the Party's Central Committee to issue special instructions.

In the Commissariat for Education there are two — just two — comrades who have special assignments. These are the People's Commissar, Comrade Lunacharsky, who exercises general direction, and Deputy Commissar, Comrade Pokrovsky, who directs affairs, firstly, as Deputy People's Commissar, and secondly, as official adviser (and director) on scientific matters and questions of Marxism in general. The whole Party knows both Comrade Lunacharsky and Comrade Pokrovsky very well and has no doubt, of course, that in this respect both are, in their way, "specialists" in the People's Commissariat for Education. None of the other workers of the Commissariat can afford to "*specialise*" in this way: their "speciality" must lie in skilfully organising the enlistment of expert teachers, in organising their work properly, and in systematically applying the lessons of practical experience. The Central Committee's instructions refer to this in points 2, 3 and 5.

The Party workers' conference should have heard reports by specialists — teachers with some ten years' practical experience — who could have told us what is being done and has been done in the various spheres, say, vocational training, how we are coping with it in our Soviet organisation, what has been achieved, illustrated with examples (which could surely be found, even if in small number), what were the main defects, and how these could be removed, stated in concrete terms.

The Party workers' conference made *no* such record of *practical* experience, and heard no teachers on their application of this experience; but fatuous efforts were made to produce "general arguments" and appraise "abstract slogans". The whole Party, all the workers of the People's Commissariat for Education, must realise this defect and correct it in a common effort. Local workers should exchange experience and help the Party to give publicity to the exemplary gubernias, uyezds, districts, schools, or expert teachers who have achieved good results in a relatively narrow, local or special field. Taking as a

basis the achievements that have stood the test of practice, we must press on and, after proper verification, apply this local experience on a nation-wide scale, promoting talented, or simply capable, teachers to more responsible posts, giving them a wider sphere of activity, etc.

The touchstone of a Communist's work in education (and educational institutions) should be his efforts in organising the enlistment of specialists, his ability to find them, utilise their knowledge, secure the co-operation of expert teachers with the Communist leadership, and verify what and how much is *being done*. He must show ability to make progress — even if very slowly and on a very small scale — so long as it is achieved in *practical* matters, on the basis of *practical* experience. But we shall not move forward if the People's Commissariat for Education continues to be full of people who pretend to provide "Communist leadership" while there is a vacuum in the practical sphere, a shortage, or total lack, of practical specialists, inability to promote them, hear what they have to say and take account of their experience. The Communist leader must prove his claim to leadership by *recruiting* a growing number of experienced teachers to help him, and by showing his *ability* to help *them* in their work, to promote *them*, and take account of and bring out *their* experience.

In *this* sense the invariable slogan must be: *less* "leadership," more practical work, that is to say, fewer general arguments and more facts, and I mean verified facts, showing where, when and what progress we are making or whether we are marking time, or retreating. The Communist who is a real leader will correct the curricula drawn up by the experienced teachers, compile a good textbook and achieve *practical*, even if slight, improvements in the content of the work of a *score, a hundred or a thousand* expert teachers. But there is not much use in the Communist who *talks* about "leadership," but is *incapable* of enlisting any specialists for practical work, getting them to achieve practical results in *their* work, and utilising the practical experience gained by hundreds upon hundreds of teachers.

That this is the main flaw in the work of the People's Commissariat for Education is evident from a paging through the fine booklet, *The People's Commissariat for Education. October 1917—October 1920. Brief Report*. Comrade Lunacharsky admits this when he refers in the preface (p.5) to the "obvious lack of the practical approach". But much more effort will be needed to drive this home to all the Communists in the People's Commissariat for Education and make them practise these truths. This booklet shows that our knowledge of the facts is poor, very poor indeed; we do not know how to collect them; we are unable to judge how many questions we ought to raise and the number of answers we can expect to get (taking into consideration our level of culture, our customs, and our means of communication). We don't know how to collect evidence of practical experience and sum it up. We indulge in empty "general arguments and abstract slogans", but do not know how to utilise the services of competent teachers, in general, and of competent engineers and agronomists for technical education, in particular; we

don't know how to utilise factories, state farms, tolerably well-organised enterprises and electric power stations for the purpose of polytechnical education.

In spite of these defects, the Soviet Republic is making progress in public education; there is no doubt about that. There is a mighty urge for light and knowledge "down below", that is to say, among the mass of working people whom capitalism had been hypocritically cheating out of an education and depriving of it by open violence. We can be proud that we are promoting and fostering this urge. But it would be a real crime to ignore the defects in our work, and the fact that we have not yet learned properly to *organise* the state apparatus of education.

Take also the distribution of newspapers and books, the question dealt with in the last point of the Central Committee's Instructions, point 7.

The Council of People's Commissars issued its decree on "The Centralisation of Libraries" (p. 439, *Collection of Statutes*, 1920, No. 87) on November 3, 1920, providing for the creation of a *single network of libraries of the R.S.F.S.R.*

Here are some of the data I have been able to obtain on the question from Comrade Malkin of the Central Periodicals Administration, and from Comrade Modestov of the Library Section of the Moscow Department of Education. In 38 gubernias, 305 uyezds, the number of libraries in central Soviet Russia (excluding Siberia and North Caucasus) was as follows:

Central libraries .....	342
District, urban libraries .....	521
Volost libraries .....	4,474
Travelling libraries .....	1,661
Village reading-rooms .....	14,739
Miscellaneous ("rural, juvenile, reference, libraries of various institutions and organisations") .....	12,203
Total .....	33,940

Comrade Modestov believes, on the basis of his experience, that about three-quarters of this number actually exist, while the rest are only listed as such. For Moscow Gubernia, the Central Periodicals Administration gives the figure of 1,223 libraries, while Comrade Modestov's figure is 1,018; of these 204 are in the city proper and 814 in the gubernia, not counting the trade union libraries (probably about 16) and the army libraries (about 125).

As far as can be judged from a comparison of the different gubernias, these figures are not very reliable — let us hope the actual figure does not turn out to be under 75 per cent! In Vyatka Gubernia, for example, there are 1,703 village reading-rooms, in Vladimir Gubernia — 37, in Petrograde Gubernia — 98, in Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia — 75, etc. Of the "miscellaneous" libraries there are 36 in Petrograd Gubernia, 378 in Voronezh Gubernia, 525 in Ufa Gubernia, 31 in Pskov Gubernia, etc.

These figures seem to show that the thirst for knowledge among the mass of workers and peasants is tremendous, and that the striving for education and the establishment of libraries is mighty and "popular" in the real sense of the word. But we are still very short of ability in organising, regulating, shaping and

properly satisfying this popular urge. Much remains to be done in creating a real *integrated network* of libraries.

How are we distributing the newspapers and books? According to the Administration's 1920 figures for eleven months, we distributed 401 million copies of newspapers and 14 million books. Here are the figures for three newspapers (January 12, 1921), compiled by the Periodicals Section of the Central Administration for the Distribution of Books:

	<i>Izvestia</i>	<i>Pravda</i>	<i>Bednota</i>
Branches of the Central Periodicals Administration .....	191,000	139,000	183,000
Military Bureau for the Supply of Literature and Newspapers to Divisional Dispatch Offices .....	50,000	40,000	85,000
Railway organisations, Railway Dept., Central Periodicals Administration and Agitation Centres .....	30,000	25,000	16,000
Offices and Organisations in the City of Moscow .....	65,000	35,000	8,000
Commandant of the City of Moscow .....	8,000	7,000	6,000
Passenger trains .....	1,000	1,000	1,000
Public Reading Stands and Files .....	5,000	3,000	4,000
Total	350,000	250,000	300,000

The figure for public reading stands, i.e., the



Distribution of the newspaper *Izvestia* in Petrograd, 1918 (Photograph by Jakow Schtejnberg, published in

really massive distribution, is astonishingly small, as against the enormous figures for the "establishments", etc., in the capital, evidently the papers grabbed and bureaucratically utilised by "Soviet bureaucrats", both military and civilian.

Here are a few more figures taken from the reports of the local branches of the Central Periodicals Administration. In September 1920, its Voronezh Gubernia branch received newspapers twelve times (that is to say, there were no papers on eighteen of the thirty days in September). Those received were distributed as follows: *Izvestia* (to branches of the C.P.A.): uyezd — 4,986 copies (*Pravda*, 4,020; *Bednota*, 4,310); district — 7,216 (5,860; 10,064); volost — 3,370 (3,200; 4,285); Party organisations — 447 (569; 3,880); Soviet establishments — 1,765 (1,641; 509) — note that Soviet establishments received nearly three times as many copies of *Pravda* as Party organisations! Then follow: Agitation and Educational Department of the Military Commissariat — 5,532 (5,793; 12,332); agitation centres — 352 (400; 593); village reading-rooms — *nil*. Subscribers — 7,167 (3,080; 764). Thus, "subscribers" (actually, of course, "Soviet bureaucrats") received a fat slice. Public reading stands — 460 (508; 500). Total: 32,517 (25,104; 37,237).

In November 1920, Ufa Gubernia received 25 consignments, that is to say, there was no delivery on five days only. Distribution: Party organisations — 113 (1,572; 153); Soviet establishments — 2,763 (1,296; 1,267); Agitation and Educational Department of the Military Commissariat — 687 (470; 6,500); Volost Executive Committees — 903 (308; 3,511); village reading-rooms — 36 (*Pravda* — 8, eight copies!; 2,538); subscribers — *nil*; "various

*Sowjetische Fotografen 1917-1940*, Berlin (West), Elefant Press, 1980).

uyezd organisations" — 1,044 (219; 991). Total: 5,841 (4,069; 15,429).

Lastly, the report of the branch in Pustoshensk Volost, Sudogoda Uyezd, Vladimir Gubernia for December 1920. Party organisations — 1 (1; 2); Soviet offices — 2 (1; 3); Agitation and Educational Department of the Military Commissariat — 2 (1; 2); Volost Executive Committees — 2 (1; 3); post and telegraph offices — 1 (1; 1); Urshelsky Works Committee — 1 (1; 2); District Department of Social Maintenance — 1 (0; 3). Total: 10 (6; 16).

What is the conclusion to be drawn from these fragmentary data? I believe it is what our Party Programme says, namely: "Only the first steps in the transition from capitalism to communism are being taken... at the present time."

Under capitalism, a newspaper is a capitalist enterprise, a means of enrichment, a medium of information and entertainment for the rich, and an instrument for duping and cheating the mass of working people. We have smashed this instrument of profit-making and deceit. We *have begun* to convert the newspapers into an instrument for educating the masses and for teaching them to live and run their economy *without* the landowners and capitalists. But we are only at the start of the road. Not much has been done during the last three years or so. A great deal remains to be done: the road ahead is very long indeed. Let us have less political fireworks, fewer general arguments and abstract slogans from inexperienced Communists who fail to understand their tasks; let us have more production propaganda and, above all, more efficient and capable application of practical experience to fit the development of the masses.

We have abolished newspaper subscriptions (I have no data on the distribution of books; there the situation is probably even worse). This is a step from capitalism to communism. But capitalism cannot be killed at one stroke; it rears its head in the form of "Soviet bureaucrats" grabbing the newspapers on various pretexts — they must be grabbing a great number, though we cannot say just how many. There must be a sustained drive in this field against the Soviet bureaucrats, who must be "rapped over the knuckles" for grabbing books and newspapers. Their share — and they themselves — must be steadily reduced. Unfortunately, we are unable to slash their number down to one-tenth or one-hundredth — it would be a fraud to promise this at our present level of culture, but we can and must whittle it down. No real Communist will fail to do this.

We must see to it that books and newspapers are, as a rule, distributed *gratis* only to the libraries and reading-rooms, which provide a proper reading service for the whole country and the whole mass of workers, soldiers and peasants. This will accelerate, intensify and make more effective the people's eager quest for knowledge. That is when education will advance by leaps and bounds.

Here is some simple arithmetic by way of illustration: there are 350,000 copies of *Izvestia* and 250,000 copies of *Pravda* for the whole of Russia. We are poor. We have no newsprint. The workers are short of fuel, food, clothes and footwear. The

machines are worn out. The buildings are falling apart. Let us assume that we actually have for the country as a whole — that is some 10,000 odd volosts — 50,000 libraries and reading-rooms. This would give no less than three for each volost, and certainly one for each factory and military unit. Let us further assume that we have not only learned to take "the first step from capitalism to communism", but also the second and the third. Let us assume that we have learned to distribute three copies of newspapers to every library and reading-room, of which, say, two go on the "public reading stands" (assuming that we have taken the fourth step from capitalism to communism, I make the bold assumption that instead of pasting newspapers on walls in the barbarous way which spoils them, we fix them with wooden pegs — we have no metal tacks, and there will be a shortage of metal even at the "fourth step"! — to a smooth board for convenient reading and to keep the papers from spoiling). And so, two copies each for 50,000 libraries and reading-rooms for "pasting up" and one copy to be kept in reserve. Let us also assume that we have learned to allow the Soviet bureaucrats, the pampered "grandees" of the Soviet Republic, a *moderate* number of newspapers for them to waste, let us say, no more than a few thousand copies.

On these bold assumptions the country will have a much better service with 160,000, or, say, 175,000 copies. The papers will be there for everyone to read the news (if the "travelling libraries" which, in my opinion, Comrade F. Dobler so successfully defended in *Pravda* just the other day, are properly organised). All this needs is 350,000 copies of two newspapers. Today, there are 600,000 copies, a large part of which is being grabbed by the "Soviet bureaucrats", wasted as "cigarette paper", etc., simply through the habits acquired under capitalism. This would give us a saving of 250,000 copies, or, despite our extreme poverty, a saving equal to *two* dailies with a circulation of 125,000 each. Each of these could carry to the people every day serious and valuable literary material and the best modern and classical fiction, and textbooks on general educational subjects, agriculture and industry. Long before the war, the French bourgeoisie learned to make money by publishing popular fiction, not at 3.50 francs a volume for the gentry, but at 10 centimes (i.e., 35 times as cheap, 4 kopeks at the pre-war rate) in the form of a proletarian newspaper; why, in that case, can't we do the same — at the second step from capitalism to communism. Why can't we do the same thing and learn, within a year, even in our present state of poverty, to give the people two copies of a newspaper through each of the 50,000 libraries and reading-rooms, all the necessary textbooks and world classics, and books on modern science and engineering.

We shall learn to do this, I am sure.

## Leon Trotsky

### NOT BY POLITICS ALONE

#### (USSR, 1923)

This simple thought should be thoroughly grasped and borne in mind by all who speak or write for propaganda purposes. Changed times bring changed tunes. The prerevolutionary history of our party was a history of revolutionary politics. Party literature, party organizations—everything was ruled by politics in the direct and narrow sense of that word. The revolutionary crisis has intensified political interests and problems to a still greater degree. The party had to win over the most politically active elements of the working class. At present the working class is perfectly aware of the *fundamental* results of the revolution. It is quite unnecessary to go on repeating over and over the story of these results. It does not any longer stir the minds of the workers, and is more likely even to wipe out in the workers' minds the lessons of the past. With the conquest of power and its consolidation as a result of the civil war, our chief problems have shifted to the needs of culture and economic reconstruction. They have become more complicated, more detailed and in a way more prosaic. Yet, in order to justify all the past struggle and all the sacrifices, we must learn to grasp these fragmentary problems of culture, and solve each of them separately.

Now, what has the working class actually gained and secured for itself as a result of the revolution?

1. The dictatorship of the proletariat (represented by the workers' and peasants' government under the leadership of the Communist Party).

2. The Red Army—a firm support of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. The nationalization of the chief means of production, without which the dictatorship of the proletariat would have become a form void of substance.

4. The monopoly of foreign trade, which is the necessary condition of socialist state structure in a capitalist environment.

These four things, definitely won, form the steel frame of all our work; and every success we achieve in economics or culture—provided it is a real achievement and not a sham—becomes in this framework a necessary part of the socialist structure.

And what is our problem now? What have we to learn in the first place? What should we strive for? We must learn to work efficiently: accurately, punctually, economically. We need culture in work, culture in life, in the conditions of life. After a long preliminary period of struggle we have succeeded in overthrowing the rule of the exploiters by armed revolt. No such

This text was first published in *Pravda* (Moscow), 10 July 1923. It was translated into English by Z. Vergerova and published in the author's *Problems of Life*, 1924, and reprinted in his *Problems of Everyday Life*, New York, Monad Press, 1973. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

means exists, however, to create culture all at once. The working class must undergo a long process of self-education, and so must the peasantry, either along with the workers or following them. Lenin speaks about this shift in focus of our aims and efforts in his article on cooperation:

We have to admit (he says) that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism. The radical modification is this: formerly we placed, and had to place, the main emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning political power, etc. Now the emphasis is changing and shifting to peaceful, organizational, "cultural" work. I should say that emphasis is shifting to educational work, were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we leave that aside, however, and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis in our work is certainly shifting to education. ["On Cooperation," in Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966)]

I consider it of some interest to quote here a passage on the epoch of the struggle for culture, out of my *Thoughts about the Party*:

In its practical realization, the revolution is, so to speak, "broken up" into partial tasks: it is necessary to repair bridges, learn to read and write, reduce the cost of production of shoes in Soviet factories, combat filth, catch swindlers, extend power cables into the countryside, and so on. Some vulgarians from the intelligentsia, from the category of persons who wear their brains askew (for that very reason they consider themselves poets or philosophers), have already taken to talking about the revolution in a tone of the most magnificent condescension: learning to trade, ha, ha! and to sew on buttons, heh, heh! But let these windbags yelp into the empty air...

But purely practical everyday work in the field of Soviet cultural and economic construction (even in Soviet retail trade!) is not at all a practice of "petty jobs," and does not necessarily involve a hairsplitting mentality. There are plenty of petty jobs, unrelated to any big jobs, in man's life. But history knows of no big jobs without petty jobs. It would be more precise to say—petty jobs in a great epoch, that is, as component parts of a big task, cease to be "petty jobs."

...It is perfectly obvious that it is quite a different sort of topical demands and partial tasks that call for our attention today. Our concern is with the constructive work of a working class which is for the first time building for itself and according to its own plan. This historic plan, though as yet extremely imperfect and lacking in consistency, must embrace all sections and parts of the work, all its nooks and crannies, in the unity of a great creative conception....

Socialist construction is planned construction on the largest scale. And through all the ebbs and flows, mistakes and turns, through all the twists and turns of NEP, the party pursues its great plan, educates the youth in the spirit of this plan, teaches everyone to link his particular function with the common task, which today demands sewing on Soviet buttons, and tomorrow readiness to die fearlessly under the banner of communism...

We must and shall, demand serious and thorough specialized training for our young people, and so, their emancipation from the basic sin of our generation—that of being know-it-alls and jacks of all trades—but specialization in the service of a common plan grasped and thought out by every individual....

Nothing, therefore, but the problems of our international position keeps us, as Lenin tells us,

from the struggle for culture. Now these problems, as we shall see presently, are not altogether of a different order. Our international position largely depends on the strength of our self-defence—that is to say, on the efficiency of the Red Army—and, in this vital aspect of our existence as a state, our problem consists almost entirely of work for culture: we must raise the level of the army and teach every single soldier to read and to write. The men must be taught to read books, to use manuals and maps; they must acquire habits of tidiness, punctuality, and thrift. It cannot be done all at once by some miraculous means. After the civil war and during the transitional period of our work, attempts were made to save the situation by a specially invented “proletarian military doctrine,” but it was quite lacking in any real understanding of our actual problems. The same thing happened in regard to the ambitious plan for creating an artificial “proletarian culture.” All such quests for the philosophers’ stone combine despair at our deficiency in culture with a faith in miracles. We have, however, no reason to despair, and as to miracles and childish quackeries like ‘proletarian culture’ or ‘proletarian military doctrine,’ it is high time to give such things up. We must see to the development of culture within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and this alone can assure the socialist content of the revolutionary conquests. Whoever fails to see this will play a reactionary part in the development of party thought and party work.

When Lenin says that at the present moment our work is less concerned with politics than with culture, we must be quite clear about the terms he uses, so as not to misinterpret his meaning. In a certain sense politics always ranks first. Even the advice of Lenin to shift our interests from politics to culture is a piece of political advice. When the labor party of a country comes to decide that at some given moment the economic problem and not the political should take first place, the decision itself is political. It is quite obvious that the word “politics” is used here in two different meanings: firstly, in a wide materialist and dialectical sense, as the totality of all guiding principles, methods, systems that determine collective activities in all domains of public life; and, on the other hand, in a restricted sense, specifying a definite part of public activity, directly concerned with the struggle for power and opposed to economic work, to the struggle for culture, etc. Speaking of politics as concentrated economics, Lenin meant politics in the wider philosophic sense. But when he urged: “Let us have less politics and more economics,” he referred to politics in the restricted and special sense. Both ways of using the word are sanctioned by tradition and are justified.

The Communist party is political in the wide historical or, we may also say, philosophic sense. The other parties are political only in the restricted sense of the word. The shifting of the interests of our party to the struggle for culture does not therefore weaken the political importance of the party. The party will concentrate its activity on the work for culture, and take the leading part in this work—this will constitute its historically leading, i.e. political part. A great many more years of socialist work, successful within and secure from without, are still needed before the

party could do away with its shell of party structure and dissolve in a socialist community. This is still so very distant that it is of no use to look so far ahead. In the immediate future the party must preserve in full its fundamental characteristics: unity of purpose, centralization, discipline, and, as a result of it, fitness for the fight. But under present conditions it needs a very sound economic base to preserve and to develop these priceless assets of Communist Party spirit. Economic problems, therefore, rank first in our politics, and only in conformity with them does the party concentrate and distribute its forces and educate the young generation. In other words, politics in the broader sense requires that all the work of propaganda, distribution of forces, teaching, and education should be based at present on the problems of economics and culture, and not on politics in the restricted and special sense of the word.

The proletariat is a powerful social unity which manifests its strength fully during the periods of intense revolutionary struggle for the aims of the whole class. But within this unity we observe a great variety of types. Between the obtuse illiterate village shepherd and the highly qualified engine-driver there lie a great many different states of culture and habits of life. Every class, moreover, every trade, every group consists of people of different ages, different temperaments, and with a different past. But for this variety, the work of the Communist Party might have been easy. The example of Western Europe shows, however, how difficult this work is in reality.

One might say that the richer the history of a country, and at the same time of its working class, the greater within it the accumulation of memories, traditions, habits, the larger the number of old groupings—the harder it is to achieve a revolutionary unity of the working class. The Russian proletariat is poor in class history and class traditions. This has undoubtedly facilitated its revolutionary education leading up to October. On the other hand, it causes difficulty in constructive work after October.

The Russian worker—except the very top of the class—usually lacks the most elementary habits and notions of culture (in regard to tidiness, instruction, punctuality etc.). The Western European worker possesses these habits. He has acquired them by a long and slow process, under the bourgeois regime. This explains why in Western Europe the working class—its superior elements, at any rate—is so strongly attached to the bourgeois regime with its democracy, freedom of the capitalist press, and all the other blessings. The belated bourgeois regime in Russia had no time to do any good to the working class, and the Russian proletariat broke from the bourgeoisie all the more easily, and overthrew the bourgeois regime without regret. But for the very same reason the Russian proletariat is only just beginning to acquire and to accumulate the simplest habits of culture, doing it already in the conditions of a socialist workers’ state.

History gives nothing free of cost. Having made a reduction on one point—in politics—it makes us pay the more on another—in culture. The more easily (comparatively, of course) did the Russian proletariat pass through the revolutionary crisis, the harder

becomes now its socialist constructive work. But, on the other hand, the framework of our new social structure, marked by the four characteristics mentioned above, gives an objectively socialist content to all conscientious and rationally directed efforts in the domain of economics and culture. Under the bourgeois regime the workman, with no desire or intention on his part, was continually enriching the bourgeoisie, and did it all the more, the better his work was. In the Soviet state a conscientious and good worker, whether he cares to do it or not (in case he is not in the party and keeps away from politics) achieves socialist results and increases the wealth of the working class. This is the doing of the October Revolution, and the NEP has not changed anything in this respect.

Workers who do not belong to the party, who are deeply devoted to production, to the technical side of their work, are many in Russia, but they are not altogether “apolitical,” not indifferent to politics. In all the grave and difficult moments of the revolution, they were with us. The overwhelming majority of them were not frightened by October, did not desert, were not traitors. During the civil war many of them fought on the different fronts; others worked for the army, supplying the munitions. They may be described as “nonpolitical,” but in the sense that in peacetime they care more for their professional work or their families than for politics. They all want to be good workers, to get more and more efficient each in his particular job, to rise to a higher position—partly for the benefit of their families, but also for the gratification of their perfectly legitimate professional ambition. Implicitly, every one of them, as I said before, does socialist work without even being aware of it. But as the Communist Party, we want these workers consciously to connect their individual productive work with the problems of socialist construction as a whole. The interests of socialism will be better secured by such united activities, and the individual builders of socialism will get a higher moral satisfaction out of their work.

But how is this to be achieved? To approach this type of worker on purely political lines is very difficult. He has heard all the speeches that were spoken and does not care for more. He is not inclined to join the party. His thoughts are centered on his work; and he is not particularly satisfied with the present conditions in the workshop, in the factory, in the trust. Such workers generally try to get at the bottom of things themselves, they are not communicative, and are just the class which produces self-taught inventors. They are not responsive to politics—at least not wholeheartedly—but they might and should be approached on matters concerning production and technique.

One of the members of the Moscow conference of mass propagandists, Comrade Kolzov, has pointed to the extreme shortage of manuals, handbooks, and guides published in Soviet Russia for the study of different trades and handicrafts. The old books of such a kind are mostly sold out, and besides, many of them are technically behind the time, whereas politically they are usually imbued with an exploiting capitalist spirit. New technical handbooks are very few and very difficult to get, having been published at random by different publishers or state departments

without any general plan. From the technical point of view they are not always satisfactory; some of them are too abstract, too academic, and usually colorless politically, being, in fact, slightly disguised translations of foreign books. What we really want is a series of new handbooks—for the Soviet locksmith, the Soviet cabinetmaker, the Soviet electrician, etc. The handbooks must be adapted to our up-to-date techniques and economics, must take into account our poverty, and on the other hand, our big possibilities; they must try to introduce new methods and new habits into our industrial life. They must—as far as possible anyhow—reveal socialist vistas corresponding to the wants and interests of technical development (this includes problems of standardization, electrification, economic planning). Socialist principles and conclusions must not be mere propaganda in such books. They must form an integral part of the practical teaching. Such books are very much needed, considering the shortage of qualified workers, the desire of the workers themselves to become more efficient, and considering also their interrupted industrial experience in conjunction with the long years of imperialist and civil war. We are faced here with an extremely gratifying and important task.

It is not an easy matter, of course, to create such a series of handbooks. Good practical workers do not write handbooks, and the theorists who do the writing usually have no experience of the practical side of work. Very few of them, moreover, have socialist views. The problem can be solved nevertheless—yet not by “simple,” i.e. routine methods, but by combined efforts. The joint work of, say, three authors is necessary to write, or at least to edit, a handbook. There should be a specialist with a thorough technical training, one who knows the conditions of our present production in the given trade or is able to get the necessary information; the other two should include a highly qualified worker of that particular trade, one who is interested in production, and if possible has some inventive aptitudes; and a professional writer, a Marxist, a politician with industrial and technical interests and knowledge. In this or some similar way, we must manage to create a model library of technical handbooks on industrial production. The books must, of course, be well printed, well stitched, of a handy size, and inexpensive. Such a library would be useful in two ways; it would raise the standard of work and contribute thereby to the success of socialist state construction, and on the other hand it would attach a very valuable group of industrial workers to Soviet economics as a whole, and consequently to the Communist Party.

To possess a series of handbooks is, of course, not all we want. I have dealt at some length with this particular question just to give an example of the new methods required by the new problems of the present day. There is much more to do in the interests of the “nonpolitical” industrial workers. Trade journals should be published, and technical societies ought to be started. A good half of our professional press should cater for the industrial worker of that “non-political” but efficient type, if it wants to have readers outside the mere staff of the trade unions. The most telling political arguments, however, for the workers

of that type are our practical achievements in industrial matters—every casual success in the management of our factories and workshops, every efficient effort of the party in this direction.

The political views of the industrial worker, who matters most for us now, might be best illustrated by the following attempt to formulate approximately his rarely expressed thoughts.

“Well,” he would say, “all that business of the revolution and the overthrowing of the bourgeoisie is right enough. Nothing to be said against it. It’s done once and forever. We have no use for the bourgeoisie. Nor do we need its Mensheviks or other helpmates. As to the ‘freedom of the press’—that does not matter. That is not the point either. But what about economics? You communists have undertaken to manage it all. Your aims and plans are excellent—we know that. Don’t go on repeating what they are. We know all about it, we agree with you and are ready to back you—but how are you actually going to do things? Up till now—why not tell the truth?—you often did the wrong things. Well, yes. We know that it cannot all be done at once, that you have to learn the job, and mistakes and blunders can’t be avoided. That is all quite true. And since we have stood the crimes of the bourgeoisie, we must bear with the mistakes of the revolution. But there is a limit to everything. In your communist ranks there are also all sorts of people just as among us poor sinners. Some do actually learn their jobs, are honestly intent on work, try to achieve practical results, but many more get off with idle talk. And they are doing much harm because with them business is simply slipping away through their fingers....”

That is how they reason, the workers of that type—clever, efficient locksmiths, or cabinetmakers, or founders, not excitable, rather of passive disposition in politics, but serious, critical, somewhat skeptical, yet always faithful to their class—proletarians of a high standard. In the present stage of our work the party must take this type of worker most specially into account. Our hold on them—in economics, production, technique—will be the most telling political sign of our success in the work for culture in the final sense of the word, in the sense in which it is used by Lenin.

Our special interest in the efficient worker is in no way opposed to the other most important problem of the party—the great interest in the younger generation of the proletariat. The younger generation grows up in the conditions of the given moment, grows sound and strong according to the way in which certain well-determined problems are solved. We want our younger generation, in the first place, to develop into good, highly qualified workers, devoted to their work. They must grow up with the firm conviction that their productive work is at the same time work for socialism. Interest in professional training, and desire for efficiency, will naturally give great authority in the eyes of our young proletarians to “the old men,” who are experts in their trade and who, as I said above, stand usually outside the party. We see, in consequence, that our interest in good, honest and efficient workers serves the cause of a thorough education of the growing younger generation; without it there would be no onward march to socialism.

## Leon Trotsky

### RADIO, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY (USSR, 1926)

#### A NEW EPOCH OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL THOUGHT

Comrades, I have just come from the Turkmenistan jubilee celebrations. This sister republic of ours in Central Asia today commemorates the anniversary of its foundation. It might seem that the subject of Turkmenistan is remote from that of radio technology and from the Society of Friends of Radio, but in fact there is a very close connection between them.

Just because Turkmenistan is *far* it ought to be *near* to the participants in this congress. Given the immensity of our federated country, which includes Turkmenistan—a land covering five to six hundred thousand versts, bigger than Germany, bigger than France, bigger than any European state, a land where the population is scattered among oases, where there are no roads—given these conditions, radio communication might have been expressly invented for the benefit of Turkmenistan, to link it with us.

We are a backward country; the whole of our Union, including even the most advanced parts, is extremely backward from the technical standpoint; and at the same time we have no right to remain in this backward state, because we are building socialism, and socialism presupposes and demands a high level of technology. While constructing roads through the countryside, improving them, and building bridges to carry them (and how terribly we need more such bridges!), we are obliged at the same time to catch up with the most advanced countries in the field of the latest scientific and technical achievements—among others, first and foremost, that of radio technology. The invention of the radiotelegraph and radiotelephone might have occurred especially to convince the bilious sceptics among us of the unlimited possibilities inherent in science and technology, to show that all the achievements that science has registered so far are only a brief introduction to what awaits us in the future.

Let us take the last twenty-five years—just a quarter of a century—and recall what conquests in the sphere of human technology have been accomplished before our eyes, the eyes of the older generation to which I belong. I remember—and probably I am

This text was first presented as a radio broadcast speech delivered at the First All-Union Congress of the Society of Friends of the Radio on 1 March 1926, and published in *Krasnaya Nov*, 2, 1927. It was translated into English by Leonard Hussey and published in *Labour Review*, December 1957, and reprinted in the author's *Problems of Everyday Life*, New York, Monad Press, 1973. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

not the only one among those present to do so, though the majority here are young people—the time when motor cars were still rarities. There was no talk, even, of the airplane at the end of the last century. In the whole world there were, I think, 5,000 motor cars, whereas now there are about twenty million, of which eighteen million are in America alone—fifteen million cars and three million trucks. The motor car has before our eyes become a means of transport of first-class importance.

I can still recall the confused sounds and rustlings which I heard when first I listened to a phonograph. I was then in the first form at secondary school. Some enterprising man who was travelling around the cities of south Russia with a phonograph, arrived in Odessa and demonstrated it to us. And now the gramophone, grandchild of the phonograph, is one of the most commonplace features of domestic life.

And aircraft? In 1902, that is, twenty-three years ago, the British man of letters, Wells (many of you will know his science-fiction novels), published a book in which he wrote, almost in so many words, that in his personal opinion (and he considered himself a bold and adventurous fantast in technical matters) approximately in the middle of this present twentieth century there would be not merely invented but also to some degree perfected, a flying machine heavier than air that could be used for operations of war. This book was written in 1902. We know that aircraft played a definite part in the imperialist war—and there are still twenty-five years to go to mid-century!

And cinematography? That's also no small matter. Not so very long ago it didn't exist; many present will recall that time. Nowadays, however, it would be impossible to imagine our cultural life without the cinema.

All of these innovations have come into our lives in the last quarter of a century, during which men have, in addition, accomplished also a few trifles such as imperialist wars, when cities and entire countries have been laid waste and millions of people exterminated. In the course of this quarter-century more than one revolution has taken place, though on a smaller scale than ours, in a whole series of countries. In twenty-five years, life has been invaded by the motor car, the airplane, the gramophone, the cinema, radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony. If you remember only the fact that, according to the hypothetical calculations of scholars, not less than 250,000 years were needed for man to pass from a simple hunter's way of life to stock-breeding, this little fragment of time, twenty-five years, appears as a mere nothing. What does this fragment of time show us? That technology has entered a new phase, that its rate of development is getting continually faster and faster.

Liberal scholars—now they are no more—commonly used to depict the whole of the history of mankind as a continuous line of progress. This was wrong. The line of progress is curved, broken, zigzagging. Culture now advances, now declines. There was the culture of ancient Asia, there was the culture of antiquity, of Greece and Rome, then European culture began to develop, and now American culture is rising in skyscrapers. What has

been retained from the cultures of the past? What has been accumulated as a result of historical progress? Technical processes, methods of research. Scientific and technical thought, not without interruptions and failures, marches on. Even if you meditate on those far-off days when the sun will cease to shine and all forms of life die out upon the earth, nevertheless there is still plenty of time before us. I think that in the centuries immediately ahead of us, scientific and technical thought, in the hands of socialistically organized society, will advance without zigzags, breaks, or failures. It has matured to such an extent, it has become sufficiently independent and stands so firmly on its feet, that it will go forward in a planned and steady way, along with the growth of the productive forces with which it is linked in the closest degree.

#### A TRIUMPH OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

It is the task of science and technology to make matter subject to man, together with space and time, which are inseparable from matter. True, there are certain idealist books—not of a clerical character, but philosophical ones—wherein you can read that time and space are categories of our minds, that they result from the requirements of our thinking, and that nothing actually corresponds to them in reality. But it is difficult to agree with this view. If any idealist philosopher, instead of arriving in time to catch the nine p.m. train, should turn up two minutes late, he would see the tail of the departing train and would be convinced by his own eyes that time and space are inseparable from material reality. The task is to diminish this space, to overcome it, to economize time, to prolong human life, to register past time, to raise life to a higher level and enrich it. This is the reason for the struggle with space and time, at the basis of which lies the struggle to subject matter to man—matter, which constitutes the foundation not only of everything that really exists, but also of all imagination.

Our struggle for scientific achievements is itself only a very complex system of reflexes, i.e. of phenomena of a physiological order, which have grown up on an anatomical basis that in its turn has developed from the inorganic world, from chemistry and physics. Every science is an accumulation of knowledge, based on experience relating to matter, to its properties; an accumulation of generalized understanding of how to subject this matter to the interests and needs of man.

The more science learns about matter, however, the more “unexpected” properties of matter it discovers, the more zealously does the decadent philosophical thought of the bourgeoisie try to use the new properties or manifestations of matter to show that matter is not matter. The progress of natural science in mastering matter is paralleled by a philosophical struggle against materialism. Certain philosophers and even some scientists have tried to utilize the phenomena of radio-activity for the purpose of struggle against materialism: there used to be atoms, elements, which were the basis of matter and of materialist thinking, but now this atom has come to pieces in our hands, has broken up into electrons, and

at the very beginning of the popularity of the electronic theory a struggle has even flared up in our party around the question whether the electrons testify *for* or *against* materialism. Whoever is interested in these questions will read with great profit to himself Vladimir Ilyich's work on *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. In fact neither the "mysterious" phenomena of radio-activity nor the no less "mysterious" phenomena of wireless transmission of electromagnetic waves do the slightest damage to materialism.

The phenomena of *radioactivity*, which have lead to the necessity of thinking of the atom as a complex system of still utterly "unimaginable" particles, can be directed against materialism only by a desparate specimen of vulgar materialist who recognizes as matter only what he can feel with his bare hands. But this is sensualism, not materialism. Both the molecule, the ultimate chemical particle, and the atom, the ultimate physical particle, are inaccessible to our sight and touch. But our organs of sense, although they are the instruments with which knowledge begins, are not at all, however, the last resort of knowledge. The human eye and the human ear are very primitive pieces of apparatus, inadequate to reach even the basic elements of physical and chemical phenomena. To the extent that in our thinking about reality we are guided merely by the everyday findings of our sense organs, it is hard for us to imagine that the atom is a complex system, that it has a nucleus, that around this nucleus electrons move, and that from this there result the phenomena of radioactivity.

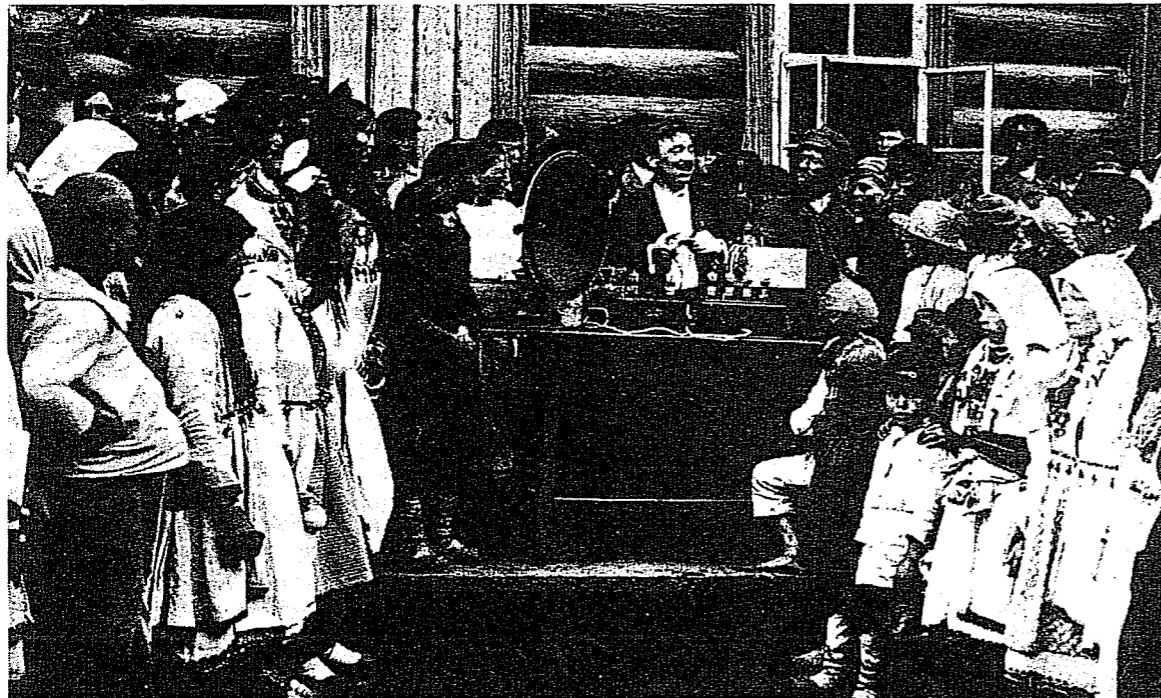
Our imagination in general accustoms itself only with difficulty to new conquests of cognition. When Copernicus discovered in the sixteenth century that the sun did not move around the earth but the earth around the sun, this seemed fantastic, and conserva-

tive imagination still to this day finds it hard to adjust itself to this fact. We observe this in the case of illiterate people and in each fresh generation of schoolchildren. Yet we, people of some education, despite the fact that it appears to us, too, that the sun moves round the earth, nevertheless do not doubt that in reality things happen the other way around, for this is confirmed by extensive observation of astronomical phenomena.

The human brain is a product of the development of matter, and at the same time it is an instrument for the cognition of this matter; gradually it adjusts itself to its function, tries to overcome its limitations, creates ever new scientific methods, imagines ever more complex and exact instruments, checks its work again and yet again, step by step penetrates into previously unknown depths, changes our conception of matter, without, though, ever breaking away from this basis of all that exists.

Radioactivity, as we have already mentioned, in no way constitutes a threat to materialism, and it is at the same time a magnificent triumph of dialectics. Until recently scientists supposed that there were in the world about ninety elements, which were beyond analysis and could not be transformed one into another—so to speak, a carpet for the universe woven from ninety threads of different qualities and colors. Such a notion contradicted materialist dialectics, which speaks of the unity of matter and, what is even more important, of the transformability of the elements of matter. Our great chemist, Mendeleev, to the end of his life was unwilling to reconcile himself to the idea that one element could be transformed into another; he firmly believed in the stability of these "individualities," although the phenomena of radioactivity were already known to him.

But nowadays no scientist believes in the un-



A radio receiver in a small Soviet village, 1929 (Photograph by Arkadi Schischkin, published in *Sow-*

*jetische Fotografen 1917-1940*, Berlin (West), Elefant, 1980).

changeability of the elements. Using the phenomena of radioactivity, chemists have succeeded in carrying out a direct "execution" of eight or nine elements, and along with this, the execution of the last remnants of metaphysics in materialism, for now the transformability of one chemical element into another has been proved experimentally. The phenomena of radioactivity have thus led to a supreme triumph of dialectical thought.

The phenomena of radio technology are based on wireless transmission of electromagnetic waves. *Wireless* does not at all mean *nonmaterial* transmission. Light does not come only from lamps but also from the sun, being also transmitted without the aid of wires. We are fully accustomed to the wireless transmission of light over quite respectable distances. We are greatly surprised though, when we begin to transmit sound over a very much shorter distance, with the aid of those same electromagnetic waves which underlie the phenomena of light. All these are phenomena of matter, material processes—waves and whirlwinds—in space and time. The new discoveries and their technical applications show only that matter is a great deal more heterogeneous and richer in potentialities than we had thought hitherto. But, as before, nothing is made out of nothing.

The most outstanding of our scientists say that science, and physics in particular, has in recent times arrived at a turning point. Not so very long ago, they say, we still approached matter, as it were, "phenomenally," i.e., from the angle of observing its manifestations; but now we are beginning to penetrate ever deeper into the very interior of matter, to learn its structure; and we shall soon be able to regulate it "from within." A good physicist would, of course, be able to talk about this better than I can. The phenomena of radioactivity are leading us to the problem of releasing intra-atomic energy.

The atom contains within itself a mighty hidden energy, and the greatest task of physics consists in pumping out this energy, pulling out the cork so that this hidden energy may burst forth in a fountain. Then the possibility will be opened up of replacing coal and oil by atomic energy, which will also become the basic motive power. This is not at all a hopeless task. And what prospects it opens before us! This alone gives us the right to declare that scientific and technical thought is approaching a great turning point, that the revolutionary epoch in the development of human society will be accompanied by a revolutionary epoch in the sphere of the cognition of matter and the mastering of it... Unbounded technical possibilities will open out before liberated mankind.

### RADIO, MILITARISM, SUPERSTITION

Perhaps, though, it is time to get closer to political and practical questions. What is the relation between radio technology and the social system? Is it socialist or capitalist? I raise the question because a few days ago the famous Italian, Marconi, said in Berlin that the transmission of pictures at a distance by means of Hertzian waves is a tremendous gift to pacifism, foretelling the speedy end of the militarist epoch. Why should this be? These ends of epochs

have been proclaimed so often that the pacifists have got all ends and beginnings mixed up. The fact that we shall be able to see at a great distance is supposed to put an end to wars! Certainly, the invention of a means of transmitting a living image over a great distance is a very attractive problem, for it is insulting to the optic nerve that the auditory one is at present, thanks to radio, in a privileged position in this respect. But to suppose that from this there must result the end of wars is merely absurd, and shows only that in the case of great men like Marconi, just as with the majority of people who are specialists in a particular field—even, one may say, with the majority of people in general—scientific thinking lays hold of the brain, to put the matter crudely, not as a whole, but only in small sectors.

Just as inside the hull of the steamship impenetrable partitions are placed so that in the event of an accident the ship will not sink all at once, so also in man's consciousness there are numberless impenetrable partitions: in one sector, or even in a dozen sectors, you can find the most revolutionary scientific thinking; but beyond the partition lies philistinism of the highest degree. This is the great significance of Marxism, as thought that generalizes all human experience: that it helps to break down these internal partitions of consciousness through the integrity of its world outlook.

But to get closer to the matter in hand — why, precisely, if one can see one's enemy, must this result in the liquidation of war? In earlier times whenever there was war the adversaries saw each other face to face. That was how it was in Napoleon's day. Only the creation of long-distance weapons gradually pushed the adversaries further apart and led to a situation in which they were firing at unseen targets. And if the invisible becomes visible, this will only mean that the Hegelian triad has triumphed in this sphere as well—after the thesis and the antithesis has come the "synthesis" of mutual extermination.

I remember the time when men wrote that the development of aircraft would put an end to war, because it would draw the whole population into military operations, would bring to ruin the economic and cultural life of entire countries, etc. In fact, however, the invention of a flying machine heavier than air opened a new and crueler chapter in the history of militarism. There is no doubt that now, too, we are approaching the beginning of a still more frightful and bloody chapter. Technology and science have their own logic—the logic of the cognition of nature and the mastering of it in the interests of man. But technology and science develop not in a vacuum but in human society, which consists of classes. The ruling class, the possessing class, controls technology and through it controls nature. Technology in itself cannot be called either militaristic or pacifistic. In a society in which the ruling class is militaristic, technology is in the service of militarism.

It is considered unquestionable that technology and science undermine superstition. But the class character of society sets substantial limits here too. Take America. There, church sermons are broadcast by radio, which means that the radio is serving as a means of spreading prejudices. Such things don't





The voice of Moscow in Uzbekistan, 1925 (Photograph by Georgi Selma, published in *Sowjetische Fotografien*

1917-1940, Berlin (West), Elefant Press, 1980).

happen here, I think — the Society of Friends of Radio watches over this, I hope? [*Laughter and applause*] Under the socialist system science and technology as a whole will undoubtedly be directed against religious prejudices, against superstition, which reflect the weakness of man before man or before nature. What, indeed, does a “voice from heaven” amount to when there is being broadcast all over the country a voice from the Polytechnical museum? [*Laughter*]

### WE MUST NOT LAG BEHIND!

Victory over poverty and superstition is ensured to us, provided we go forward technically. We must not lag behind other countries. The first slogan which every friend of radio must fix in his mind is: Don't lag behind!

Yet we are extraordinarily backward in relation to the advanced capitalist countries; this backwardness is the main inheritance that we have received from the past. What are we to do? If, Comrades, the situation were to be such that the capitalist countries continued to develop steadily and go forward, as before the war, then we should have to ask ourselves anxiously: shall we be able to catch up? And if we do not catch up, shall we be crushed? To this we say: we cannot forget that scientific and technical thought in bourgeois society has attained its highest degree of development in that period when, economically, bourgeois society is getting more and more into a blind alley and is beginning to decay. European economy is not going forward. In the last fifteen years, Europe has become poorer, not richer. But its inventions and discoveries have been colossal. While ravaging Europe and devastating huge areas of the continent, the war at the same time gave a tremendous impetus to scientific and technical thought, which was suffocating in the clutches of decaying capitalism.

If, however, we take the material accumulations of technology, i.e., not that technology which exists in men's heads, but that which is embodied in machinery, factories, mills, railways, telegraphic and telephone services, etc., then here above all it is plain that we are fearfully backward. It would be more correct to say that this backwardness would be fearful for us if we did not possess an immense advantage in the Soviet organization of society, which makes possible a planned development of technology and science while Europe is suffocating in its own contradictions.

Our present backwardness in all spheres must not, however, be covered up, but must be measured with a severely objective yardstick, without losing heart but also without deceiving oneself for a single moment. How is a country transformed into a single economic and cultural whole? By means of communications: railways, steamships, postal services, the telegraph, and the telephone—and now radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony. How do we stand in these fields? We are fearfully backward. In America the railway network amounts to 405,000 kilometers, in Britain to nearly 40,000, in Germany to 54,000, but here to only 69,000 kilometers—and that with our vast distances! But it is much more instructive to compare the loads that are carried in these countries

and here, measuring them in ton-kilometers, i.e., taking as the unit one ton transported over one kilometer's distance. The United States last year carried 600 million ton-kilometers, we carried 48.5 million, Britain 30 million, Germany 69 million: i.e., the U.S. carried ten times as much as Germany, twenty times as much as Britain, and two or three times as much as the whole of Europe along with ourselves.

Let us take the postal service, one of the basic means of cultural communication. According to information provided by the Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs, based on the latest figures, expenditure on postal communications in the U.S. last year amounted to a billion and a quarter rubles, which means 9 rubles 40 kopeks per head of population. In our country, postal expenditure comes to 75 million, which means 33 kopeks per head. There's a difference for you—between 9 rubles 40 kopeks and 33 kopeks!

The figures for telegraph and telephone services are still more striking. The total length of telegraph wires in America is 3 million kilometers, in Britain half a million kilometers, and here 616,000 kilometers. But the length of telegraph wires is comparatively small in America because there they have a lot of telephone wires—60 million kilometers of them, whereas in Britain there are only 6 million and here only 311,000 kilometers. Let us neither mock at ourselves, Comrades, nor take fright, but firmly keep these figures in mind; we must measure and compare, so as to catch up and surpass, at all costs! [*Applause*] The number of telephones—another good index of the level of culture—is in America 14 million, in Britain a million, and here 190,000. For every hundred persons in America, there are thirteen telephones, in Britain a little more than two, and in our country one-tenth, or, in other words, in America the number of telephones in relation to the number of inhabitants is 130 times as great as here.

As regards radio, I do not know how much we spend per day on it (I think the Society of Friends of Radio should work this out), but in America they spend a million dollars, i.e., 2 million rubles a day on radio, which makes about 700 millions a year.

These figures harshly reveal our backwardness. But they also reveal the importance that radio, as the cheapest form of communication, can and must have in our huge peasant country. We cannot seriously talk about socialism without having in mind the transformation of the country into a single whole, linked together by means of all kinds of communications. In order to introduce it we must first and foremost be able to talk to the most remote parts of the country, such as Turkmenistan. For Turkmenistan, with which I began my remarks today, produces cotton, and upon Turkmenistan's labors depends the work of the textile mills of the Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk regions. For direct and immediate communication with all points in the country, one of the most important means is radio—that is, of course, if radio in our country is not to be a toy for the upper strata of the townspeople, who are established in more privileged conditions than others, but is to become an instrument of economic and cultural communication between town and country.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY

Let us not forget that between town and country in the USSR there are monstrous contradictions, material and cultural, which as a whole we have inherited from capitalism. In that difficult period we went through, when the town took refuge in the country and the country gave a pood of bread in exchange for an overcoat, some nails, or a guitar, the town looked quite pitiful in comparison with the comfortable countryside. But in proportion as the elementary foundations of our economy have been restored, in particular our industry, the tremendous technical and cultural advantages of the town over the country have reasserted themselves. We have done a great deal in the sphere of politics and law to mitigate and even out the contrasts between town and country. But in technique we have really not made a single big step forward so far. And we cannot build socialism with the countryside in this technically deprived condition, with the peasantry culturally destitute. Developed socialism means above all technical and cultural leveling as between town and country, i.e., the dissolving of both town and country into homogenous economic and cultural conditions. That is why the mere bringing closer together of town and country is a question of life and death for us.

While creating the industry and institutions of the town, capitalism held the country down and could not but do this: it could always obtain the necessary foodstuffs and raw materials not only from its own countryside but also from the backward lands across the ocean or from the colonies, produced by cheap peasant labor. The war and the postwar disturbances, the blockade and the danger that it might be repeated, and finally the instability of bourgeois society, have compelled the bourgeoisie to take a closer interest in the peasantry. Recently we have heard bourgeois and Social Democratic politicians more than once talk about the link with the peasantry. Briand, in his discussion with Comrade Rakovsky about the debts, laid emphasis on the needs of the small landholders, and in particular the French peasants. Otto Bauer, the Austrian "Left" Menshevik, in a recent speech spoke about the exceptional importance of the "link" with the countryside. Above all, our old acquaintance, Lloyd George—whom, true, we have begun to forget a little—when he was still in circulation organized in Britain a special land league in the interests of the link with the peasantry. I don't know what form the link would take in British conditions, but on Lloyd George's tongue the word certainly sounds knavish enough. At all events, I would not recommend that he be elected patron of any rural district, nor a honorary member of the Society of Friends of Radio, for he would without fail put over some swindle or other. [Applause]

Whereas in Europe the revival of the question of the link with the countryside is on the one hand a parliamentary-political maneuver, and on the other a significant symptom of the tottering of the bourgeois regime, for us the problem of economic and cultural links with the countryside is life or death in the full sense of the word. The technical basis of this linkage must be electrification, and this is directly and immediately connected with the problem of the

introduction of radio on a wide scale. In order to approach the fulfillment of the simplest and most urgent tasks, it is necessary that all parts of the Soviet Union be able to talk to each other, that the country be able to listen to the town, as to its technically better-equipped and more cultured elder brother. Without the fulfillment of this task the spread of radio will remain a plaything for the privileged circles of the townspeople.

It was stated in your report that in our country three-quarters of the rural population do not know what radio is, while the remaining quarter know it only through special demonstrations during festivals, etc. Our program must provide that every village not only should know what radio is but should have its own radio receiving station.

The diagram attached to your report shows the distribution of members of your society according to social class. Workers make up 20 percent (that's the small figure with the hammer); peasants 13 percent (the still smaller figure with the scythe); office workers 49 percent (the respectable figure carrying a briefcase); and then comes 18 percent of "others" (it's not stated who they are exactly, but there is a drawing of a gentleman in a bowler hat, with a cane and a white handkerchief in his breast pocket, evidently a NEPman). I don't suggest that these people with handkerchiefs should be driven out of the Society of Friends of Radio, but they ought to be surrounded and besieged more strongly, so that radio may be made cheaper for the people with hammers and scythes. [Applause] Still less am I inclined to think that the number of members with briefcases should be mechanically reduced.

But it is necessary, though, that the two basic groups be increased, at all costs! Twenty percent workers—that's very little; 13 percent peasants—that's shamefully little. The number of people in bowler hats is nearly equal to the number of workers (18 percent) and exceeds the number of peasants, who make up only 13 percent! It is a flagrant breach of the Soviet constitution. It is necessary to take steps to ensure that in the next year or two peasants become about 40 percent, workers 45 percent, office workers 10 percent, and what are called "others"—5 percent. That will be a normal proportion, fully in keeping with the spirit of the Soviet constitution.

The conquest of the village by radio is a task for the next few years, very closely connected with the task of eliminating illiteracy and electrifying the country, and to some extent a precondition for the fulfillment of these tasks. Each province should set out to conquer the countryside with a definite program of radio development. Place the map for a new war on the table! From each provincial centre first of all, every one of the larger villages should be conquered for radio. It is necessary that our illiterate and semi literate village, even before it manages to master reading and writing as it ought, should be able to have access to culture through the radio, which is the most democratic medium of broadcasting information and knowledge. It is necessary that by means of the radio the peasant shall be able to feel himself a citizen of our Union, a citizen of the whole world.

Upon the peasantry depends to a large extent not

A.B. Khalatov

THE CULTURAL  
REVOLUTION AND  
THE BOOK

(USSR, 1931)

Comrades, before touching upon the subject of my speech, that is, "The Cultural Revolution and the Book," allow me to extend warm greetings from the State Publishing House of the RSFSR and the State Publishing House of Fine Literature to the delegates of the International Conference of Revolutionary Writers, to the delegates of this gathering, so important in the history of revolutionary literature.

In a number of western countries proletarian literature has made considerable progress during the last few years. At the same time, proletarian literature has also been going through a tremendous development in our own Soviet land of socialist construction. And at present while proletarian literature is in a stage of steady growth, it is particularly important that the ideology and organizational unity for which the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature has been striving in its practical work be finally achieved.

The cultural revolution is a mighty upsurge of the laboring masses based on the socialist reconstruction of our entire national economy, and on the social organization of life in our country.

The social revolution and the seizure of power by our proletariat gave the impetus to the cultural revolution. Lenin, in one of his articles on cooperatives, wrote the following: "Our enemies often told us that we were involving ourselves in a hare-brained undertaking, by attempting to plant socialism in a culturally undeveloped country. But they were mistaken in that we did not start at the end that the theory of all pedants would require us to start at, our political and social revolution having been the forerunner of that cultural revolution with which we are now confronted."

Our present experience in socialist construction shows that Lenin was right. By exerting great efforts, we are successfully bringing about this cultural revolution. On what basis? On the basis of the successful development of socialist construction. A cultural revolution is necessary before we really become a socialist country; but a cultural revolution involves enormous difficulties, not only in the domain of culture, but in that of economics as well. As Lenin said, "a certain material basis is required."

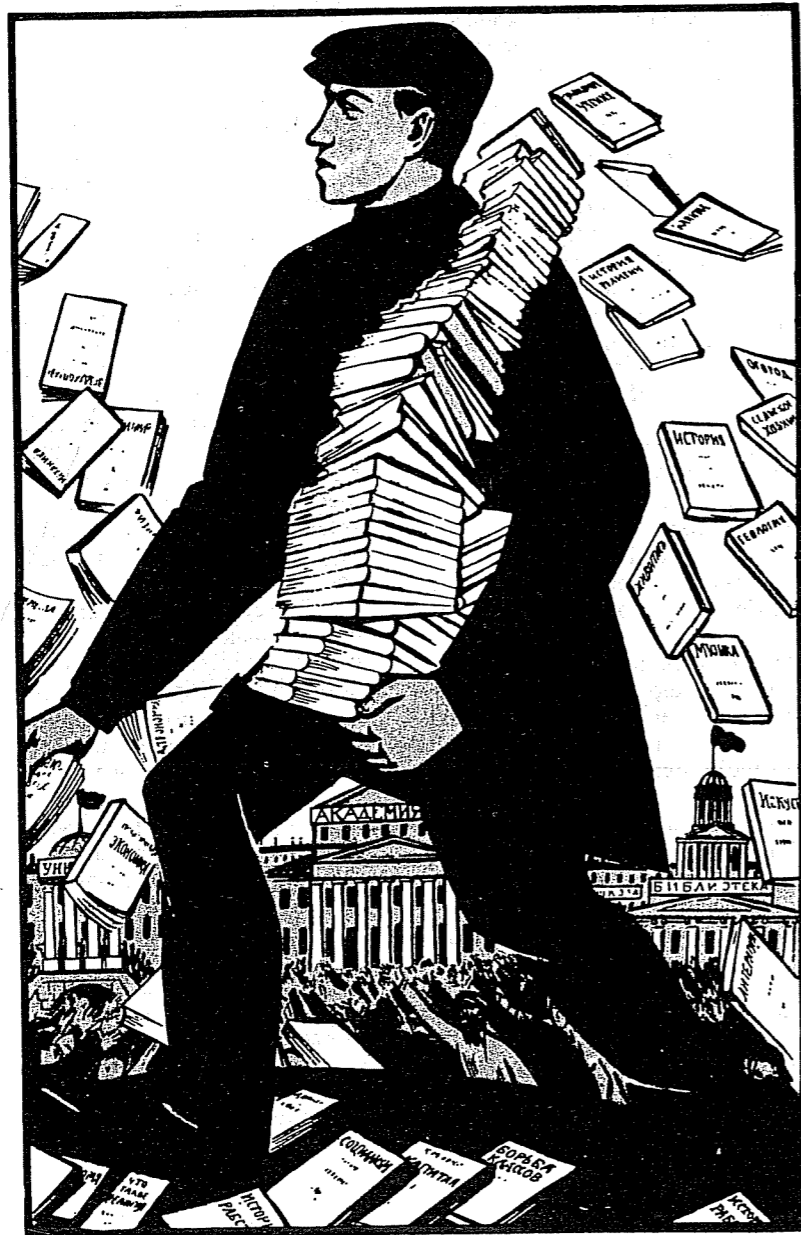
At the beginning we were unable to develop our culture at the pace we desired and considered necessary. The period of war communism, when the proletariat fought against imperialists and white guards, the period of famine and destruction and the years when the country was maintaining its revolu-

only the development of our own industry—that is more than clear—but upon our peasantry and the growth of its economy also depends, to a certain degree, the revolution in the countries of Europe. What worries the European workers—and that not by accident—in their struggle for power, what the Social Democrats utilize cleverly for their reactionary purposes, is the dependence of Europe's industry upon countries across the oceans as regards foodstuffs and raw materials. America provides grain and cotton: Egypt, cotton; India, sugarcane; the islands of the Malay Archipelago, rubber; etc., etc.

The danger is that an American blockade, say, might subject the industry of Europe, during the most difficult months and years of the proletarian revolution, to a famine of foodstuffs and raw materials. In these conditions an increased export of our Soviet grain and raw material of all kinds is a mighty revolutionary factor in relation to the countries of Europe. Our peasants must be made aware that every extra sheaf that they thresh and send abroad is so much additional weight in the scales of the revolutionary struggle of the European proletariat, for this sheaf reduces the dependence of Europe upon capitalist America.

The Turkmenian peasants who are raising cotton must be linked with the textile workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Moscow and also with the revolutionary proletariat of Europe. A network of radio receiving stations must be established in our country such as will make it possible for our peasants to live the life of the working people of Europe and the whole world, to participate in it from day to day. It is necessary that on the day when the workers of Europe take possession of the radio stations, when the proletariat of France take over the Eiffel Tower and announce from its summit in all the languages of Europe that they are the master of France (applause), that on that day and hour not only the workers of our cities and industries but also the peasants of our remotest villages may be able to reply to the call of the European workers: "Do you hear us?"—"We hear you, brothers, and we will help you!" [Applause] Siberia will help with fats, grain, and raw materials, the Kuban and the Don with grain and meat. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan will contribute their cotton. This will show that our radio communications have brought nearer the transformation of Europe into a single economic organization. The development of a radiotelegraphic network is, among so many other things, a preparation for the moment when the people of Europe and Asia shall be united in a Soviet Union of Socialist Peoples. [Applause]

## День Советской Пропаганды.



## ЗНАНИЕ — ВСЕМ!

tionary positions, could not have seen anything more than the feeble beginning of our culture program, in which we marked our steps.

Back in 1923, during the first period of the NEP, when we engaged in restoring our economic life, Lenin wrote "We are now standing face to face with the cultural revolution, and should commence to tackle this great problem."

Not until after the restoration period, not until the beginning of socialist reconstruction, did we finally begin to unfold our cultural program on a broader scale. Then we began to move forward at a tremendous pace in our cultural development. The period in which we are living, was characterized by Lenin, thus: "That will be a unique historical epoch; and without this historical epoch, without one hundred percent literacy, without a certain degree of intelligence, without sufficient training of the population in reading and the use of books, and without a certain material foundation, without a guarantee, for example, against crop failure, famine, etc., without all these things we cannot achieve our purpose." Thus you can see what significance Lenin attached to the book, when he emphasized the necessity of conducting our cultural work along such lines as training the population in the use of books. I will not dwell on the many indices of our cultures; comrade Skrypnik devoted sufficient attention to this theme in his speech. I wish only to give you a few additional figures. Let us take, for instance, the abolition of illiteracy and the extent to which the half-educated elements of the Soviet Union were provided with instruction by our educational institutions in 1929. The total figure is approximately 3½ million. Our index shows that in 1930 the figure was already 11 million, while according to the expectations of the plan for 1931, this figure will reach 16 million. Beginning this year, as you know, we have introduced general compulsory education. The desire for knowledge, and the enthusiasm for study in our socialist country is tremendous. This year the universities and technical institutes of the RFSSR alone will have four times as many students as they had last year.

The unprecedented rate of our cultural development fully coincides with our economic development, their common aim being to "overtake and surpass" the advanced capitalist countries. As regards, however, our cultural development, the slogan "overtake and surpass" must be somewhat qualified, for in its essence our culture is proletarian culture, and the forces for its development are Marxism and Leninism. In contradistinction to bourgeois culture which embraces, as a rule, only the upper classes, our culture work involves the toiling millions. Furthermore, the principles of our culture which Comrade Skrypnik emphasized in his speech and concluding remarks, oblige us, on the one hand, to struggle against all forms of nationalist chauvinism and all attempts of any nationality to dominate the rest, and on the other, to develop to the greatest possible extent the national cultures of all peoples forming the Soviet Union.

The cultural revolution in our country develops

along the following general lines:

1) Enormous social and political uplift of the masses on the basis of drawing them into the administration of the state and national economy. This is the foremost and basic condition.

2) Raising the cultural level of the masses by abolishing illiteracy, introducing general compulsory education, and greatly extending the network of schools and other educational institutions.

3) Improving the labor qualifications of the masses by means of the system of industrial education, on the basis of methods which prove most satisfactory in our socialist construction, on the basis of socialist competition, shock-brigades and the colossal upsurge of labor enthusiasm. For labor, in the words of Comrade Stalin, in a socialist country, is a matter of honor, and ceases to be a form of exploitation.

4) Extensive training of new men from amongst the toilers, to manage all branches of our socialist construction.

In addition to this, the use of self-criticism, the introduction of the 7-hour working day, the unbroken working week, collectivization of agricultural production, and the liberation of the laboring masses from the "idiocy of village life" form a solid foundation, for the cultural revolution in general, and for the widespread use of our Soviet books in particular. Our press and our books serve as a connecting link between the toilers and the party which directs all the enormous construction in our country. Comrade Stalin said: "The press is the only medium through which the party converses in its own tongue with the laboring class, each day and each hour. There is no other means of forming a psychological tie between the party and the class; we know of no means quite so flexible as the press."

What are the outstanding features of our press?

The first feature is that the press, as reading matter, aims to educate the masses in the spirit of communism.

Accordingly it must and does have a communist content, because our press is of a class character, is proletarian. Evidently it is and must be a party press. We struggle against neutrality, and indifference to politics which in a concealed form plays into the hands of our enemies. Our press is a very fine weapon of class struggle. Moreover, our entire press is uniform both in nature and in ideology. The attention of our press in every detail is strictly centered on mobilizing the masses for the building of socialism. Our press is marked by its mass character, direct and constant orientation on the masses, and not on any privileged social strata; it continues to strengthen its bonds with the masses, and to bring in new workers for the press from amongst the masses.

As for our book, it is truly scientific, because it is based on the sole foundation of the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

The great cultural advance made by the revolution and the party's policy of raising the cultural level of the great masses of the population, gave the chief impetus to the development of book publishing in this country. The first condition for the success of our publishing enterprises has been the enormous increase in the general output of books; the second, the

predominance of mass literature.

Let us turn to the development, or rather the jump in book publication. Everyone knows the status of book publication in the pre-revolutionary, tsarist period. But let us turn to figures. During the first year of the world war when tsarist culture was at its height, the total volume of books published was about 120, or at the most, 130 million copies. Now take the post-revolution period. Following a considerable drop for reasons known to everyone, our book publishing since 1924 has surpassed all pre-war figures.

Within the last two years, 1929-1930, the yearly output of books in the Soviet Union has been doubled in comparison with what it was in 1928, and almost quadrupled in comparison with the pre-war period. Let us compare the growth of our book publication with that of the foremost capitalist countries.

According to our figures, in 1929 the Soviet Union published over 40 thousand different titles. During the same period Germany published 27 thousand, Great Britain 14 thousand, and the United States about 10 thousand. Thus in the matter of variety, we have not only caught up with and surpassed Germany, but are actually ahead of all the western countries.

But that is not the only important point. Let us note the pace at which book production increases in our country as compared with that in the leading capitalist countries.

In this respect, we can produce the following interesting figures: during the period between 1920 and 1929, Germany decreased the assortment of her book production from 32 to 27 thousand, Great Britain increased her assortment from 11 to 14 thousand, and America increased hers from 8 to 10 thousand. Within the same period of time USSR increased the assortment by over 600 percent. These important figures indicate that notwithstanding our economic and cultural backwardness, our country has prospects for more intensive creation of literature than most of the leading capitalist countries. Notwithstanding the gigantic increase in the volume of book production, the demand for books is greater than ever. Therefore the opportunities for further growth are enormous. However, the insufficiency of our polygraphic and paper industries, is, at the present time, a considerable obstacle to the development of book production.

A few words now about the significance of mass literature as a powerful weapon of our cultural revolution.

What do we understand by mass literature? First of all those books on social and political subjects, which are intended for the great masses of workers and peasants. Under mass literature we also place popular books on technique and the processes of production. Mass literature further includes that part of creative literature which has mass circulation and which deals with subjects of interest, and finally, text books and school books.

According to advance data for the first nine months of 1930, these various forms of mass literature comprised 75 percent of all literature published in the Soviet Union during this period. This means that while our total book production doubled within the

past three years, the volume of mass literature increased 3 times during the same period.

It is not unusual in our country for scores of books to have a circulation running into millions.

In one of its recent decisions on literature the party made the following instructive statement: "The current period of socialist construction greatly increases the significance of mass literature as a means organizing the masses and raising their cultural level along communist lines. The Central Committee considers that mass literature should be the means of mobilizing the masses in support of economic and political campaigns, to a still greater extent than has been the case heretofore."

The foundation of our constructive work is the 5-year plan, which at first provoked a storm of derision in the capitalist countries. We see, however, that for the first two years the program has not only been fulfilled, but even exceeded, and the slogan of the party "the 5-year plan in four years" has inspired the working masses and is executed in every-day practice.

To what degree has the Soviet book contributed to the difficult task of mobilizing the masses for the fulfillment of the great plan of construction? (We issued a separate series of pamphlets explaining the contemplated changes in our economy by the end of the Five-Year plan; the series "Overtake and Surpass", "For the Fulfillment of the Industrial and Financial Plan," etc.). During the first year and part of the second year of the five-year plan, over 15 million such pamphlets, popularizing the five-year plan, had been issued. Our books for children also contain propaganda on the five-year plan. I would recommend that you look through one of our series of books for children. The book by Ilyin called "Story of the Great Plan," or the books "Turksib" and "Dnieprostroi" are good examples. You will see how we train our young generations to participate in the efforts of the proletariat to build, and we prepare them for this task. The book has become a most necessary weapon in the heroic struggle of the masses for the fulfillment of the five-year plan.

The book also serves us in our task of reconstructing our rural economy along socialist lines. According to the five-year plan we anticipated having 22 million hectares of land under collective farms by the end of 1932. It has actually turned out, however, that we already have 35 million hectares in 1930.

I quote these figures in order to emphasize that the spring agricultural campaign in 1930 was conducted at the time of a wide collective-farm movement. During the spring sowing campaign in 1930, over 100 million books and pamphlets on the sowing campaign were issued and circulated. In 1929 only 6 million copies were issued, or sixteen times less than in 1930. This shows how greatly we have increased our literature on the subject of collective farming.

Under capitalist conditions there is a great difference between the cultural and economic level of the town and the village. According to data for 1928-29, book buying in towns averaged 96 kopeks per capita, while per capita in villages it was only 6 kopeks. In other words, the town population bought sixteen times as many books as the village population. Our program aims to raise the cultural level of the

village to that of the town. This may be seen if we compare the censuses of 1898 and 1926. In 1898 only 47 out of every hundred town residents and 15 out of every 100 village residents were literate. In 1926 the figures were 66 and 36 correspondingly. Since 1926 we have achieved further success in abolishing illiteracy, and the differences in cultural development between town and village are gradually diminished.

The laboring class is a permanent consumer of mass literature. When the important political campaign for socialist competition in fulfilling the five-year plan was launched, three and a half million copies of Lenin's pamphlet on socialist competition were sold in six weeks. Who were the consumers of this literature? The consumers were those millions who participated in socialist competition. We have also begun to publish mass literature dealing with technical problems and the process of production. Our press as a whole deals with the subjects of revolutionary practice. Before the revolution, religious literature made up 13 percent of all literature published, while literature on social problems made up only 5 percent. Now fifty percent of our literature deals with social-political problems, the other half being in substance also mass proletarian literature. There is also the literature on exact and applied science, which plays a very necessary part in the building of socialism.

Our interpretation of the universe is based on the principles of Marx and Lenin, whose doctrines laid down the course we have followed in our struggle. Of 27 volumes to be published, we have up to date published 10 volumes of the full works of Marx and Engels. This edition has scientific value, and is of world-wide importance. The first edition of these works in the Russian language consisted of 100 thousand copies. The second and third editions ran into 450 thousand copies each. We have also published a complete collection of Lenin's works. 150 million volumes of this collection were printed in the first edition. But all this is not enough for the proletariat of the USSR, the builders of socialism. The State Publishing Houses of the RSFSR and other republics, together with the Lenin Institute, are now publishing 500 thousand copies of a volume of Lenin's selected works. By the end of the five-year plan we intend to issue three million copies of these works. The Institute of Marx and Engels is now preparing for publication a selection of the works of Marx and Engels. During the years of the revolution separate writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin have been printed in hundreds of millions.

Comrade Skrypnik dwelt at length on the national policy of the Soviet Government. If in 1923 Russia published books and periodicals in 29 different languages, the editions in most of these languages being infinitesimal, our present Soviet literature is published in 57 languages. Soviet literature shows systematic progress in the national republics; national minorities formerly oppressed by tsarism are now making giant strides in their cultural development.

Creative literature is a powerful means of organizing and educating the masses. Speaking of its influence on social psychology, Plekhanov compared it to dynamite. Our proletarian government devotes

considerable attention to creative literature and its publication. The tremendous growth in book production in general is paralleled by a corresponding growth in creative literature. Our mass creative literature makes up about 11 to 12 percent of our entire book production. You can however well imagine what one percent is if you consider the hundreds of millions of books that we publish.

Along what lines is this section of our literary production developing? I will not go into the details of our policy in creative literature, because this will be done by the speaker from the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers. I only wish to say that our policy is first of all directed toward making our creative literature a mass literature. Take, for example, the series of the "Novel Newspaper" or other cheap publications of the State Publishing House or the ZIF Publishing House. The minimum circulation of these publications runs not only into thousands but into hundreds of thousands, while some of the best run into millions.

What proportion does mass creative literature constitute of the total book production of the Soviet Union? Of all fine literature published by the State Publishing House alone in 1928, mass creative literature comprised 25 percent, while in 1930 it was 45 or even 50 percent.

We insist that our creative literature be based on definite proletarian class principles and problems, and naturally the proletarian works are in the vanguard of all our creative literature. Proletarian literature is becoming predominant in our literature, the greater part of our mass creative literature being represented by the works of proletarian writers.

Work with the "fellow-travellers" in our Soviet creative literature continues to be one of the most important problems. As in the past, so in the future, we must train new men from amongst those "fellow-travellers" who can and desire to work with the proletariat and who identify themselves with the cause of socialist construction. We must work in close contact with them, but at the same time we must not be deterred in our struggle against those of the "fellow-travellers" who have deviated to the right, and with whom we have nothing more in common.

We demand of our creative literature that it plunge still deeper into the problems of our socialist revolution, into the problems of cultural revolution. In our epoch, a proletarian writer is first of all a revolutionist, who must participate in the struggle for socialism. We have quite a few achievements in this respect. We must admit, however, that our creative literature continues to lag behind and has not caught up with the pace of development, dictated by the gigantic progress of socialist construction, nor with the requirements of the masses.

Another indictment is that our creative literature does not yet sufficiently reflect the life of the masses. In this connection, the proletarian movement has turned its attention to the shock-brigades and their activities. The fact that the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers and the trade unions have turned their attention to shock-brigades is of great political significance; this will direct our creative literature along new lines, and stimulate its activity to meet the

rapidly growing requirements of our socialist reconstruction.

A few words about foreign literature. Translated works make up about one third of the creative literature published here. Concretely speaking, of the 260 million quires of creative literature printed in the Soviet Union in 1929, 73 million quires were translated works. In 1929, 208 different translations from foreign authors were printed in 5 million copies. In 1930 we had a further growth in the printing of translated literature. 4,217,000 copies of translated works were published during the first six months of 1930 which is almost as much as in the entire year of 1929. Mass literature is in predominance. In 1929 mass literature made up 70 percent of all translated literature, while in 1930 according to data for the first six months, it reached 80 percent. Our policy in regard to translated creative literature is to promote the publication of works by revolutionary proletarian writers, and to concentrate the attention of the reader on this literature. Here are a few figures: in 1929 works by proletarian writers comprised 15 percent of all translated literature, or 800,000 copies. According to the plan for the first half of 1930, the share of proletarian literature must increase to 45 percent—which is equal to two million copies. In other words the publication of translated revolutionary literature will increase five times within one year.

At the same time the share of translated bourgeois literature is diminishing. It is sometimes said that we still continue to publish translated rubbish. This is to some extent true, but most of the rubbish referred to was printed back in 1928 and partly in

1929. Bourgeois literature has been cut down considerably; in 1930 we printed only half as many books by bourgeois writers as we did in 1929. The increase of translated proletarian literature is a very important fact; the present International Conference of Revolutionary Writers testifies to the ever growing significance of revolutionary proletarian literature.

The toilers in our Soviet Union are devoting much attention to the study of foreign languages. This has become particularly noticeable in the past year. I think that the time has come when we must begin to publish in the RSFSR and in the entire Soviet Union, the original works of the best proletarian revolutionary writers of Western countries.

The printing business in the entire Soviet Union is at present in a stage of reorganization and consolidation for the purpose of improving the quality of published literature. With this purpose in view, we have established two Publishing Houses of Creative Literature in the RSFSR, which enter as members into the All-Union Incorporation of State Publishers. These State Publishing companies must promote the publication of creative literature. The aims of these publishing companies are to establish close contact with the masses, surround themselves with a large group of authors, and increase the quantity of mass creative literature.

The cultural revolution opens wide possibilities to our writers. Each Soviet, and first of all each proletarian writer has the right to address the many millions of audience in his full voice. Forward, in the fight for proletarian literature, for a new book, for a new man to build socialism! [Applause]



The propaganda train "V. I. Lenin", 1920.

## Sergei Tretiakov

### WORDS BECOME DEEDS: THE PRESS AND BOOKS IN THE SOVIET UNION

(USSR, 1933)

A few object lessons in dialectics.

Huge steam cranes, locomotives, monster rolling mills bow their steely knees before the bubbling kettle of James Watt. The lid spurts and rattles garrulously, irritatingly, like an old woman. The steel elephants snuffle respectfully. They are her metallic great grandchildren. She is the great grandmother of the giants of modern industry.

In a Leningrad museum stands a little old leaking boat. Any one of the steam launches fussing about the leviathans riding the waters could blow her to bits with a blast of its siren. But this rotten little craft is wrapped in an air of historical respect as if in cotton. It is the boat of Peter the Great, beloved of the story-tellers as the Father of the Russian Navy.

In Wood Street, in Moscow, not very far from the Butirsky Jail stands a Caucasian fruit stall, with a sign written according to the old style.

If you climb over the counter, go down the cellar and down the well that stands there, you will find, by groping, a square hole in the wall of the well. You crawl through this on your stomach and arrive in an empty space hollowed in the ground. A few red bricks from the foundations of the house show here and there. There is not even room to swing a cat. A little printing press stands here.

This little hole was the secret printing office of the Bolsheviks of the 1905 period. It was never discovered by the Tsarist police, now it has been restored to its former state and has become a museum.

In the glass cases lie appeals and magazines of an extremely explosive nature. This press, standing forgotten underground, has full right to call itself the great grandmother of the Soviet press of today.

What is a Soviet newspaper? The total circulation for all newspapers in tsarist times was five million. Today the country swallows up 35 million copies. In a single gulp.

When a delegate is being elected it is usual in the course of his biography to ask—what education have you had?

A newspaper education—replies the candidate, in place of the usual high school, university, or technical.

There are 6,775 newspapers in this country. It very rarely happens that a district does not possess its own paper. I once brought back from my travels abroad a copy of a provincial *Wurstblatt*. I placed it side by side with the local district paper. In the latter

there were, it is true, no advertisements on how to improve the bust, but there was a great deal of information on repairing tractors for the spring sowing campaign. It contained no verses by pious octogenarians usually old women acknowledging birthday congratulations, but it had a description of the awards received by shock brigade women tractor drivers. There was no lyrical feuilleton on the druggist's silver wedding, but plenty to be said about the disorder in the creches attached to the collective farms. No notes on some prince's doings in a fashionable health resort but an account of the useful minerals discovered in that district by tourists from the League of Communist Youth.

In the advertising section of the foreign paper there was a lot of market news, a great number of music hall advertisements in the amusements and art sections, a great many lurid murders in the news section and a lot of gossip in the section devoted to politics.

Unpleasant facts were either weeded out, or placed under accidents—"accidents that have no consequences."

The Soviet newspaper is truth, active truth, stubbornly reconstructing the world. There are a huge number of newspapers in the Soviet Union called *Pravda* (Truth): *The Young Communist's Pravda*, *The Pioneer's Pravda*, *Leningrad Pravda*, *Proletariat Pravda*, *Collective Farm Pravda*, and scores of others called after different places and fields of activity.

The word *Pravda*, is not merely a name, it is a slogan, a program for Soviet literature in general. If a cartoonist was to draw the plain folk of tsarist times, he would be perfectly correct in picturing him with a bottle of vodka sticking out of his pocket. Nowadays this pocket is occupied by a newspaper, which has become as indispensable to the man as his purse, his box of matches or his handkerchief.

How many people take part in the preparation of one number of a bourgeois newspaper? Scores.

But hundreds if not thousands of pens go to the writing of the worker correspondence and village correspondence columns of a single number of *Pravda*. Every corner of the Union has its worker correspondent of *Pravda* or village correspondent of *The Peasant's Newspaper*.

The liquidation of illiteracy—this is the first examination that has to be passed in order to gain the distinction of being called a Soviet social worker.

The far reaching influence of the written word broadens infinitely the primitive, family horizon of the former "man of the spoken word."

The second examination—is the first letter sent to the wall newspaper—the pen at the service of society.

Every moment the best, the most talented, the most energetic of what was formerly called the "lower strata" sweep forward. Those who were only yesterday ignorant and obscure have become today the leaders, scientists and teachers in the country that is crying out for even more and more millions of educated people.

The worker correspondents form the first rung in the ladder of advance.

I was working in the editorial offices of a col-

This text was first published in *International Literature* (Moscow), 3, 1933.

lective farm paper. I saw the process with my own eyes. The people we needed were all around me, honest, sprightly, energetic collectivists in the co-operatives, brigades, in the schools and the village soviet.

Where do we get them from? From the growing ranks of the village correspondents.

A man has only to send four or five letters to the paper before he is already put on to social work and is soon up to the neck in it. And for me, the editor, it only remained to go once more into the thick of the masses and encourage these new folks who had kept silence so long, to urge them on to take up the pen.

Even if it were possible to count the printed newspapers including those issued by factories, Soviet-farms, mines, quarries, fisheries, etc, it would be unthinkable to count the hundreds of news sheets turned out on the mimeograph machines and house presses. And the innumerable wall newspapers in houses, workshops, on steamships, trains, air ships, submarines, down mines, on prison walls and in kindergardens.

Union House in Moscow was formerly the exclusive club of the Moscow aristocracy. Pushkin loved this hall. Young Leo Tolstoy went to dances there. After the Revolution the trade unions entered it. It was in this hall that Lenin lay dead. It has seen a great many conferences and meetings in the last 15 years.

Now the hall is a meeting place for books. They have come from everywhere. They speak all languages.

Tsarist Russia knew only 22 printed languages, but she used them mainly for printing bibles.

The Soviet Government has given 51 nations a written language and a press of their own.

Ukrainian literature sails a powerful ship into the middle of the hall. Opposite to it along the wall there are books in the White Russian language, in Yiddish,

Georgian, Uzbek, Tartar—but these are all tongues that we know. There are other books in the Touva, Shora, Nentsk and Yuitsk languages. Touva and Shora are places situated on the upper reaches of the Yenissey. The Nentsi are the folk formerly called Samoyedes, who inhabit the districts between the Northern Dvina and the River Pechora, the Yuiti are the Eskimos from the Tchukotsky coast.

Make haste for the voices of other nations can be heard in the land—they speak in the Itelmen tongue, the Aventskey, the Tungan, the Uigur, Mansi, Nanai, Nymylan tongues and there are more and more of them. The number of languages spoken in the Soviet Union is 73.

From the pre-revolutionary five million copies of Gorky's works we have jumped to twenty-two and a half million. Eight hundred and forty million copies turned out by all the presses in 1931; compare this figure with the hundred million in 1913. And then take the publication of church books—1,800 in 1913 dropping to 100 in 1927 and to zero in 1931.

The table issued by the Institute of Statistics in Pictures shows several groups of four people. They have books in their hands. In 1913 it appears, there were three books to every four persons, in 1927 there were six and in 1931 the figure had mounted to 21.

Whoever has been in Moscow knows how crowded the tramcars are. Yet everyone can remember seeing earnest folk propped up in the weirdest poses, reading books.

A thoughtful writer has said "people read in the train because it is dull, and in the tramcar because it is interesting."

In 1913 we consumed only 87 thousand tons of paper in the whole country. Two thirds of it was imported. And yet it was sufficient not only for us but for Poland and the Baltic provinces as well.

Now we use 675 thousand tons of paper, none of it imported. But it is not enough.

The active reader of the paper becomes a correspondent of it—a worker correspondent.

The active reader of books is drawn to writing.

A few figures. In February 1932 the writers' bureau for beginners from the collective farms began to work. In February 10 manuscripts were sent in, two were printed. In June—105 manuscripts were received and 25 printed. In September 165 of which 35 were accepted.

Some little books stand in a modest pile in the corner of the hall. They were written by shock brigade workers—accounts of their campaign for "honour and glory" on the field of the Five-Year plan.

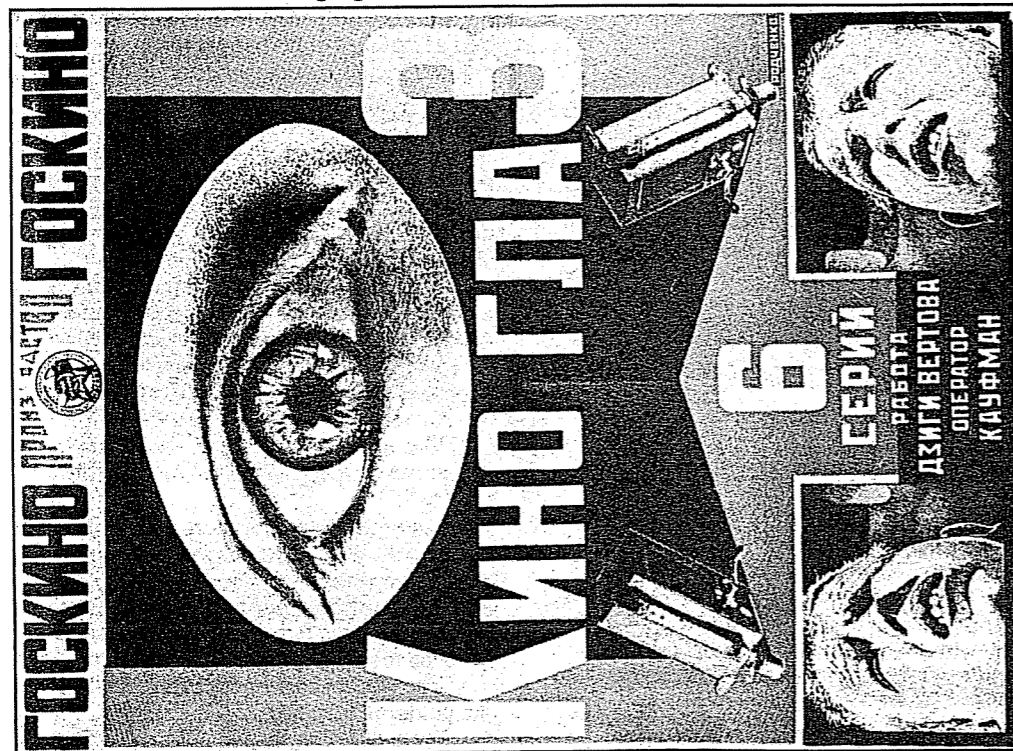
One of the books was written by a whole group of railway workers—200 people. And the echo of their modest words rings out in new editions and a huge circulation of seven million sheets. Here the printed word is a toiler, with his sleeves rolled up. Here the pen is the brother of the tractor and the lathe. Here the only words that are bad are those that have nothing to do with deeds and those are bad which have not been made permanent in words.

## EL Lissitsky THE FUTURE OF THE BOOK (USSR, 1926)

Every artistic innovation is unique, it has no development. In time different variations on the same theme grow up around innovation, maybe higher, maybe lower, but they will rarely reach the original power of the first. This goes on until long familiarity has made the effect of the work of art so automatic that the senses no longer react to the worn means and the time is ripe for a further technical innovation. However, the 'technical' and the 'artistic' (so-called) are inseparable, so we must not lightly dispose of a profound relationship by means of a few slogans. At any rate, the first few books printed by Gutenberg with the system of movable type which he invented remain the finest examples of the art of book production.

The next few hundred years saw no basic innovations (until photography) in this field. In typography there are just more or less successful variations accompanying technical improvements in the manufacturing apparatus. The same happened with a second discovery in the visual field—with photography. As soon as we give up assuming a complacent superiority over everything else, we must admit that the first Daguerrotypes are not primitive artifacts needing improvements, but the finest photographic art. It is shortsighted to suppose that machines, i.e. the displacement of manual by mechanical processes, are basic to the development of the form and figure of an artifact. In the first place, the consumer's demand determines the development, i.e. the demand of the social strata that provide the 'commissions'. Today, this is not a narrow circle, a thin cream, but 'everybody', the masses. The idea moving the masses today is called materialism, but dematerialization is the characteristic of the epoch. For example, correspondence grows, so the number of letters, the quantity of writing paper, the mass of material consumed expand, until relieved by the telephone. Again, the network and material of supply grow until they are relieved by the radio. Matter diminishes, we dematerialize, sluggish masses of matter are replaced by liberated energy. This is the mark of our epoch. What conclusions does this imply in our field?

This text was originally published in the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (Mainz), 1926-1927. It was translated and published in English in the *New Left Review* (London), 41, January-February 1967, where it was prefaced by a short article on the author and his ideas. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



Poster for Dziga Vertov's film "Cinema Eye", 1924 (by Alexander Rodchenko).

I draw the following analogy

<i>Inventions in the field of verbal traffic</i>	<i>Inventions in the field of general traffic</i>
Articulated language.....	Upright gait
Writing.....	The wheel
Gutenberg's printing-press...	Carts drawn by animal power
?.....	The automobile
?.....	The aeroplane

I have produced this analogy to prove that so long as the book remains a palpable object, i.e. so long as it is not replaced by auto-vocalizing and kinovocalizing representations, we must look to the field of the manufacture of books for new basic innovations in the near future, so that the general level of the epoch can be reached in this field.

There are signs to hand suggesting that this basic innovation is likely to come from the neighbourhood of the collotype. Here we have a machine which captures the subject matter on a film and a press which copies the negative of the material on to sensitive paper. Thus the frightful weight of the subject matter and the bucket of dye is omitted, so that once again we have dematerialization. The most important thing here is that the mode of production of words and pictures is included in the same process: photography. Up till now photography is that mode of expression which is most comprehensible. We have before us the prospect of a book in which exposition has priority over letters.

We know of two kinds of writing: one sign for each concept—hieroglyphic (modern Chinese): and one sign for each sound—alphabetic. The progress of the alphabetic over the hieroglyphic mode is only relative. Hieroglyphics are international. This means that if a Russian, a German or an American fixes the sign (picture) of a concept in his mind he can read Chinese or Egyptian (soundlessly), without learning the language, for language and writing are always one creation as far as he is concerned.

We may conclude that:

1. the hieroglyphic book is international (at least potentially)
2. the alphabetic book is national, and
3. the book of the future will be non-national; for it needs the least education to understand it.

There are today two dimensions to the word. As sound it is a function of time; as exposition, of space. The book of the future must be both. This is how to overcome the automatism of the contemporary book. A world-view which has become automatic ceases to exist in our senses, so we are left drowning in a void. The dynamic achievement of art is to transform the void into space, i.e. into a unity conceivable for our senses.

An alteration in the structure and mode of language implies a change in the usual appearance of the book. Before the War, printed matter in Europe was appropriately enough converging in appearance in every country. A new optimistic mentality laying stress on immediate events and the fleeting moment underlay the origins in America of a new form of printing. They began to modify the relation of word and illustration in

1. The June 1917 number of *Neue Jugend* (Berlin) was described as 'Prospectus for the little Grosz portfolio', published that autumn. The typography was by John Heartfield.

exposition into the direct opposite of the European style. The highly developed technique of facsimile-electrotype (half-tone blocks) was especially important for this development; thus photo-montage was born.

After the War, sceptical and stunned Europe marshalled a screaming, burning language: all means must be used to maintain and assert oneself. The catchwords of the epoch were 'attraction' and 'trick'. The new appearance of the book was characterized by:

1. broken-up setting
2. photomontage and typomontage

These facts, which are the basis for our predictions, were already foreshadowed before the War and our Revolution. Marinetti, the siren of Futurism, also dealt with typography in his masterly manifestos. In 1909 he wrote:

The book will be the futurist expression of our futurist consciousness. I am against what is known as the harmony of a setting. When necessary we will use three or four colours to a page, and 20 different typefaces. E.g. we shall represent a series of uniform, *hasty*, perceptions with *cursive*, a **scream** will be expressed in bold type and so on. So a new painterly typographic representation will be born on the printed page.

Many of today's creations do not go beyond this demand. I should like to stress that Marinetti does not call for playing with form as form, but asks rather that the action of a new content should be intensified by the form.

Before the War the notion of the simultaneous book was also proposed and, in a sense, realized. This was in the Poem of Blaise Cendrars, typographically conceived by Sonja Delaunay-Terk. It is a foldable strip of paper 5 feet long—an attempt at a new book-form for poetry. The lines of poetry are printed in colour, with colours always discontinued in the content and changed into others.

In England during the War the Vortex group published their magazine *Blast!* in a crude, elementary style, using almost only unrelieved capitals, a style which has become the token of all modern international printing. In Germany, the 1917 Prospectus of the little *Neue Jugend* Portfolio<sup>1</sup> is an important document of the new typography.

The new movement which began in Russia in 1908 bound painter and poet together from the very first day; hardly a poetry book has appeared since then without the collaboration of a painter. Poems have been written with the lithographic crayon and signed. They have been cut in wood. Poets themselves have set whole pages. Thus the poets Khlebnikov, Kruchenich, Mayakovski, Asseeyev have worked with the painters Rosanova, Goncharova, Malevich, Popova, Burlyuk, etc. They did not produce select, numbered, de luxe editions, but cheap unlimited volumes, which today we must treat as popular art despite their sophistication.

In the Revolutionary period a latent energy has concentrated in the younger generation of our artists, which can only find release in large-scale commissions. The audience has become the masses, the semi-literate masses. With our work the Revolution has achieved a colossal labour of propaganda and enlightenment. We ripped up the traditional book into single pages, magnified these a hundred times, printed them in colour and stuck them up as posters in the

streets. Unlike American posters, ours were not designed for rapid perception from a passing motor-car, but to be read and to enlighten from a short distance. If a series of these posters were today to be set in the size of a manageable book, in an order corresponding to some theme, the result would be most curious. Our lack of printing equipment and the necessity for speed meant that, though the best work was hand-printed, the most rewarding was standardized, lapidary and adapted to the simplest mechanical form of reproduction. Thus State Decrees were printed as rolled-up illustrated leaflets, and Army Orders as illustrated pamphlets.

At the end of the Civil War (1920), we had the opportunity to realize our aims in the field of the creation of new books, in spite of the primitiveness of the mechanical means at our disposal. In Vitebsk, we brought out five issues of a magazine called *Unovis*, printed by typewriter, lithography, etching and linocut.

As I have already written: 'Gutenberg's Bible was only printed with letters. But letters alone will not suffice for the handing down of today's Bible. The book finds its way to the brain through the eyes, not through the ears; light waves travel much faster and more intensely than sound waves. But humans can only speak to each other with their mouths, whereas the possibilities of the book are multi-form.'

With the advent of the period of reconstruction in 1922, the production of books also rose rapidly. Our best artists seized on the problem of book production. At the beginning of 1922 I and the writer Ilya Ehrenburg edited the periodical *Veshch-Gegenstand-Objet* which was printed in Berlin. Access to the most developed German printing techniques enabled us to realize some of our ideas about the book. Thus we printed a picture-book *The Story of Two Squares*, which we had finished in our productive period of 1920, and the *Mayakovski-Book* which made even the form of the book corresponding to the particular edition a functional structure. At the same time our artists were exploring the technical possibilities of printing. The State Publishing House and other printing establishments put out books which were shown, and appreciated, at several international exhibitions in Europe. Comrades Popova, Rodchenko, Klutis, Stepanova and Gan devoted themselves to book design. Some worked directly in the printshop with the compositors and presses (Gan, *et al.*). The growing esteem in which book design is held is indicated by the practice of listing on a special page the names of all the compositors and finishers concerned with the book. This means that there has grown up in the print-shops a stratum of workers who have developed a conscious relation to their craft.

Most of the artists produce montages, that is, lay out photographs and suitable captions together on a page which is then made into a block for printing. Thus is conceived a form of undeniable power, apparently very simple to handle and therefore easily diverted into banality, but in skilful hands extremely fruitful as a means to visual poetry.

At the outset we said that the expressive power of each artistic innovation is unique and has no development. The innovation of easel-painting made

great works of art possible, but it has now lost this power. The cinema and the illustrated weekly have succeeded it. We rejoice in the new means which technique has put into our hands. We know that a close relation with the actuality of general events, the continuing heightening of the sensitivity of our optic nerves, the record-breaking speed of social development, our command over plastic material, the reconstruction of the plane and its space and the simmering force of innovation have enabled us to give the book new power as a work of art.

Of course, today's book has not found a new overall structure, it is still a single volume with a cover, a back and pages 1,2,3,... The same is true of the theatre. Even our most modern drama plays in a theatre like a peepshow, with the public in the stalls, in boxes and in rows in front of the curtain. But the stage has been cleared of all the paraphernalia of painted scenery, the stage-space as a painted perspective has perished. A three-dimensional physical space has been born in the same peepshow, allowing maximal unfolding of the fourth dimension, living movement. Within the book modernism may not yet have gone so far, but we must learn to see the tendency.

Notwithstanding the crisis which book production, like every other area of production, is undergoing, the avalanche of books grows with every passing year. The book is the most monumental art form today; no longer is it fondled by the delicate hands of a bibliophile, but seized by a hundred thousand hands. This illuminates the hegemony of the illustrated weekly in this transition period. We should add to the number of illustrated weeklies the flood of children's picture-books. Our children's reading teaches them a new plastic language, they grow up with a different relation to the world and space, to image and colour, so they are preparing for a new kind of book. But we shall be satisfied if we can conceptualize the epic and lyric developments of our times in our form of book.

**Tudo Kurtovic**

## CURRENT QUESTIONS ON THE INFORMATION SYSTEM IN YUGOSLAVIA

(Yugoslavia, 1973)

I.

It has been borne out by the Yugoslav experience that a clear and definite point of departure, a distinct idea of what is wanted and what can be achieved, of the objectives and interests on which the system rests and for which it strives, are needed for the successful editing of newspapers, radio and television broadcasts and for the proper functioning of information media and the system of information generally. Whenever this was not kept in mind in discussions of this or other political questions, it was easier for tendencies leading to erroneous conclusions and to compromises to assert themselves. This was particularly characteristic of the behaviour of certain organizations in the struggle against nationalistic ideas, against other trends and manifestations running counter to self-management and socialism, against pseudo-liberal conceptions. This is all the more meaningful in view of the importance of information media in the democratic socialist conditions of this country, for obviously the information media here are responsible in considerable degree for the formation of public opinion. But we have not been practical enough in our approach to this matter. I do not mean to imply that the manner in which the information media function is exclusively responsible for the formation of public opinion. Other elements are also decisive in their impact: the objective situation in society, and the activities of the subjective socialist forces in their entirety. But, by the same token, the participation of socially conscious forces in the information media is enormously important. And I should particularly like to stress that the further our society develops along the lines of self-management, the more the role of the working class in it strengthens, meaning the more socialist self-management democracy gains ground, the more will their significance increase, for the system of self-management in itself requires the dispensation of the most objective, clear and timely information possible, information that — to put it simply — gives the whole truth and comprehensive assessments.

Consequently, in discussing the situation and the position which is our starting point for consideration of the tasks and courses of information activities, we must be wary of piecemeal or oversimplified appraisals. This should not be taken to mean that we cannot discuss partial problems from the standpoint of the

This text was first published in *Socialist Thought and Practice* (Belgrade), 56, September 1973.

positions of principle that have been adopted and assess these problems. When arrived at in this manner, such assessments will be integral regardless of the fact that they might apply to only one aspect of the problem. It appears to me that a great deal still remains to be done at this level in the fight for a more comprehensive conception of the system of information, although in saying this I do not underestimate what has been accomplished so far, as that is considerable. However, social relationships in Yugoslavia have developed to such an extent that radical changes are called for in the information system. And it needs to be said that we shall succeed in this only if we start with the positions and assessments of the League of Communists (LCY) on this matter. The statements made by President Tito on various occasions indicate the importance of these questions to which he has always accorded great attention and significance.

Taking the general, common position as its point of departure, every editorial office must work out its own approach which, under our social conditions, should not collide with the general assessments of the League of Communists as a whole. This approach must be quite concrete and specific, that is, it must contain an elaboration of our general position and policy. On this basis, every editorial office should work out its position and its approach in the struggle to implement the policy of the League of Communists. Basically, this conception is identifiable with the policy of the LCY but cannot be regarded simply as the mere rewriting of that policy. This would make it schematic and thereby uncreative; it would not be concrete enough to enable the newspapers to conduct actions and to be a useful factor in society, that is, it would not permit them independently to participate in the struggle. Practice offers the best evidence of how insipid such behaviour can be in this as in all other fields. The development of such a position in each editorial office necessitates a comprehensive approach and it must always express the views arrived at in the editorial and management bodies of newspapers, radio and television.

In working out this concept, it must be stated at the outset that a newspaperman, or an editorial office, or the organizations of the League of Communists in various editorial offices, must not be swayed by individual or group opinions as this would reflect a lack of independence on their part. It would be tantamount to an approach lacking in principle which could easily lead all those involved to follow the opinions of forces opposed to self-management, either those of a dogmatic bent or those that tend to the bourgeois restoration. And as is common knowledge, such opinions are put forward in this country also in the name of socialism. It even happened that for a time certain editorial offices and other information media fell prey to such opinions, either tainted by nationalism or displaying pseudo-liberal leanings. But not only that. This is a matter of the entire attitude towards the common interest of the peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia and towards the vital interests of the society of self-management. The further development evolved, and the greater the success recorded by the League of Communists in its struggle for the victory of self-management, the

greater was the differentiation in the information media, as elsewhere. It needs to be said that we have accomplished a great deal but that in some of the editorial offices the fronts are still intermingled; we find the coexistence of elements that cannot coexist for long and we see that every single manifestation is not always readily identifiable. In dealing with this sphere of activity, I feel it is essential to observe that every milieu today has forces that are capable of fighting to realize the Programme and policy of the LCY although we are aware of the fact that resistance will be put up for some time to come. Such are the objective conditions of our society where there are interests that are opposed to the interests of the working people. That is why I feel that a decisive stand must be taken against the depersonalization of this struggle. Here I have in mind institutions, enterprises and individuals, that is, the standardbearers of various kinds of behaviour opposed to self-management, for the tendency behind the depersonalization is to retain the status quo, to preserve the positions of forces opposed to self-management and socialism. All this is done under the cloak of democracy although it is completely at odds with the socialist, democratic development of self-management.

There are still concealed forces who endeavour to proclaim the course followed by the LCY — and it is a very clear course reflecting revolutionary, democratic continuity — as being of a fleeting, passing nature, as something that cannot be maintained for long. I think that the stands of the LCY in this field are quite unequivocal, despite the fact that some documents left unsaid many things that should have been put clearly in their day, although this was not done because it would not have been acceptable at the time owing to the ratio of forces. But it does seem to me that regardless of all the compromises contained in some of the documents, especially those that are peripheral in their significance, the starting position of all the documents contains a message that makes for unity of the system, that rests on the integral interest of the working man and that by this very fact bears working class features. But the opponent forces also try to proclaim policy in the information media as something temporary, something that is sure to pass. It is from these positions, then, that they regard freedom of the press as something outside of the context of self-management, beyond society and above the working class, while the working man is treated as someone outside political, social and organizational structures, as a person of little consequence. The information media basically contravene

1. Letter by President Tito and the Executive Bureau of the Presidency of the LCY, a particularly significant party document, was passed on September 18, 1972. The Letter examines essential questions relating to the implementation of the LCY's policy and establishes the measures which should, resolutely and without hesitation, be undertaken in order to strengthen the unity of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, to increase its action potential and the effectiveness of its activities. The document calls for a consistent clear-cut class orientation, for a transition from ideological to political offensive, for the critical assessment of the manifestations of inconsistency, vacillation and ineffectiveness in carrying out the adopted conclusions and basic directions of the LCY's action.

him, although not in so many words both in terms of the substance and structure of the information they dispense and the positions they uphold while professing to be independent factors; all of this acquires the overtones of opposition to the working man.

In the present situation, it needs to be stressed that we have to expedite action, that we must contribute to further differentiation in the information media, and that this calls for an even broader rallying and alliance of forces. Wherever forces exist that are capable of fighting to realize what we call the policy of information media, this will help them to strengthen. Of course, where necessary, the organized socialist forces of self-management outside the editorial offices should accelerate the implementation of this policy through democratic social action.

Recently, and especially since the publication of the Letter,<sup>1</sup> appreciable progress has been made in devising and taking measures to change the situation in the information media. Conditions have been created enabling the entire concept in this field to be realized more quickly, to be more cohesive and democratic. This also means among other things fighting against monopoly groups which tended to gain the upper hand. As an idea and as a policy, our concept of information media has been accepted more or less in its entirety by those working in this sector. This was evident particularly during a number of consultations held last and this year. In places, however, this idea has not been worked out or realized in sufficient degree; there has been a deficiency of initiative and of the dynamism needed to get things moving forward more rapidly. Consequently, I feel that here, as in some other spheres, where advancement has been sluggish, more vigorous action is needed.

Our people are particularly interested in the more rapid development of the system of information just as they are in the advancement of the system in its entirety, especially now in connection with the Constitutional amendments. First of all, so that people might be better informed and also because it reinforces the country's political stability, and the faster penetration of the truth about our reality in the outside world. It also enables Yugoslav workers abroad to be better informed.

In this respect, the LCY's role is irreplaceable. It is the internal force which develops the system of information and facilitates its upsurge. Here, too, the Letter has given impetus to such action by the LCY, in the sense of its strengthening its revolutionary social role without which the system of information could not function properly, as it provides the internal motor force, the internal power, the cement of our cohesion generally. For self-management could not develop, nor could independent and non-aligned Yugoslavia herself exist without such organized action by the League of Communists.

There are those abroad who do not perceive this, or do not want to. Our development has its own clear logic and concrete platform which have been confirmed by life. This is no tight-rope walking but a stable forward march which creates a stable future. Nevertheless, some people abroad serve up their own theses to us. Thus, for instance:

— A section of the right-wing press in the West



publishes erroneous information about the reasons and conditions that motivated this country to formulate the policy of non-alignment. Most frequently, they reiterate the thesis that Yugoslavia, having found herself alone in respect of the East and the West, was forced to turn to the countries of the so-called Third World;

— Refusing to recognize the real nature of non-alignment, certain Western newspapers regard it as a dogma that Yugoslavia has »paid for too dearly«;

— Or it is claimed that Yugoslavia, in order to ensure her independence which might be jeopardized in negotiations between the USSR and USA, will turn in increasing degree to the West, to Europe and the Mediterranean, and neglect her role in the non-aligned world;

— Yugoslavia's non-aligned foreign policy is superficially and onesidedly linked with personalities rather than with the nature of our social system, the essence of which is reflected by such personalities;

— The right-wing press in the West fails to see the logical link between the introduction of self-management in Yugoslavia and many features of our revolution which would have led to self-management even if there had been no conflict with the Cominform (the independence of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the People's Liberation Movement, the firm ties between the CPY and the working class, the reliance on the original teachings of Marx and Lenin, the forms of people's government and self-management that developed in the course of the armed revolution, and so on);

— Ignoring deliberately of course, the sources and motivation of self-management in Yugoslavia, the right-wing press repeats the thesis that self-management in Yugoslavia came into being to prove that the Yugoslav system differed from the Soviet. (This thesis is not only naive but senseless as it treats a complex social system which has been developing successfully for over twenty years as though it were some sort of a parlour game. It is also forgotten that self-management was not originated by the Yugoslavs but rather that it was formulated, although in rudimentary fashion, during the time of the Paris Commune and in Marx's teachings);

— Or, for instance, the thesis is disseminated that self-management emerged from the need to assure »ideological autonomy« for the »rebellious regimes«;

— The conservative section of the Western press refuses to regard the strengthening of the role of the LCY in society within the frameworks of the strengthening of self-management and of the dominant role of the working class, but rather depicts it as a »reversal to the centralized, authoritarian system«. Therefore, that section of the press cannot unravel the puzzle it itself has created: how is it possible further to implement decentralization of the system in Yugoslavia while at the same time strengthening the role of the LCY;

— In connection with the 25th anniversary of the Cominform Resolution, certain papers and radio and television stations in the West took advantage of the occasion to »prove« that Yugoslavia and the USSR were drawing closer together on the basis of concessions made by Yugoslavia, buttressing this by

claiming that there is an "obvious tacit agreement between Belgrade and Moscow to refrain from writing about this anniversary except in *Komunist*."

It goes without saying that this kind of press regards information media as a means for serving its own requirements rather than the interests of the peoples of Yugoslavia. Therefore, our approach and that of the reactionary press are conflicting class approaches, and this effects the interests of Yugoslavia as an independent and non-aligned country. The kind of writing described above is at odds with the interests of Yugoslavia and our information media must take an energetic stance against everything that represents an attack on our interests. This is the essential difference between our own press and the other which would have its writing proclaimed to be "untainted" by class considerations, this also having been the case of some of our own pseudo-liberals.

In developing action by the LCY and applying the methods outlined in the Letter, we must take further steps and, as we do so, we cannot permit coexistence with everything under the sun. It is on this basis, particularly at the ideological level, that we are reinforcing elements of democratic centralism, developing cooperation among the forums and organizations of the LCY, and doing so publicly and openly, and investing that cooperation with a democratic and organized character. Special significance attaches in this sphere to the role of the basic organizations of the LCY. They will have to be far more dynamic in upholding the development of criteria that are integral and principled, criteria based on those of the League of Communists as a whole. The basic organizations must foster a creative approach to work, responsibility for developments, for doing away with spontaneity wherever organized action is needed. In publishing activities as a whole, and especially with regard to certain newspaper columns, the organizations of the LCY will have to forge ahead more rapidly.

Unless they engage steadily in the struggle, the publishing houses, radio and television, will not be able to extricate themselves from the position which led them to set themselves apart from society. Otherwise, they will be hard put to it to incorporate more fully into the mechanism of the society of self-management and, in essence, to become the voice of self-management, a weapon of the revolution, in substance and in terms of the conceptions they uphold.

The tendencies towards aloofness, sidetracking and dodging the basic course of social development in this country have not yet been surmounted. Recently, they have to some extent shown signs of revival. In some environments, covert forces are even acting in an organized fashion.

But I must say that neither has our action, in face of this, been properly oriented. A determined battle must be conducted by ideological means against ideas and practices running counter to self-management, against tendencies undermining the country's independence, against the depersonalization of our struggle. But in doing so, we must always take care not to violate human dignity, which deserves to be respected. Our struggle has always supported respect for human dignity and this is characteristic of our

humanism.

On the whole, most editorial offices and individual newsmen are genuinely in favour of the concept of development based on self-management. However, experience has taught us that a small number of people who have not accepted the socialist orientation of self-management can impose their views and positions, can manipulate the great majority of a collective body. This happened in situations where organizations of the LCY were inactive, where organizations and leaderships were misguided, where there was factionalism and manipulation of the press, and where the system of information was underdeveloped.

It should be remembered that this situation has not been transcended in sufficient degree and especially that efforts have not been organized enough to prevent the press from reflecting various views that are directly at odds with the country's development in the direction of self-management. We have still not overcome the tendency to look at life from the nether side, from a negative standpoint, or to assume an uncritical approach to certain partial interests. The system of information has not yet developed comprehensively. Little for instance is written, and that mechanically, about the implementation of the amendments,<sup>2</sup> and the writing about technocratic-managerial<sup>3</sup> and other groups is not concrete enough, is depersonalized.

There was some premature satisfaction evinced when the information media took the first steps in seeking their rightful place in the system and in sociopolitical life under the present conditions, that is, when the opportunity arose for them to develop more quickly. Yet, if the press is to achieve this goal, we must take a more differentiated view of certain manifestations, and also build up our positions on these questions, for this is not only a matter of eliminating the negative but rather, and in the first place, of giving impetus to the positive. It is encouraging that the first resolute ideological measures were followed by important results also in this sphere. But this should not be taken to mean that the problem has thereby been removed from the agenda. Actually, we are in a stage where society and the LCY must demand much more than they have done so far from the information

2. Amendments: the fuller and more precise elaboration of the Constitution of Yugoslavia and its amendments. The present Constitution of Yugoslavia was promulgated on April 7, 1963. Since that time, it has been amended and supplemented on a number of occasions (the Constitutional Amendments of 1967, 1968, 1971 and 1973). As the Amendments of 1971 and especially those of 1973 apply more to the meaning and spirit of the Constitution than they do to individual articles, it was decided to adopt a clarified text of the Constitution, that is, to promulgate a new one. The draft of the new Constitution is now being discussed publicly. In this article the term »amendments« refers to the most recent ones of 1973 which embody new revolutionary changes in the field of socio-economic relationships and the socio-political system, with the objective of developing self-management more quickly. The substance of these Amendments and of the new Constitution which is being proposed is not to regulate the relationships between the State and the worker but to promote the self-regulation of relations between the workers and their associations.

3. Technocratic-managerial groups: groups and indivi-

media, not only in terms of the dispensation of objective information but also in terms of commitment and fuller clarification of the movement of society. This is all the more true as conditions and relationships in the world are getting more complex by the day, which is quite natural in view of the development of society.

In view of the development of our own system, Yugoslav newsmen must improve their style of work, both in writing about the country and in dealing with events abroad. Naturally, this must be in line with our Programme<sup>4</sup> and our policy. With its specific features, Yugoslav journalism can make a contribution to the advancement of the profession here and in the outside world. The possibilities are enormous, particularly as regards writing about the self-management base<sup>5</sup> and from that base.

We must not regard the social base as something impersonal, unorganized, indeterminate, as something that takes shape spontaneously. Organized, socially-conscious forces and organs of self-management, are at work at the base. The weakness here lies not in the volume of writing but rather in the approach, in the nature of what is transmitted: is that writing socially organized, does it reflect the victories that are being won, does it offer impetus, does it carry progress, or is it undefined, fragmentary, casual or even the spontaneous reflection of resistance to the development of self-management.

In this respect, regardless of the strength of organizations of the LCY and other social organizations, especially in some of the publishing houses, all of them must be given more help in taking organized, joint action. It is therefore pertinent to speak of new forms of the organization of communists over a wider field, with members of the leaderships taking full part. But some of the organizations also need the help of society, either for strengthening their cadres, or for the solution of numerous problems, from material through personnel problems, and others.

Some newspaper collectives particularly need help in organizing themselves on the basis of self-management. The contradictory position of journalists in them frequently results in compromises in the houses themselves and in writing about what is happening outside those houses. This duality and this

duals in the economy and administration who oppose the development of production relationships on the basis of self-management and strive for a monopoly hold on the disposal of income in their entirety.

4. Programme: this refers to the basic strategic document of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The Programme of the LCY was adopted at the Seventh Congress, held April 22-26, 1958, in Ljubljana. The Programme establishes the immediate and long-term objectives of social action by the communists of Yugoslavia in the struggle to promote the socialist society of self-management.

5. The self-management base: a term usually used to designate the base from which derives the entire socio-economic and political system of Yugoslavia. This base comprises the direct producers and their inalienable right to self-management, the basic organizations of associated labour in which the workers directly exercise their self-management right to manage their labour and the conditions of their labour, and to decide on the disposal of the results of their labour, in working with socialized means of production.

contradictory position compels us to think about the ways we can assist them in solving certain problems that have accumulated in these areas.

In referring to the objective nature of writing, I think that this depends in substantial measure on the commitment of journalists and editorial offices, which varies from one organization to the other, from one house to the other, ranging from the very committed to the practically impersonal. Under the present conditions, when our republics must be better informed about each other, this can in itself cause some harm. For, the information media are an extremely sensitive part of the political system, or rather of the social system in its entirety, whereas the political system in itself contains elementary solutions of some aspects of the national question. All of this is interlaced and bound up together.

There is particularly no room for satisfaction with the way cultural columns or newspapers are published. Partially, the fault lies with the people who work in them but it is not theirs alone; they are frequently under the sway of the will and tastes of certain closed groups which, as a rule, lead the writers and their paper into a position of isolation both in relation to the environment in which they function and to social developments. Some of these persons even try to monopolize the written word. This is a matter of no mean importance both in the publishing houses and in publishing activities generally.

I think that the struggle for the development of an internal policy, writing about internal policy in the information media, and the effort to develop the system of information as a whole, means moving in the direction of the further democratization of our press. This does not mean the preaching of democracy for a narrow circle but rather democracy for the organized working people. This is also the key to solving certain other problems connected with the circulation of papers, with the audience of radio and TV programmes, and so on.

In a word, in making a political assessment of the situation in the information media, we may say that flagrant excesses are already a thing of the past, that we have achieved meaningful results, but that we have not assured, through systematic and organized struggle by communists, through the influence of society and the activation of the working people in this field, that such manifestations will not be repeated, in given situations. Obviously, this needs to be done.

A major problem in journalism in this country is the improvement of the structure of cadres, which can be solved by taking on well-educated, professionally trained persons who are ideologically committed and who are capable of understanding social trends. This refers particularly to the need for a significant increase in the number of newspapermen in view of the fact that the number of newspapers and broadcasts has grown and that the system itself is in the process of development. Adequate planning is needed on the part of all media — newspapers, radio and television — regardless of whether they are at regional, republican or federal level. Certain educational institutions and bodies which engage in research of public opinion should be linked up with them through the medium of special communities, which is now not the

case. The question of appropriate documentation and statistical services is a timely one, for this would enable our journalists to do their work more soundly and analytically and in turn promote the fight against the kind of narrow pragmatism that now hamstringing the work of newspaper offices. Public opinion research centres would thereby also function more effectively, for they would apply themselves to the basic trends of social developments in a less ephemeral fashion. Journalistic and scientific institutions in this field would thus find their work eased considerably. Obviously, under such circumstances, newspapers concerned with specific fields which are presently not developed sufficiently would be able to make better headway; this refers, for instance, to youth papers, papers for the rural districts, and also certain publications intended for the broad reading public. It is indispensable for a common basis to be created so that all this may be achieved. This would also facilitate the development of a more integral theory of Yugoslav journalism which has its own specific features. However this does not mean to say that we neglect world experience. On the contrary, only those who are capable of creatively developing their own style are capable of accepting the achievements of others. However, Yugoslav journalism is specific just as social development in Yugoslavia is specific. Evidently, we shall have to hasten to develop a theory of Yugoslav journalism which will take as its point of departure the common interest of Yugoslavia and the interests of the individual nations belonging to the Yugoslav socialist community. For the system of information as part of our whole system also reflects those interests. Thus, the theory of Yugoslav journalism, based on our experience so far, will keep uppermost in mind the national interest and the interests of the working man. Obstacles in the way of this are, equally, pseudoliberal views on liberty and on supra-class and supra-national categories, and dogmatic views which make journalism a mere transmission belt. Keeping all these elements in mind, a rightful place will also be found for the traditions and heritages which are highly variegated in this country and are reflected today in the efforts being made by different newspapers and magazines.

## II.

All that is taking place in society, in the League of Communists and in its leaderships, influences the situation in the field of information and publishing activities. But it would be an error to use this to justify everything happening in this field. For there are also autonomous trends in this field and the latter itself wields an influence on what goes on in society. It is evident that information and publishing activities are independent domains and that they treat problems independently. Sometimes they depict matters in a way that is not true to life. When we speak of past and present negative manifestations, we sift out those that were inspired by the factional activities of certain leaderships and organizations from those that began to acquire an autonomous logic and to manifest themselves as autonomous trends, this being the consequence of negative influence that finds expression in a negative type of growing autonomy. For instance, attempts were even made to create a con-

tinuity with the pre-war situation. Nor was the endeavour to restore certain pre-war, pro-fascist newspapers a mere coincidence.

This is the form in which class resistance finds expression in the information media and publishing activities. Ignoring this independent dimension would among other things mean ignoring class resistance in its broader sense. The thesis that ideological orientation suffices for conducting the struggle, or that the struggle can be waged disconnectedly, is barren phrasemongering and escape from the real struggle and particularly from the personalized struggle for socialist development on the basis of self-management. Also along these lines were the theories about commercialization<sup>6</sup> about an abstract market that negates planning.

Such an approach naturally meant sidestepping the course of self-management, coming to terms with all manner of things, propagating anything that came along. This approach made it possible to react emotionally and on the basis of first impressions; to hide behind screens of various kinds. Today, these forces, justifying yesterday's situation and secretly hoping for its restoration, say that "all this will pass away" and that we should "wait for better times". According to them, the "stands of the LCY are rigid" and "positions must be preserved at all costs". But obviously, further differentiation cuts the ground from under the feet of these forces, both in the information media and in society at large. In a word, the forces which, pursuing the thesis that the press should be independent, placed the newspapers in the position of becoming a power unto themselves, — now that they are threatened — want to proclaim the press not a factor or judge of the situation, but something that simply transmits what is being done and therefore sheds all responsibility from itself. I do not think it is in the interests either of the press or of society to tolerate such concepts, such viewpoints, for this provides asylum for the class enemy and enables him to retain his positions.

Compromises on this plane lead nowhere and simply serve to support quasi-objective writing which is basically unobjective. Compromises maintain the demagoguery which is still present on the pages of many newspapers and among certain individuals. It renders possible the continuation of the type of writing that negates everything, it fosters a messianic attitude towards various parts of the country, likens our parliamentary development and the Constitution to the development of bourgeois parliamentarism and, as it is not the same, opposes it or searches for different solutions. The demagogues are annoyed at our degree of organization, unity and effectiveness. They try to obstruct our initiatives, they strive against the achievement of agreement, twist and misuse the facts, quote out of context and present one-sided information. In the future, we must deal even more

6. Commercialization: the doctrine of economic activity and production for the market regardless of authentic human requirements and value orientation; the attitude based on the «lucrative» quality of commodities irrespective of use value; the system of values in which things and the «possessive spirit» hold the highest place in the hierarchy of values.

determinedly with them and with the opportunism in editorial offices that tolerates such behaviour.

The struggle for objectivity in the interests of the working class includes the struggle for the free circulation of information and against all concealment. The information media and the interests of the working people are not in conflict when it is a matter of interpreting their problems. Along these lines, the working man, the organized social structures and the LCY aspire to, and promote full objectivity and commitment.

We must develop a school of writing whose motto is truth. We should not touch up results or give the real state of affairs a glossy finish; what we must do is observe everything in an objective committed manner. That is why newsmen must be informed accurately and on time about everything. In this country it was never a question of what could or could not be written; rather it was a question of how to write about things, of whether the writing was objective and committed. I think this is equally significant in its application to various forums (the workers' councils, the basic organizations of associated labour, the communities of interest). As far as writing goes, the basic thing is for it to deal with current topics, with what our policy stands for, with the interests of the working class. This is equally applicable to forums and to the working man. Everything must be depicted objectively and in its true light. I think it is extremely important for objective writing to find expression in all fields and all forms. And I should particularly like to stress that in this respect we must not neglect a single broadcast, a single text. To write thus means to be well-informed, to be abreast of what is going on, to be in a position to put data and opinions to the test. To write objectively, does not mean to write neutrally, that is, without an attitude of one's own. If one lives and works outside of the framework of life and life's problems, then one cannot write objectively. Clearly, a journalist is not an arbiter, but neither can he be uninvolved. Working people in this country refuse to accept preaching and unobjective writing, and there is still some of both in the present writing. A determined stand must be taken against the patronizing attitude toward manual workers and against attempts to confront this section of the working class with other sections. Our journalism must reject everything that is defeatist and everything that tries to dissociate itself from the basic course of life, that wants to avoid the organized structures of the working people, that endeavours to regard the working man as a "small", unprotected, being apart; that looks upon business interests as profiteering. In all this, the journalist must be involved. If he is a journalist, he must discharge his duty to society, but he must also go about his work professionally. Unless both these aspects of his work are represented, he cannot be a good newspaperman.

## III.

Everything that I have underlined about the situation in the press is closely connected with the development of the system of information as a whole, and particularly with its various parts. Certain problems relating to the system as such are becoming extremely important in this respect. In the first place,

the concept of the journal, which is also the organ of a given political body or institution, and which has been retained in this country, has still not been elaborated adequately. Although we have said that the organ-type of journal is not a bulletin and that it is under obligation to follow the line of its founder, this does not suffice. Obviously, we must work this out more fully and concretely, both in principle and in the documents that regulate relations between founder and journal. The concept of "organ" implies that the latter must reflect the policy of the founder and the policy pursued in the given field in general; not, however, blind forces and resistance to self-management but rather socialist endeavours, socialist practice and struggle. It should, of course, be added that such a journal cannot behave like a transmission belt. This means that the organ-type of journal must have an adequate socialist orientation, that it must be committed to the struggle for the implementation of what we term the policy in that particular sphere.

But in speaking of the organ-type of journal it needs to be said that this institution cannot be treated in isolation, as the formal, legally established right of anyone.

Where bodies of the Federation are the founders of a journal, there is a multiple obligation. In the first place, it should reflect the common interests and the policy of the Federation, the policy agreed upon at federal level for a certain sphere of activity; but it must also provide objective information about the preoccupations of the republics and provinces. These media should pay special attention to events in the outside world, and should present the truth about trends in this country to the world. In recent years, some such journals, having withdrawn completely from this type of activity, cannot now find their bearings. The tasks facing them are indisputably important ones and they must set about them discharging them more quickly. Their role is a significant one and the system of information could not exist integrally without such organ-journals, that is, without the role they are called upon to play. I think that we have done very little along these lines so far, although some efforts have been made and some initial results achieved. We can and must expect greater results in the period ahead.

The role of correspondents in the country and abroad is also a very meaningful one. They must be bridges linking up and disseminating information about us and about the environment where they work. They must wield more influence on editorial offices than they are now in a position to do. They must also sense our achievements and present them more comprehensively. I think that they have not yet carved out the right place for themselves. No doubt, this calls for a more closely-knit organization of the collectives of newspapermen and new relationships in connection with which many activities must be evaluated in a new way and certain things changed thoroughly.

Our starting point must be that a society in development, such as ours, has a constant need to promote criticism in all sectors, but while doing so it is also in its interest steadily to assert results, to point up what has been accomplished, so that the good and the bad sides are clearly visible. In other words, the information media, and organs, must reflect on a day-

to-day basis what we are struggling for, what we are accomplishing, what we are for and what we are against. These are two sides of the same process and both must be seen. For that reason, neither the touching up of the truth, nor a negative attitude are suitable because life does not consist of pure black or pure white. Here it is the bright side that prevails as the fundamental characteristic of our course of development and revolutionary changes. We determinedly reject criticism which supports spontaneity and decries organization, as well as criticism of all and everything, even of that which is socialistic, whereby such criticism by this very fact, objectively ends up by being unsocialistic. Such criticism, for instance, claims that the League of Communists, and especially its forums is a "bureaucratic structure" as though the LCY, with its revolutionary forces which are developing self-management and the role of the working class, has not opposed bureaucracy and has not been removing the conditions that made it possible for bureaucracy to survive. All criticism that refuses to see the positive is one-sided and consequently socially useless. It is also at odds with practice, for practice shows up what is good and what is bad. If we were to accept this kind of criticism, we should not be able to see the movement of society or the positive in the social situation. That is why the press, and criticism in the press, must rise not only against resistance to our socialist course but also against criticism from destructive positions. We cannot divide ourselves up into those who act and those who criticize. All of us act and all of us criticize, each in his own way.

Freedom of the press, and independent writing, take shape in practice, through the struggle for self-management. This involves both the individual newspapermen and the editorial offices. Freedom of the press remains inviolate if it sees the good and the bad. There can never be an excess of freedom in the interests of the working class, freedom in the struggle committed to the development of self-management and therefore we must all develop that freedom together, while at the same time safeguarding and defending it. For freedom, like anything else, is also open to attack. Our experience shows that we have had dogmatic, nationalistic and pseudo-liberal attacks on freedom of the press in our society of self-management. All of them tried to capture the press and turn it into their own obedient tool.

I therefore consider that the press should transform all criticism of its work into a democratic dialogue, saying what is good in that criticism and what is not, what is unsocialistic and uncommunitic. By taking this approach, the press can do a great deal to accelerate our socialist evolution simply by combating resistance and helping to make various manifestations understood better. We must look at the system as one in which everyone has his place: the press, political organizations — especially the League of Communists, the Socialist Alliance, the Trade Unions and also, of course, the Federal Executive Council, the assembly, various secretariats. On the other hand we must see to it that our point of departure, that is, the policy that we take as our starting point is the same.

It seems to me, hence, that when we speak of the system of information and of organs today, we cannot

speak only of sections of the information system, as all of it rests on the same principles, objectives and interests. In this respect we must take new steps in organizing and developing the physiognomy of the system. We must particularly try to link up the system better, but without administrative centralization. Mutual links must be developed more comprehensively on the basis of consultation and agreement on such matters as the sale of the press, and on up.

It is likewise necessary to establish closer ties between sections of the system which are not directly what we call media but are rather, what we conditionally refer to as "sources of information", although this is a term borrowed from an earlier period. Sources of information are not as demarcated today as they once were. As I see it, these links in the system are the precondition for newspapermen doing their work more independently and creatively. This is the basis for the newspapers, that is, the press, radio and television, asserting more fully the innovations and the specific features of the society of management and contributing to the emergence and development of what is new, whatever this involves — an organ or a style of writing. All of this together will create conditions in which the information media will not be treated as something outside the system. Our concept in any case precludes this as it would mean degrading the press to statist positions, to something that is either an anachronism, or a leftover from capitalist society, or from the administrative period.

With this as a point of departure, we must also foster firmer linkage among the information media by spheres. For obviously, organs deal with specific spheres. And we must, in these spheres, struggle for democratization of structures in the sense of making journals and newspapers an integral part of those spheres as this tends to democratize the structures concerned by assuring that work and democratic discussion are fully accessible to the public. I think that this aspect is frequently neglected. Therefore, when we speak of democracy, we cannot speak of the democratization of only a small circle in specific organs but rather of the democratization of the entire sphere, of all those for whom the organ is intended, including the small circle as part of the whole. The one does not cancel out the other. Actually, one could not function without the other, as either one in isolation would not represent a force. Our experience with certain journals bears this out.

In my opinion, there is no newspaper-organ, nor can there be any, outside of the system, meaning there can be no organ outside of a specific sphere, taken in its broadest sense. Tendencies along these lines must be energetically combated for essentially they are aspirations towards "privatization" — toward monopoly. "Privatization" is the tendency towards group ownership and monopoly which have here and there, by force of circumstance, developed into political monstrosities in the attempt to behave as though they were political parties. We have had a number of examples of this recently, and some of them are still with us. Certain publishing houses, like certain periodicals and journals — despite the fact that all of their

7. Statist: meaning administrative-bureaucratic, state-monopoly, centralized interference in economic and social affairs.

programmes proclaimed their basic activities to be either publishing or the treatment of specific problems in a manner that is not politically subversive — have attempted to be and behaved as though they were oppositional political groups, both in the manner in which they reacted to the political events of the day, and in the contacts they maintained with certain groups and certain centres in the country as well as in the way they formed anticommunist, anti-socialist and anti-self-management points and in the kind of links they established abroad. Their aspirations and their behaviour smacked of the behaviour of opposition parties leading them to set forth alternatives to democratic development based on self-management and to the independence of the country. They were directly responsible for the launching of theses about the need to oppose Yugoslavia as a self-managing community by the very fact that they opposed self-management and national equality, sought to revise the status of various republics and attacked the manner in which the national question had been resolved in this country.

The information media are, as a whole, part of our socio-political system, whereas political dailies are even very explicitly a section of that system. From this certain conclusions of a practical nature must be drawn. Unless we do so, we shall continue having disagreements and misunderstandings and this will work to the detriment of the press and political development in its entirety. When we speak of these matters, therefore, we do not and we cannot turn to the press, radio and television alone. We must also speak of the better organization of society, of further struggle by the League of Communists, matters which had been neglected for years in this field. The system of information in our society is not the simple summation of information media — newspapers, radio and television. Clearly, its place and function is determined by the ideological and working class essence of socialist self-management and the position of the working class and working people generally in social labour. Only such an approach can ensure that communists, as an internal force also in the field of information, linked together in the struggle conducted by the League of Communists as a whole, will successfully discharge their mission, their revolutionary role. Such a system of information has a positive influence on forming public opinion; it does not complicate our internal relationships; it does not confuse our citizens abroad but rather contributes to the affirmation of our prestige in the outside world. Such a system of information, organized and conducted in this manner, cannot be misused and manipulated by various groups and various personages. In such conditions, individual contacts on a working basis too, will be a contribution to the better functioning of the system.

The information media were divorced from society and the platform of the League of Communists under the motto of struggle for their further democratization. Actually, that was tantamount to stopping the struggle and ceasing militant commitment to the development of self-management; it meant manipulation of the press, and undemocratic procedures of the worst kind. What was involved here were the interests of the standardbearers of nation-

alistic and pseudo-liberal euphoria who foamed at the mouth at every criticism of their behaviour.

Our system of information operates on uniform principles, although it consists of various autonomous sections, regional, republican or federal. I do not think this is an obstacle to their being firmly linked together as the principals on which they work are the same. Solutions may be found through flexible forms, through self-management within the frameworks of the system itself. This is also applicable to sources of information. As I have stated, the development of the system of information is equally important and significant for the communes, and the republics, and the federation. That is why this system must be developed even more fully.

Considerable misunderstanding has arisen of late in regard to writing originating in enterprises and communes. Certainly this was partially due to disorganization. We must therefore, I feel, organize ourselves better in this sphere, too. Services must be set up and people found who will do their work professionally and knowledgably. Naturally, these need not always be new people who do only this work; in some places that will not be necessary as the problem can be solved with the existing organizational set-up and the present personnel. Unless services are organized, individuals, acting arbitrarily and in a self-willed manner, can misuse information, whether they write it or provide information about various events. Of course, certain legal measures will have to be taken in this sphere as the need for norms is a pressing one over a very broad area, from the communes and enterprises, and on up. In my opinion, this will facilitate the work of the press, radio and television and reinforce their responsibility for what they write but it will also call for a responsible attitude on the part of social factors towards the written word, towards the press, radio and television.

In this way, writing becomes freer and more candid, whereas administrative measures are applied only to that which is politically destructive, to criminal cases, pornography and so on. By this very fact, even these administrative measures, under such conditions, promote freedom of the press, as they clearly define and differentiate between what is freedom of the press and what is destructive. In this connection, a precise definition must be given of the obligations deriving from the relationship between publisher and editorial office, and between editorial office and individual newspapermen. This is an important issue. It will then be easier to see what is what where public opinion is involved — what is the concrete contribution of the press and what is the contribution of the sources of information, meaning, what is the objective situation, the objective problem and how can it be dealt with in real life and not only at the verbal level. In a word, we are embarking in growing degree on a situation that will get much clearer as we go along.

#### IV.

The present organizational connection between society and the press has retained its old forms in many respects. Although we have not had Agitprop sections in the central committees for a long time — as we abolished them — we have not yet set up an

organization or hammered out a concept for the more integral linkage of society and the press. Or, better said, we have not worked that concept out, although we have always had it in the form of an idea. When we say we must organize better, we do not mean to imply a reversal to the old forms, but rather a search for solutions fitting the present situation and facilitating the better organization of leaderships. When I say leaderships, I am thinking of the leaderships of the League of Communists, and of the Socialist Alliance, in particular, as it plays an exceptional role in this field, and also of the leaderships of representative and other bodies.

The organization of the Socialist Alliance must perform an important role in the entire relationship between society and the press as a front of socialist forces capable of discharging such a responsibility. Initial results have been achieved in some republics but by and large we are still not organized well enough and suffer from the lack. Obviously, we must organize anew in the communes, in the republics and at the federal level. We must set up new bodies or reorganize the existing ones so that all factors concerned can find fuller expression. The Socialist Alliance too, must supplement, organize and knit these ties more closely so as to be able to follow trends on a daily basis, to reinforce the reciprocal influence, making it possible to perceive the whole and the parts and to create an organization assuring free, but engaged and objective writing about everything that goes on in this country and seeing to it that the information media do not bypass the interests of the working people in any field, which is still the case in certain sections of the media.

Under the present conditions, when self-management is developing, the press has become incomparably more independent than it was in the previous period, thus making it necessary for its ties with society to be even fuller and qualitatively different. Press independence, and the ties of the press with society are not mutually conflicting, although certainly there are some contradictions in the situation. For in itself every tie limits independence in its own way, while, on the other hand, contributing to fuller and better information and by that very fact also reinforcing important elements in that independence. Unless these ties were there, and this is particularly important, the press would become the prey of groups, of private interests. The aspirations to "privatization" are similar to the aspirations of press magnates in capitalist society. That is why information media must be in the hands of the working class; this is something that is inseparable from the structure of the system of self-management and its institutions. We have had contrary tendencies of late. Practically speaking, without more stable and qualitatively new ties with society, the press would lose its independence, it would not be protected by society from various kinds of pressure and usurpation, examples of which we find today. There are many of them, from the naive requests to print photographs of individuals, or to present certain forum sessions, certain statements and so on in the most favourable light, to others. Experience teaches us that we cannot ignore examples indicating that part of the press has fallen prey to dogmatic technocratic groups and national-

istic and anarcho-liberalistic monopolies. Through its ties with the press, society must fight against such influences. Certainly, the role of the League of Communists is very significant in this respect, and in this sense I do not put it on par with the role of other factors. It has a special responsibility.

Freedom of the press is based on the interests of the working man and that freedom is the affirmation of his interests which are not in conflict with the interests of the other sections of society. Democracy must facilitate the reproduction of socialist relationships. If it does not achieve this, it is anti-communistic. The forces that oppose this actually desire bourgeois relationships, the creation of capitalist relations.

Under our conditions, fuller integration between the press and society is a guarantee of independence and of the development of critical responsibility. Independence is not, of course, "privatization" as some try to present it as being, as some have interpreted it and tried to put into practice. It is the interdependence of progressive forces in their interaction, under the guidance of the League of Communists and in the struggle of the interests of the working class. There are no dilemmas here as to whether or not we need more or less democracy in the information field.

When we speak of independence and the link between society and the press, we do not think that this should be replaced by ties between individuals or between individual organs. This is a much broader issue the concept of which must be elaborated more fully and developed from day to day. That is the reason why we must promote the mechanism that links society with the press and protects the press from the assaults and inroads of various clannish groups. We must staunchly oppose the negation of the role of councils, for if these had been non-existent (regardless of the actual results achieved in the work of the councils), the press would obviously have developed differently. We have gained a great deal from their very existence, from the tendencies that are inherent in them. We must continue to aspire to a more fortunate link between society and certain social organisms where people express themselves, on one hand, and the press, radio and television, on the other. The finding of an adequate link which guarantees freedom of the press and parallel with it social responsibility on the part of the press assumes the establishment of new institutions. That is why we must establish the kind of organisms where directors and editors, and newspapermen and representatives of the forums and institutions of society, that is, of the social and political organizations of the working people, will be on an equal footing. Naturally, this will obstruct the aspiration to "privatization".

It is particularly important, I think, to find such solutions for journals founded by federal bodies. I am thinking above all of their organized links in the republics, that is, of the participation of representatives of the republics in their work. All this will help define the criteria for writing about the social action of the socialist forces, both of the forums and the base. For at the base, too, there is much that is not positive.

I also feel we must pay special attention to ways of writing more fully and concretely about the various

nations and nationalities of this country; to the dissemination, in the Serbo-Croatian language area, of writings in the Macedonian or Slovenian languages, or in the languages of the various nationalities, and vice versa.

A determined stand must be taken against attempts to close the door to the press. For it is common knowledge that closing the door to the press means, in principle, closing the door to progress, to the struggle of the League of Communists, to the socialist relationships of self-management.

#### V.

It is extremely important to reinforce the activities of publishing, programme-outlining, and other councils or boards. They must become a bridge linking all those concerned in the information media, and in publishing activity. The more we develop the democracy of self-management, the more the work of the councils is in the immediate interest of the information media. Councils (or similar bodies), of course, under the influence of the League of Communists as an organized, socially conscious force, can safeguard the information media from group pressures. But this does not mean that they can also preclude group pressures. As the question of the work of these councils is gaining in importance, they cannot meet only once or twice a year to verify reports that are frequently drawn up without the knowledge of the newspapermen's collectives, as was the case until recently. Councils must regularly discuss daily problems and current political events. For independence never comes of itself. It must be created. A clear and definite starting position facilitates the struggle for independence. The identity of the members of the councils is an important consideration. These must include the representatives of those structures that are interested in the writing of the press, that have a direct influence on the interests, work and behaviour of the information media. The councils must concern themselves with political and other questions. They are becoming the internal force of the press. This method of working is a negation of guidance of the press in the name of forums, while at the same time it builds up the kind of relationships in which progressive forces work out their approach to various questions and fight for committed, socialist-oriented writing about the struggle for the development of the relations of self-management, for the material and all other kinds of advancement of our society. Under the circumstances, there is a growing differentiation in the roles of the editors-in-chief, the editorial offices and the individual newspapermen. They work in an integrated manner although each has his own responsibilities. It is normal for all communists in the leaderships who are involved closely in ideological-political activity to take direct and active part in the work of the councils and other similar organs which already exist or which will be set up in this sphere. This is a component part of their responsibility and work.

The councils must initiate various activities on behalf of the leaderships, democratically, legally, and in public places where positions are shaped on the basis of equal participation, where there is the possibility of countervailing all group tendencies towards

usurpation and monopoly. The councils must be organized in a fashion that reflects the development of self-management. They must discuss, politically and responsibly, the state of affairs in the country and various major problems in all delicate situations. This means that they take upon themselves a part of the obligations of the leaderships, particularly of the founders of different journals. The councils should inform the leaderships of their activities and at the same time concretize with the editorial offices the principles of policy laid down by the leaderships. Thus they promote the independence and responsibility of the press, the newspapermen and the editorial offices. The councils are the internal organic force of the journals and as such must pinpoint the tasks so that problems may be solved. By the same token, they indicate to organs and organizations the problems that arise in the field of information. In this sense, they should steer the activities of the editorial offices, define the manifestations that must be combatted and the goals and results that should be achieved. In large measure, the councils make state intervention superfluous. Moreover, unless these associations and organs function properly, there can be no synchronized, adequate work; there can be no self-management plan in this sphere, and it is obviously needed in this sphere just as it is in every other.

In speaking of the work of the councils, I think that we can also deal separately with various sections; for instance, the field of television requires a special type of organization, as the parts of programmes that are common to all are of broad interest to all our citizens although these programmes are at the same time differentiated to a considerable degree. The initial results have already been achieved. As I see it, broad activity along these lines is in the offing. I think that there can be joint programmes in many fields which would at the same time assure respect for the independence of the republics and for national freedom and individuality, while providing links where links are needed. It should also be said that these programmes would not be directed towards the Serbo-Croatian language area alone, but rather towards the entire country. Technically, this is not so difficult to achieve, whereas all other kinds of problems can be solved in a spirit of equality and on the basis of self-management.

Social management of the radio and television must also be intensified. In the present situation, the fact that the founder of radio and television organizations is most frequently a state organ does not in itself say much. I think it necessary to develop the kind of machinery of management that will protect these media from various clans and bureaucratic groups. It would thereby be assured that all values find expression. This would break up the exclusivity that prevails in certain places and make all the worthy achievements of our peoples available to everyone (I am thinking here of the working people) while assuring that activities at federation level are accessible to all television viewers. Here the councils should have a special role in view of the comprehensive nature of the radio and television media, of their influence, of the volume and variety of their programmes. A large number of people from various fields, especially

capable educational workers, should be engaged in the radio and TV councils. Representatives of professional and management organs concerned with these questions should also have their place on the councils. This is a major activity which is frequently left to a small number of people.

Something along similar lines could be said of enterprises that publish literature for entertainment. The councils in these institutions must be somewhat different in terms of composition and organization. One section of them could be formed on the basis of the delegates' principle and their work more highly differentiated so that they might, generally speaking acquire the features that are characteristic of the work and organizational set-up of assemblies.

I think that firm criteria are still lacking in the publishing activities and that their ties with society have not provided them with such criteria. This refers particularly to the criteria on which rest the programmes of publishing activities, especially in regard to the translation of foreign work. We are overly obsessed with translating from certain regions while neglecting worthy works from other parts of the world; this should not be permitted as our people must be acquainted with all the values that are being created in the world. We should hear from authors in Asia, Africa and Latin America, for instance, where events in those parts of the world are concerned, just as we must be acquainted by those same authors with achievements in art and science in those regions. As regards the identity of all those who should wield influence over policy, everything that applies to newspapers, radio and television is also, broadly speaking, applicable to publishing activities. We must therefore work for a better publishing policy, for mobilizing all forces and eliminating our own shortcomings, while at the same time relying on social factors. Cooperation with social factors is of major importance if all the possibilities are to be exploited. Work in isolation or seclusion has particularly negative consequences in this field, beginning with the planning of circulation and going on to other aspects. That is why the present action to strengthen the influence of society is favourable to the publication of more works, to the enrichment of the publishing activities generally, and to the assertion of self-management in them. Retention of the present state of affairs would suit only the interests of small monopoly groups; consequently, their objective position in the enterprises must be changed.

In publishing policy, our point of departure must be the idea that it is a component part of the entire concept of our development and that therefore no concessions or compromises can be made with various aspirations that hide behind the pretext of the need for commercial success. Here, too, we have to fight against tendencies towards pseudo-liberalism, against attempts to justify everything under the sun. That is why I feel great significance attaches to the work of publishing associations in this field, to the agreements they reach for the regulation of important matters.

I think that better organization and activity by the LCY in this sphere should reduce restrictions to the smallest possible measure, so that the role of the public prosecutor might also be reduced only to

banning explicitly counter-revolutionary tracts and pornographic literature. He, too, should discharge his task more effectively. This would leave the regular courts to concern themselves only with cases of betrayal of the country and its interests. Along with this, it seems to me that we should take a more determined stand against the politicization of the religious press, the scope and purpose of which is common knowledge. We must act more firmly against everything that is not in keeping with this.

With the system of self-management in this field developing along these lines, the courts of honour of the journalists' associations should play an increasing role. Their competence must be broader. Courts of honour should not be bound in a narrow manner to specific associations, although they cannot, on the other hand, act in isolation from them. They should function far more independently and wield a daily influence on work in this sphere. Their activities should also in part (I am referring to the courts of honour) be accessible to the influence of other factors that are interested in sound and objective information, for all of us support good quality in the press and in the publications field, generally. Public prosecutor's offices should be capacitated to perform their duties independently where there has been a serious violation of public morals, where the country's independence is under attack, where explicitly anti-socialist and anti-communist manifestations are in question and where brotherhood among our peoples is infringed upon. It is necessary along these lines to consider the competence and organization of the public prosecutor's offices and to see what legislation will be required.

## VI.

The question of the material position of the information media has not been solved appropriately at all times. There has on the whole been a certain stagnation in circulation. As regards the market, many aspects have remained underdeveloped, many things undone. Protective mechanisms do not exist in sufficient degree. The market itself is not adequately organized, nor properly oriented.

For many years, the opponents of self-managements have used the argument of commercialization, of a market that negates planning and socialist orientation, to justify manifestations of an undemocratic and anti-self-management character. The market has been glorified<sup>8</sup> and virtually equated with the capitalist in its initial form. Even today, technocrats in this country call for a free market, but only for themselves. When it suits them, they are equally pseudo-liberal and nationalistic, and this is always the case when they call for freedom to work their destruction. On this level, too, glorification of the market has been in defense of partial interests. This is the theory of the stronger who thought that by achieving large circulations they could repress the weaker while dressing their activities up in the cloth-

8. Glorification or fetishism of the market (see commercialization): the concept that considers the market as the sole regulator of economic advancement and excludes the role of planning; an orientation to the market that does not establish the social character of production relations.

ing of democracy and self-management, and laying stress on freedom of the press and freedom of the circulation of information throughout the entire area. This placed certain editorial offices in certain centres in the position of coming into conflict with the interests of various republics. (On the whole, however, the fact that circulation is so small in this country gives incentive to joint struggle for raising the circulation of all).

But while fighting for higher circulation and sales inspired by market considerations, we must also take a determined stand against the thesis that glorifies the market. For actually this is a matter of those who represent interests that run counter to the interests of the working class, who glorify everything that is at odds with those interests and then use the pretext of the market and material interests to justify themselves. The publications of various nationalistic works is also in line with this.

In many places, we were not able to create a market, but then neither did we find ways to assure the sale of the press and books by other means (for instance, by subscription or in some other way). Society has not provided sufficient material stimulus for this. Many social factors take a rather passive attitude towards this matter. The League of Communists has not dealt with it in sufficient degree. Obviously, it will have to do so for this is not primarily a question of the attitude towards sales, but above all towards the reader; it is a question of the attitude towards democratization of the press.

As regards the organization of these houses, I should like to say that nothing here can be considered of secondary importance nor can matters be allowed to take their own course, sidestepping the collectives of newspapermen. Let us take the matter of sales, for instance. This is a matter that is growing in significance in terms of the development of newspapers, and yet it is most frequently treated as a thing apart and left to a section of the collective that usually has no real grasp of the daily role of a newspaper although it concerns itself with such an important function as sales, meaning the direct practical link between the reader and the daily.

Some associations in this sphere deal with these matters verbally and in an over-generalized fashion while not actually seeking coordination and cooperation with other social factors. Rather they try to "pass the buck" to others and to make others the scapegoat. Obviously, this is not the way to settle this problem quickly.

As regards financing in this field, I feel that special importance attaches to communities of interest and that they must effect a fuller integration of certain publishing and informative activities as this is in their immediate interest. For instance, the system of education and schools and its institutions has a stake in television. Many programmes could be incorporated into the system of schooling. Communities of interest in the field of schooling must take an interest in the financing of this form of education.

We also cannot preclude the possibility of grants earmarked for specific purposes from other sources. This, in turn does not exclude greater use of loan investment; both for grants and for loans, clear-cut relationships must be established which do not side-

step the market, but also do not permit a fetish to be made of it. We must, with all this, make a special effort to find better and more appropriate solutions for the problems of the political informative press.

## VII.

Today, the written word has greater importance than ever before in terms of the struggle of the League of Communists, although I am not inclined to set one period up against another. The structure of our society has changed as have living conditions. Today, people get most of their information from the newspapers, radio and television. They read books, and if these books are anti-communist they can but leave some traces; if nothing else, the reader wonders why such things are published and by whom. That is why the League of Communists is not indifferent to the question of whether the influence of the press, radio and television is in line with socialism and self-management, or if it is a compromise with all manner of things and if it implies the coexistence of various ideologies, lack of militancy and support of interests that are not the interests of the working class.

There have been cases in various fields of socialist relationships of self-management being called social disintegration, of support being given to a centralized system or to the restoration of bourgeois relationships. Attacks have been levelled against the principles adopted by the Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AFCNLY)<sup>9</sup> for solution of the national question, and on this basis centralization and methods of command in the system of information have been called for. Vulgar fetishism of the market and opposition to planning have been pitted against reform and stabilization. And where freedom of the press was involved, artificial dilemmas were raised as to what is socialistic and what is not. Results were manipulated. The interests of the working class in this sphere were pitted against the interests of other sections of society. National myths were invoked to dilute action, to undermine the authority of the People's Liberation Struggle and the moral norms it had established. An attempt was made to favour whatever was antisocialistic and anti-communistic in art, to throw the revolution out of art. Unitarianism was upheld and the interests of one or the other nation favoured. Attempts were made to give preferential treatment to partial interests.

Broadly speaking, the League of Communists has triumphed over such conceptions. But neither here nor elsewhere can there be a maximum for the League of Communists. We must continue to break ground for the victory of the entire concept. We

9. The AFCNLY principles refer to the decisions taken by the Second Session of the Anti-fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, held in the town of Jajce, western Bosnia, on November 29, 1943, during the futile attempts by Hitler's troops to smash the People's Liberation Struggle conducted by the Partisans under Tito. The decisions were that Yugoslavia was to be built up as a federated community of equal peoples; that the AFCNLY was to be constituted as the supreme legislative and executive-represented body of Yugoslavia; that a new revolutionary government was to be formed — the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia and that the Royal Government in exile was to be stripped of all the rights of the legitimate government of Yugoslavia.

cannot therefore, on this plane either, identify the views of some individual members of the League of Communists with the views of the League of Communists as a whole. We must strive for them to take a broader view, to work out and realize the concept of the League of Communists. If they cannot do so, they will necessarily have to leave the League of Communists.

It is my opinion that our strength today is such that, if properly oriented, we can quickly solve all these, and many other problems, and see to it that our informative and publishing activities offer support to the course of socialist self-management and to the corresponding foreign and internal policy. It is along these lines that we must develop the unity of the working people throughout the entire field. Consequently, struggle in informative activities means strengthening the authority of our policy and our unity on new, principled foundations. I feel that the changes foreseen for society through the adoption of the new constitutional norms will facilitate integration over a broad field, particularly between various communities of interest and various sections of the information system and publishing activities. The integration and influence of socio-political organizations will also strengthen. The policy of the League of Communists will be manifested in increasingly concrete form as everyone in this field is interested in seeing the League of Communists do good work. On this in large measure depends further development and unity on this plane, as the League of Communists is the internal motor force of that development. Without this, there can be no advancement of self-management or protection of the interests of the working people in that field. That is why the League of Communists is the place for all those who are ready to work actively, to participate in social organizations and socio-political life in that sphere. A determined struggle must be conducted against all those who disrupt and dissipate our policy in the field of information. The LCY has adopted the principle of not imposing solutions that have been prepared beforehand, and this is all the more reason for making it impossible for individuals and groups to engage in manipulation.

On the whole, in this field the League of Communists must strive for the settlement of the question of cadres in a way that will render it possible for the most progressive people in all editorial offices and all enterprises to wield an influence. It is necessary to train the kind of newspapermen and the kind of workers in the publishing field who are able, and willing to sense where our interest lies and what should be stressed, so that the composition of personnel will assure that our policy is followed in this field. Understandably, those who do not agree with our policy will, as is normal, have to leave such jobs. This does not mean creating an atmosphere of servility. But those who are not able to work creatively, those who do not accept our course, obviously cannot remain in this sphere, as their starting position is at odds with that of the working man. Consequently, here, too, the League of Communists must staunchly pursue its clear positions and relationships. In the present phase, we must intensify this action and capacitate more independent and responsible per-

sons who will not be fearful of their own independence. We must surmount the "anaemia" that is still found in some places and concern ourselves more with the ideological-political aspect of editorial and publishing policies, and with social relationships in the publishing houses. Here we must show more initiative and the maximum engagement.

The system upon which we are embarking more fully, and the democratic centralism we are developing in the League of Communists, calls for greater information, precisely because of this democratic component. Hence the need for more mutual contacts, confidence and candidness, for joint action by the entire League. This is not a matter of confidence or lack of confidence in themselves, but of the need for good work, for good solutions within the frameworks of the system which can pave the way towards strengthening confidence and unity on principled bases. We have still not surmounted in sufficient degree, in practice, the various opinions that have been left over from earlier years, holding that the editorial offices (because they are composed largely of communists) suffice as a guarantee and as a substitute for organized action by the League of Communists.

The leaderships of the League of Communists must be included in this work as a responsible force without which the system cannot function. And if they are to operate effectively, organs attached to the leaderships of the League of Communists must be set up and strengthened. They must be made up of persons capable of assisting the leaderships.

I also feel that the question of the press and literature whose purpose is to entertain, of the various popular magazines and evening editions of newspapers, is growing in importance. I am thinking precisely of recent developments which must be considered as positive. This means a new breakthrough in our market and is something that provokes the interest of the readers. It is therefore all the more necessary, I feel, to strive for sound and stable ideological and esthetic criteria in this field and against everything that makes for poor taste and bad habits, sensationalism, and so on, and to sift out from this everything that implies a positive kind of curiosity and the positive and interesting presentation of values. Therefore, raising the level of the press must be linked with the development of our dailies and programmes. The orientation must be an integral one and guidance unified. The problem must be dealt with integrally. We cannot proclaim this part of the press either uninformative or unpolitical. That part of the press, as is the case elsewhere, needs committed newspapermen and this is equally important regardless of what is involved: political dailies, radio or television. At the same time, we must rise resolutely against monkish moralizing and puritanical concepts that strive to stifle positive entertainment. A resolute stand must also be taken against the infiltration of negative aspects of the past, and especially against the nationalistic corrosion of the course of our society, of our brotherhood and unity. For this reason, organization in this field is of major significance. As I see it, there is a broad area for work by the Socialist Alliance here and it has not by far exhausted its role.

Against the background of our historical deve-

lopment, our geographic position and the rather delicate interests of certain powers in this area, our information media play an important role in relation to foreign countries. When speaking of foreign countries, we must state that we accept everything that is positive, but in line with our own criteria. This is enormously important whatever happens to be involved: the press, radio, television, films or books. By the same token, we oppose everything that is reactionary. The system of information must therefore become a dam against everything reactionary. It is on this basis that trends must be developed both in publishing activities and generally. Frequently, anti-socialist breakthroughs have been such that some of our institutions and organizations, rather than being a dam, served as a conduit. We therefore need greater coordination on this level.

We must also transcend a great many inferior things that have lingered on, having come down to us from earlier periods. We must present everything worthwhile that is being done in the world, but we must also see to it that everything worthwhile done here is also presented to the world. Our newspapermen and others in this field must act accordingly; effort is needed to overcome neutral attitudes, imitation and copying, vulnerability to negative influences from foreign propaganda institutions. In other words, we must not behave as certain institutions abroad would have us behave.

In speaking of these matters, it should be noted that numerous attempts are made to smuggle in under the cloak of broadmindedness and tolerance many things that are against our development. It must be stated clearly that broadmindedness in the approach to problems is one thing, and sitting with folded hands and tolerating all manner of things is another. I think it is extremely important for us to overcome those forces in our society that search for people of a like mind abroad and call upon them to bring pressure to bear on us so as to win support for their positions and for themselves. These people supply half-truths and untruths to their friends abroad which the latter use to their own ends. Some research workers abroad also take the kind of interest in Yugoslavia that is not within the context of research work, that is, under the cloak of science they take an interest in explicitly political affairs. This they do in a manner that is not expressive of friendship for independent, non-aligned, self-managed Yugoslavia. We must start from the position that we want the full truth about ourselves to be known. Consequently, our writing must, from this point of view, and not only from the internal standpoint, be objective and truthful and Committed. Our correspondents and generally our representatives abroad, as well as exchanges of journalists and of publishers, can play an important role in this respect. We must be more active along these lines.

The kind of writing that discourages, the kind of writing that contains half-truths, is precisely the kind foreign anti-communist propaganda wants. It is easier for us to suppress that kind of propaganda today, as understanding of recent events in this country is growing abroad. But it should be kept in mind that propaganda in the world is spreading systematically and improving, and that in many ways it plays the role of permanent political pressure, of psychological ag-

gression. We must therefore be better organized, take the offensive, strive to secure greater resources and better techniques, so that all our organizations may be more active and effective. In this respect, every paper, radio and television station is important; all our centres abroad are important, and it is especially significant that those who engage in publishing activities keep this in mind. All this should be ensured by communists through their organized action.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM A ROUND TABLE ON COMPUTERS

(Peoples' Republic of China,  
1975)

### DEVELOP COMPUTERS ON A LARGE SCALE ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF "AUTONOMY AND SELF-RELIANCE"

*EDITORIAL NOTE: The computer is an advanced technique of great utility in agriculture, industry and national defense, as well as in science. Our national computer industry, guided by the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao, for more than ten years, and particularly, since the Cultural Revolution, has grown and established itself from zero and has become a flourishing sector of the electronics industry. This has laid the foundations for the advancement of the industry so it can catch up with the most advanced world levels.*

*During this meeting, the following truth was clearly expressed by the participants: the development and the use of computers are domains which are constantly the object of intense struggle between two conceptions or lines. It is only by holding to the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao that the computer industry can, with a great leap forward, respond to the economic development of the country. Currently, based on the principle autonomy and self-reliance, we must emphasise and give priority to more widespread use of computers, especially in industry, and increase the level of applications. A resume of the discussion follows.*

### HOLD TO THE ORIENTATION OF 'AUTONOMY AND SELF-RELIANCE'

MA QIJUN (of the "Changjiang" Radio Factory, Shanghai):

Our factory is a series of streets.<sup>1</sup> At first, 80% of the staff were housewives. But since 1972, phoenix birds have soared from our grass nest; we now make integrated-circuit digital computers capable of 120,000 operations a second. This year, a foreign specialist in information science visited our factory. He saw that all the components were of Chinese manufacture and couldn't help expressing his admiration by giving the "thumbs-up" sign. Where does such a change come from? Our conclusion is that it is the fruit of the consistent application of the

1. Street factories are small workshops established by the collective effort of neighbourhood residents. It is often housewives who form the majority of the staff of these factories.

This text was first published in Chinese in the revue *Dialectics of Nature* (Shanghai), 1975, and was translated and published in French in *Interférences* (Paris), 3, Autumn 1975. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

autonomous and self-reliant line.

When we were asked to produce computers, we were both happy and uneasy. At that time, the majority of workers had never even heard of this type of machine, let alone seen one. Some of them said, "A street factory, making precision equipment? It's sheer daydreaming. We'll never be able to do it!" But when everyone understood the blockade methods of imperialism and social imperialism<sup>2</sup>, and the consequent degrading conditions for their supplying our country, there was indignation all around. Everyone resolved to honour our socialist motherland and Chairman Mao, and to create the "machine to save our honour" as soon as possible. We criticised the thesis which held that electronics is "mysterious", as well as servility to overseas countries, advancement at a snail's pace and blind emulation of others. With the help of the Information Science Research Centre of Shanghai, and also of Fudan University, we studied and went ahead with research at the same time. The comrade-workers correctly remarked, "To create a computer, we must make a path. It is only by taking this path that we will know all the pitfalls. If we don't make a start, we'll never know how to take this road". To create this "machine to save our honour" as soon as possible, and to guarantee its quality, the old women were fitted with far-sighted glasses. "Each magnetic core is a red heart for Chairman Mao"<sup>3</sup>. They pass three electric wires through 1,840,000 magnetic cores, each as big as half a sesame seed. The welders painstakingly studied the difficulties and successfully accomplished the task which needed several hundred thousand soldered joints. When the first computer constructed by our factory was tested, to the tune of 'The East is Red', and with a print-out reading 'Long live Chairman Mao', tears of joy streamed down our cheeks! This event reduced our preconceptions to dust, liberated our thought, and showed that with a correct line, a hen's feather can fly up to the sky.

DING RANWEN (Radio Factory, No. 13, Shanghai):

Following the path of other countries, to build a computer, one must start from the stage of vacuum-tube computers, move towards semi-conductor computers, before going on to integrated-circuit machines. Some people advocated this path, and at first we imitated foreign vacuum-tube computers, under the pretext that 'it's a shortcut'. What is a shortcut? What is a long path? Chairman Mao has pointed out, "We cannot follow the paths previously traced out by other countries for their technical development. If we do, we are towed behind by others. We must break with the routine, conquer

2. This is a reference to the economic blockade against China by the USA and the USSR.

3. The workshops of Chinese factories are often decorated with colourful slogans of this type.

4. This is an allusion to a Chinese proverb, "the young calf is not afraid of the tiger" (due to its ignorance of the danger, of course).

5. Computer manufacturers have already had bad experiences in presenting old equipment, thinking it sufficient for the Chinese. This is a grave error because the Chinese only buy ultra-modern material that they cannot yet manufacture themselves.

avant-garde techniques, and in a relatively short historical period, make our country into great, modern socialist country". Following this teaching of Chairman Mao, we decided to start with the manufacture of a semi-conductor computer. In about a year only, we succeeded in manufacturing our first semi-conductor computer which served as a control system for the industrial process. Superficially, one would have thought that jumping the stage of the vacuum-tube computer would have caused a lot of difficulties and a loss of time. In other words, an overly-long path. But by making this leap, we are the masters of our destiny. It is precisely this which is the shortcut of self-reliance. Following in the footsteps of overseas countries does not seem to present any obstacles, but in fact, by doing so, one is pulled along by the nose. This path would have been not only long, but dangerous. We must not take it.

Next, we tackled integrated-circuit computers. This time, the debate was even more violent. The fact that there were a lot of young people participating in the experiments led some to say that the experimental group was like a "new-born calf" and that integrated circuits were like a "fierce tiger"<sup>4</sup>. They said, "How can a young calf fight a fierce tiger?". Of course, the difficulties were immense. At the time we had never seen an integrated-circuit computer, but we had had some experience constructing discrete component computers; and as for the integrated-circuit computers, we had already proceeded with some trial and error experiments for some time. After many experiments, the failures were transformed into success and the integrated-circuit computer saw the light of day. The "young calf" had conquered the "fierce tiger". In the light of these tangible successes was the veneration of foreign countries going to disappear? Not at all. Last year, there were still a few people proposing plans for manufacturing computers dependent on foreign-made components. The working masses raised a violent criticism, "You want our socialist factory to become an assemblying workshop for the capitalists". If we want to hold to the "autonomy and self-reliance" line, we must continue to develop the struggle between these two modes of thought and the two lines.

HONG YUCHEN (Textile Research Centre, Shanghai):

For some years, jackets made of synthetic textiles have appeared. Elegant and comfortable on top of many other advantages they have been very well received by customers, even overseas. But as these clothes have machine-made decorations, the patterns are necessarily small, and it has not been possible to respond entirely to the customers' needs, especially for export. How could we produce medium or large-sized jackets and still keep the decorations? At the beginning of this year, we pooled our efforts with spinning mill 13 and devised a weaving loom controlled by computer. While developing this equipment, we visited an exhibition organised by a capitalist country. In order to keep their technical monopoly, they simply exhibited an old-model of an electronic-controlled loom, and moreover, refused to show to us the control system for the weaving of decorations by means of perforated tape.<sup>5</sup> This was

an important negative lesson for us. It was only by consistently following the path of self-reliance that we were able to have our own electronic-controlled loom. After the exhibition, we were more determined than ever to construct this machine by ourselves. We went to the factory to learn from the specialised workers and to get the feel of the machines. We struggled without stopping for several months, and finally, before the 25th anniversary of the Peoples' Republic of China, the prototype computerised loom weaved its first large-size patterns under electronic control. Its speed and quality were much greater than a mechanical loom.

**HE NAIXAN** (Research and Scientific and Technical Information Centre, Shanghai):

Since 1946, the year when the very first computer was constructed, the manufacture of these machines has developed very quickly. Having left the first generation (vacuum-tube computers) behind, we are now in the fourth generation, using integrated circuits. The speed of operation has progressed from several thousand operations per second to several million, even reaching 10 million. As far as foreign-made computers are concerned, we must study them seriously, without worshipping them blindly or slavishly copying them. Computers, like all other techniques, have been stamped with the mark of a class in the course of their development. For example, there are many different types of computers constructed in capitalist countries. For spare parts, the situation is even more complex. A single type of part can exist in more than 30,000 forms in the US. This is the inevitable result of the anarchy existing in capitalist countries. Overseas, the majority of computers are used for the management of companies. Those which are used directly in the control of the manufacturing process represent little more than 10%. Some are still used for things like 'situations wanted', matrimonial agencies or even horoscopes, and we haven't seen everything yet. This is why, when we reflect on the manufacture and the use of computers overseas, we should be guided by Mao's thought and develop our analyses in line with the principle, "One divides into two".<sup>6</sup> We must take what is good, and reject the bad. In this way, we can profit from the study of foreign computers.

### ASSURE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH USE; RAISE STANDARDS THROUGH POPULARISATION

**KANG FEI** (Telecommunications and Instrument Measuring Office, Shanghai):

I consider that in order to develop computers on a large scale, their applications must be generalised. It is only through generalising and popularising applications, that we will be able to arrive at a real and total independence, self-reliance, and the installation of an independent information science industry. Why

6. "One divides into two" is one of the philosophical concepts of Mao Tse-tung in which a situation must always be analysed by taking into account its two contradictory and antagonistic aspects which are intimately linked.

is this the case? By spreading computers out amongst people, and submitting applications to the test of practice, we will be able to improve their role and bring out various contradictions; like, for example, problems arising from the quality of the machines themselves, their integration in the factory, and the relations between computers and other techniques etc. Thus, we will assemble a rich collection of documents and establish a favourable terrain for the development and improvement of computers. Computers adapted to the production conditions of our country could therefore appear in large quantity.

One of our proverbs says, "Small hole, small peg" If we do not generalise applications or advance through the practice of production, with what rule do we measure the hole, and with what tool do we shape the peg? There would be nothing left to do but slavishly recopy foreign textbooks. We have already learnt our lesson from this viewpoint in the past. Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and other con-men of the same mould advocated the theory that "electronics is mysterious", "electronics is at the centre of everything", and by doing so, made the popularisation of applications of computers very difficult. In the past, we did not pay enough attention to applications and simply imported foreign machines and blindly recopied them. These computers were either not adapted to the production conditions of our country, or could not be integrated into our existing material. Most were not able to play their full role and some were left dormant in a corner. This experience led us to the following conclusion: all the problems due to useless imports are essentially due to having taken the capitalist road.

To deal with the popularisation of applications, a troop of users must be created. These people will study mainly the techniques of using computers. They will also be able to participate in the conception and manufacture of new articles, and apply their powers to the transformation of old factories. Can we not imagine, in the years to come, each profession proposing an example of using computers, thus permitting a multiplication of computers? This is within the realm of possibility. Particularly with us, the electronic workers, the use of computers is at a very low level, a long way behind the development of our production. We must be determined to transform the techniques in our own corporation and to use computers to manufacture computers.

**XU CHUNJIU** (Automatic Measuring-Instruments Research Centre, Shanghai):

We cannot speak of popularisation without speaking of standards. There are people who consider that as soon as we popularise, there is no longer any standard or that the standard is low. What are we to make of this? I consider that small computers, adapted to our real situation, reliable, convenient and economic, possess a certain standard. Before the Cultural Revolution, poisoned by the line of Liu Shaoqi, people were devoted to the cult of large machines. Shutting themselves in for several years, barricaded in their own world, they were always behind the others. If we cut off ourselves from popularisation, then the raising of standards becomes as hollow as a house of cards. During the Cultural

Revolution, guided by the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao, we established profound links with the production factories and those that use them; we combined with the working masses to conceive of simple machines for industrial use, characterised by rapid installation, small investments, reduced volume and lightness. These machines have already played a role in the three great revolutionary movements.<sup>7</sup> Of course, these machines are not perfect, and still need to be perfected. But we think that the path is a correct one.

Taking popularisation as a basis, efforts must be made with small and medium-sized machines, particularly, mini-computers. Mini-computers have a vast range of applications, and on top of other qualities, are cheap. They are very suitable for popularisation. As the worker-comrades say, "these simple, reliable and practical mini-computers are like coal brought to you in winter. They are really useful". This does not mean that we should reject large computers with over a million operations per second. While popularising these machines, we must pay attention to the way they are integrated with already existing equipment. The context is just as important as the machine itself. When we use computers in industry, we are using entry and exit organs. If we compare the central unit to the brain, the input and output peripheries of the machine are like the eyes, ears, arms and legs. If the eyes and ears perceive nothing, then the arms and legs will remain inert, and the brain will not be able to attain its goal. Currently, the input and output peripheries are the weak links which influence the use of computers. I consider that this equipment must be simplified, miniaturised and brought back to more reasonable prices.

**LI MINZHONG** (Information Science Research Centre, Shanghai):

The generalisation and use of computers is a domain which is undergoing intense struggle between two types of thinking, two lines. Some scientists remain sceptical; computers being a very advanced technology, how can their applications be generalised? Experience shows that by going to the heart of the masses, through practice the computer can demonstrate all its powers. For example, the workers of a naval construction site felt the urgent need to use computers as well as other advanced techniques, in their struggle to successfully emancipate our naval industry and to create shipping lines. An old specialised worker with an education level of four years primary school, studied assiduously the basic techniques of computer utilization for more than six months. Currently, the naval industry uses computers for problems such as the study of structures, engine power, and the adjustment of models. Another example. For the conception of micro-generators, we can determine in five minutes, thanks to the computer, the optimal solution which previously took six months, The volume and weight of the equipment was cut in half.

7. The three great revolutionary movements are the class struggle, the struggle for production, and the struggle for scientific experiment. [It could also refer to the worker, peasant and soldier movements.]

We economised over 20% in silicon sheets, and lightened the labour of the workers. The worker-comrades happily remarked that now that we use the computer, it's as if the tiger grew wings. For this reason, the popularisation and applications of computers are needed by the three great revolutionary movements; workers, peasants and soldiers.

### CRITICIZE CAPITALIST VIEWS ON THE USE OF COMPUTERS

**CHEN RUPU** (Information Science Research Centre of Eastern China):

From a technical point of view, each time a new technology appears, each class adds to it its explanations, its evaluation and its appreciation of the perspectives for development. When computers appeared, each made its own analysis. The bourgeoisie did their best to exaggerate their role, pretending that the computer could replace humans, going so far as to overtake the human brain; there are still people who put forward the idea that computers could resolve the economic and political crises of capitalism. The soviet revisionists have loudly and clearly proclaimed that computers and other automated machines were more intelligent than, and superior to humans. The Liu Shaoqi, and Lin Biao current spread the theory that "electronics is mysterious", that "electronics is at the centre of everything", and other reactionary theses. These absurdities must be totally refuted.

In spite of what the bourgeoisie say, computers do no more than carry out automated processes by means of electron movement, resulting in better output, increased speed and a more developed memory capacity. As to their nature, computers are an extension of the organism and the capacities of man, and the machines controlled by man. For the thirty years that they have progressed through the necessities of practice, computers have greatly developed, but whatever their development, they never escape the control and the command of man. There are only two fundamental possibilities for computers:

—the possibility to calculate, and to carry out the four basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division);

—the logic possibility to decide between YES or NO.

The two possibilities are implemented through a programme foreseen and written by man. If man does not program the computer, it can do nothing. This is why there are absolutely no grounds for saying that the machine will replace or catch up with man. It is even more extravagant to imagine that machines can be used to resolve the political and economic crises of capitalism. Today, computers are very numerous in capitalist countries, but the crises are stronger than ever. Daily, capitalism plunges deeper into a phase of great depression and crisis.

**ZHANG JIFENG** (Jiaotong University, Shanghai):

It is very important to criticise bourgeois theories. In our teaching work, we find ourselves in contact with a small number of students who find that



computers have something mysterious about them; we understood that they had been influenced by books and publications. These are publications which, when they present the current state of foreign techniques or when they translate the works of bourgeois scientists, add no explanatory notes and pretend to adopt a viewpoint of "strictly fidelity". Of course, this information on foreign science and techniques must be known and presented, but it is better to accompany it with a system of notes and explanations. As to the theory of the 'representativeness' of the bourgeoisie, I propose that the journal *Dialectics of Nature* make a critique of it.

## Fidel Castro

### COMMUNISM WILL BE ABUNDANCE WITHOUT EGOISM: ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (Cuba, 1967)

Radio, television, movies, the press, magazines, apparently we do not know how to use them as efficiently as we could, just as we previously didn't know how to utilize practically anything else as efficiently as we could.

But, fortunately, we have been learning in these years, and therefore we are beginning to understand how to do things better. And we also hope that in the area of providing information to the people we are also learning and are going to improve.

So many things! Speaking of any one of these deficiencies recalls something we were able to prove in the mountains of Oriente not long ago: with all the publishing houses we have in this country, with all the workers who work in these publishing houses, with all the paper that they use, not one single book had been published in this country for the farmers. And you went into a store in the mountains and found books on philosophy. This does not in any way mean that philosophy is something to be underestimated, but those farmers were not about to study matters of deep philosophy. They were interested in books on agriculture, books on mechanization, books on a whole series of subjects. One day I asked a man in charge of a store what kind of books he had and which ones were sold. The answer was: "Well, we have a lot of books by Marx and Angel". "Marx and Angel?" Ah, I see, Marx and Engel."

So there were books on political philosophy, books of every kind, and we asked ourselves: "What are these books doing here?" And the problem was simply that no books were printed in this country for our farmers. Nor for our students either, for that matter.

Fortunately, this is now practically a thing of the past and for quite some time now all the books our students needed have been printed and a Book Institute has been organized that is doing a great deal of printing, taking full advantage of the abundant human resources and machinery we have at hand in the printing field. And perhaps we shall also learn to make better use of our paper.

At times, millions of copies of certain works were printed only to be submitted—as Marx would

This text was first presented as a speech delivered on 29 April 1967. It was translated into English by the Cuban government and slightly reworked by Martin Glass, and published in the anthology *Fidel Castro Speaks*, edited by Martin Kenner and James Petras, New York, Grove Press, 1970.

say—to the devastating criticism of moths and mice—since there was no demand for them and they were simply stored.

Should it surprise us then that many of the things accomplished by our people today are not publicized, when not even many of the great accomplishments of humanity were publicized, when even elementary matters of agricultural technology were not made available to our agricultural workers and farmers, and technical matters were not brought before our students, nor did our students have textbooks?

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Of course, the solution was not an easy one. It became necessary to make a decision that we considered revolutionary. There exists a thing known as "intellectual property." In these matters of property we are increasingly less experienced. In the past, everything was "property, property, and more property." No other concept was better known, more publicized, or more sacred than that of private property. Everything was private. Possibly the ground on which you are now sitting was once very "private." The houses, the land, the mountains, the sky, the sea, everything was private—even the sea, the seas surrounding Cuba, because every vessel that crossed those seas was a private vessel.

Well, these are all becoming things of the past. Our entire new generation is becoming more and more familiar with a different concept of property and is beginning to look upon those things as goods of general use and as goods that belong to the whole of society. The air, it is true, could not be said to be private, for the simple reason that there was no way to get hold of all of it and enclose it in a carafe. Had it been feasible, the air would have been taken over in the same way that the landgrabbers took over the land. But better the air in their control than food. Air was available to everyone, because it could not be bottled up, but food was not available to all because the land that produced it was not in the hands of the people.

Among all of the other things that were appropriated, there was one, very *sui generis*, called intellectual property. You will say: but that is abstract property. Yes, it is abstract property. And strangely enough, air could not be bottled up, yet, nevertheless, something as abstract as intellectual property could be shut up in kind of bottle.

What do we mean by intellectual property? It is well enough understood. But, in case anyone is not familiar with it, it is, simply, the property of anything that emanates from the intelligence of individuals, of a group of individuals—a book, for example; any book of a technical nature, or a novel.

I want to make it quite clear—because I do not want to earn the enmity of the intellectuals; in the first place, because it would be unjustified enmity—that this should by no means be taken as disregard for the merit, the value, even the right to survive of those who produce this type of spiritual goods. Very well. But what happens? Those property rights over intellectual possessions—following custom, following a system that prevailed in the world until very recently, following the influence of the whole capitalist concept

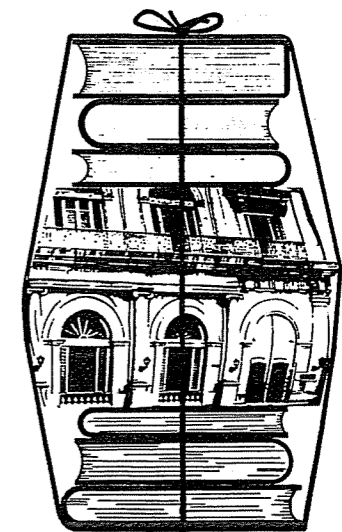
of society—those intellectual possessions were subject to purchase and sale.

And, naturally, some—and, in general, many—of the creative intellects were badly paid; many have gone hungry. Anyone who reads, for example, the biography of Balzac, who was one of the great novelists of the last century, must be moved by the poverty in which that good man lived. In general, many of the great creative minds have gone hungry because they had no backing. Many products of the intellect have been highly valued years after the death of their authors. Many men whose works have gained fame and immortality later were completely ignored while they lived.

Persons producing works of intellect have generally lived in poverty. They have lacked the support of society and have often had to sell their intellectual productions at any price.

And in what circumstances, in what conditions, did we find ourselves? We were an underdeveloped country, completely lacking in technical knowledge, a country lacking technology and technicians; a country that had to begin by taking on the task of teaching one million citizens to read and write; a country that had to begin establishing technical schools, technological institutes, schools of all kinds from primary to university level; a country that had to undertake the training of tens of thousands, of hundreds of thousands of skilled workers and technicians in order to emerge from poverty and underdevelopment; a country that had to make up the centuries of backwardness that burdened us. When a country like ours sets itself the task of recovering all that lost time, when it proposes to create better living conditions for the people, when it proposes to over-

UNA BIBLIOTECA  
NO ES UN ALMACEN  
DE LIBROS



Poster, "A Library Is Not A Warehouse for Books", ca. 1975.

come poverty and underdevelopment, it must then invest every cent, a large part of its limited resources, in construction, in purchasing means of production, factories, equipment. At the same time that we had to make countless investments, we were faced with the difficulties in educating the people.

Why? Because as our citizens learned to read and write, as all children began to attend school, as the number of sixth-grade graduates topped the 50,000 mark and reached 60,000, 70,000 and 80,000, as more students entered the technological institutes and the universities, and as we aspired to defeat underdevelopment and ignorance, we needed an ever-increasing number of books. And books were—and are—very costly.

### KNOWLEDGE IS THE PATRIMONY OF MANKIND

Because of the existing copyright concepts, we found that, in order to satisfy the demand for books, we had to spend tens of millions of pesos on their purchases, often paying for them most dearly. But in practice it is very difficult to determine exactly what is copyright; copyright belonged no longer to the authors but to those who had paid hard cash on the market for these products of the intellect, at any price, generally a low one. Those who exercised a monopoly over books had the right to sell them at the price they deemed suitable. We had to arrive at a decision, a defiant one, indeed, but a fair one. Our country, in fact, decided to disallow copyrights.

What does this mean? We feel that technical knowledge ought to be the patrimony of all mankind. To our way of thinking, whatever is created by man's intelligence ought to be the patrimony of all men.

Who pays royalties to Cervantes and to Shakespeare? Who pays the inventors of the alphabet; who pays the inventors of numbers, arithmetic, mathematics? In one way or another, all of mankind has benefited from, and made use of, those creation of the intellect that man has forged throughout history. When the first primitive man took a stick in his hands to knock down a piece of fruit from a tree, mankind began to benefit from a creation of the intelligence; when the first human being emitted a grunt that was the precursor of a future language, mankind began to make use of the product of man's intelligence.

That is, all, or rather the vast majority of man's creations have been amassed throughout thousands of years. And all mankind feels entitled to enjoy those creations of the intellect; everyone feels entitled to enjoy all that past generations have produced in other periods of history. How is it possible today to deny man, hundreds of thousands of human beings—no, not hundreds of thousands, but hundreds of millions and thousands of millions of human beings, who live in poverty, in underdevelopment, to deny access to technology to those thousands of millions of human beings who need it for something as elemental as feeding themselves, something as elemental as living?

Naturally, to adopt such a decision generally involves incurring the enmity of those whose interests are affected. Often copyrights are ignored, and it is done secretly, surreptitiously, without admitting it. We are not going to adopt that procedure. We state

that we consider all technical knowledge the heritage of all mankind and especially of those peoples that have been exploited. Because where is there hunger, underdevelopment, ignorance, a lack of technical knowledge? Right there, in all those regions of the world where men were criminally exploited for centuries of colonialism and imperialism.

Technical books are generally printed in developed countries. And then the poor countries, the countries that have been exploited for centuries, have virtually no access to that technical knowledge, when for centuries they have been stripped of many of the resources with which, equipped with modern technology, they could have been developed.

In the United States there are many thousands of technical books. We have begun by announcing an end to intellectual copyrights on all technical books from the United States. And we state our unequivocal right to reprint all U.S. technical books that we feel will be useful to us.

It is clear that we don't have to offer any excuses to justify this. We feel justified in printing U.S. technical books, entitled to this, at least in compensation for the harm they have tried to do this country. Well, then, we will bypass copyright in relation to the United States; but we, independent of those circumstances, consider as a right of our people—of all the underdeveloped peoples—the use of all technical knowledge that is available throughout the world, and we therefore consider ourselves entitled to print any book of a technical nature that we need for our development, that we need in the training of our technicians.

And what will we give in exchange? We feel it a duty of society to help, to stimulate. We feel it a duty of society to protect all intellectual creators. I don't mean protect them; perhaps that is not the correct concept. We feel that our intellectual creators must take their place in society with all the rights of outstanding workers.

Cuba can and is willing to compensate all its intellectual creators; but, at the same time, it renounces—renounces internationally—all the copyrights that it is entitled to.

Not many technical books are published in this country, but, for example, we have produced a great deal of music that is enjoyed all over the world.

And in the future, in all intellectual fields, our people will produce more and more. As of now, we announce our renunciation of all copyrights relating to our intellectual property and, with Cuban intellectual producers protected by the Cuban government, our country renounces all its copyrights relating to intellectual property. That is, our books may be reprinted freely in any part of the world, while we, on the other hand, assume the right to do the same. If all countries did the same, humanity would be the beneficiary.

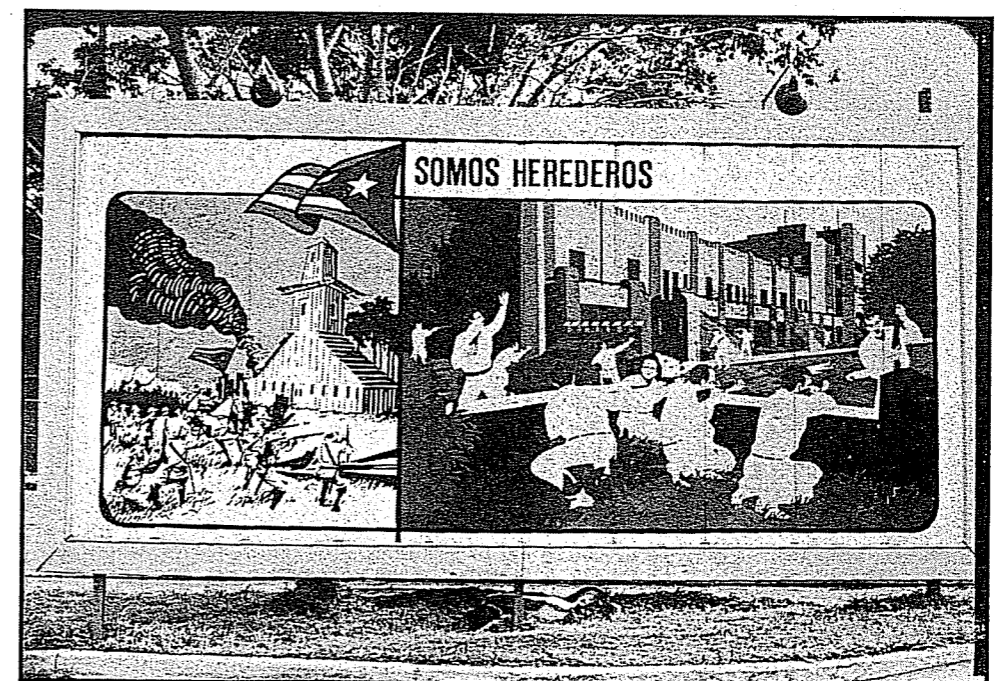
However, this is utopian. It is impossible to think that a capitalist country would do this. But if all countries did exactly the same, in exchange for the books that each country created, for the books published, or rather written in a given country, that country, by renouncing its copyrights to those books, could acquire the rights to the books written in every other country of the world.



Poster for the Carnaval in Havana, 1975.



Poster for the Festival of Protest Songs, 1967 (By A. Rostgaard).



A sequence of 13 Cuban roadside billboards "We Are the Inheritors of . . .", ca. 1975.



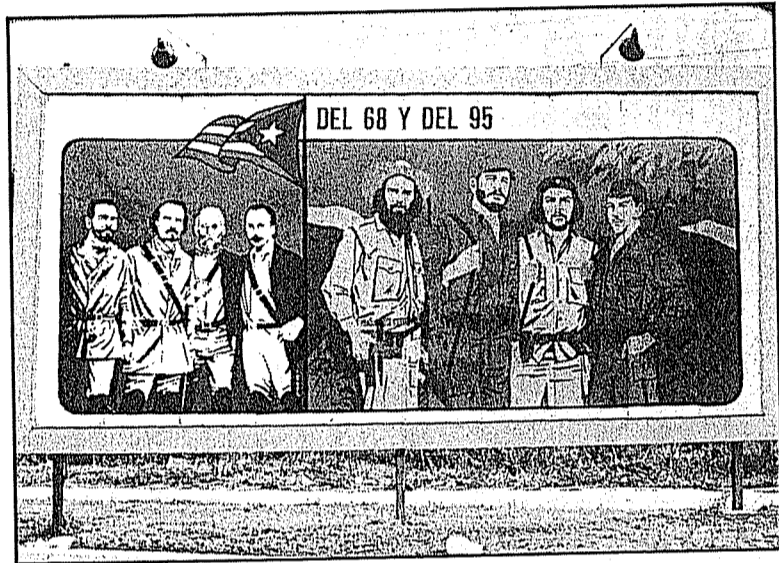
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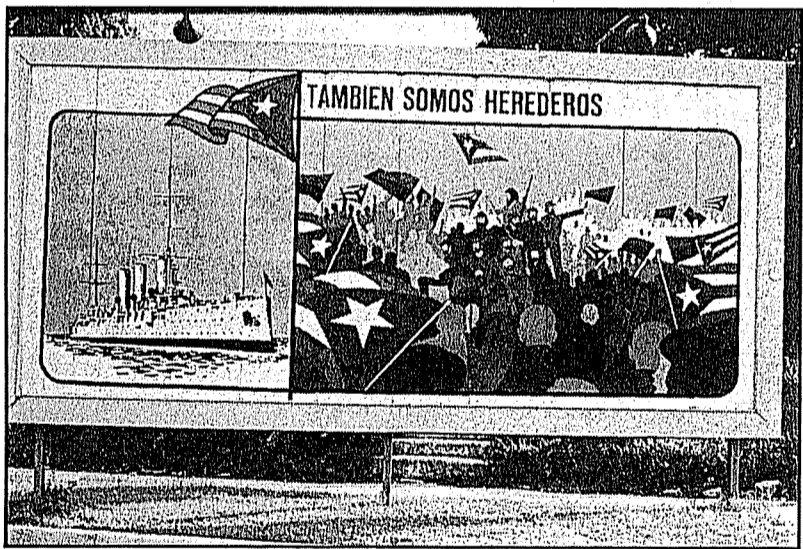
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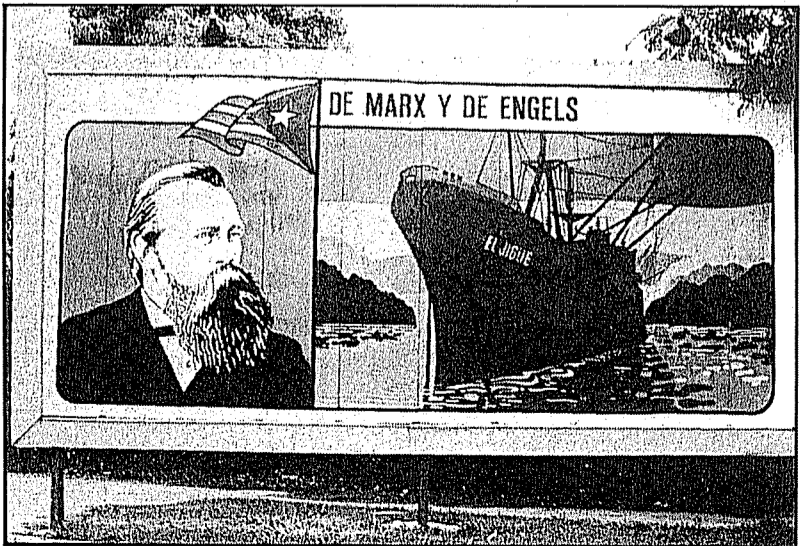
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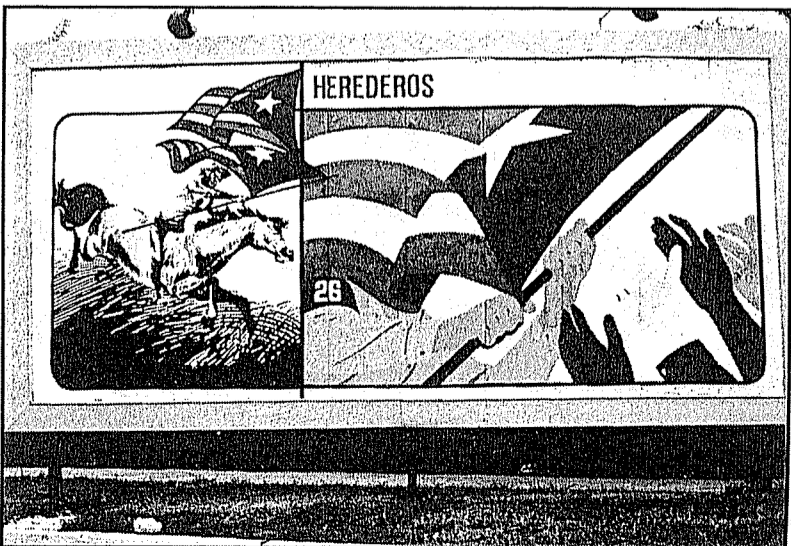
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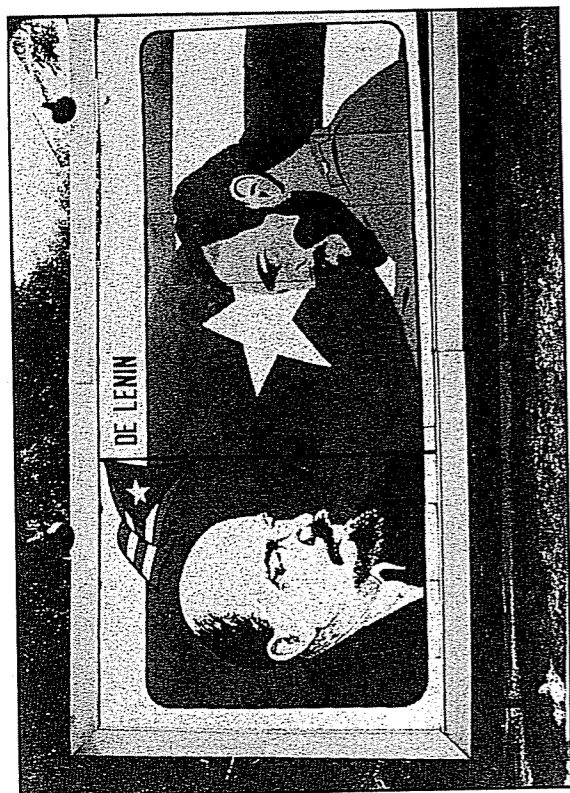
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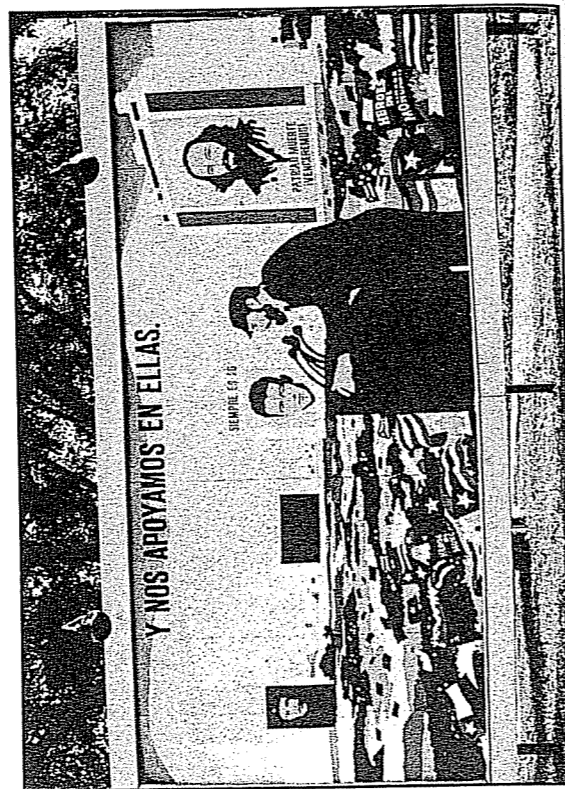
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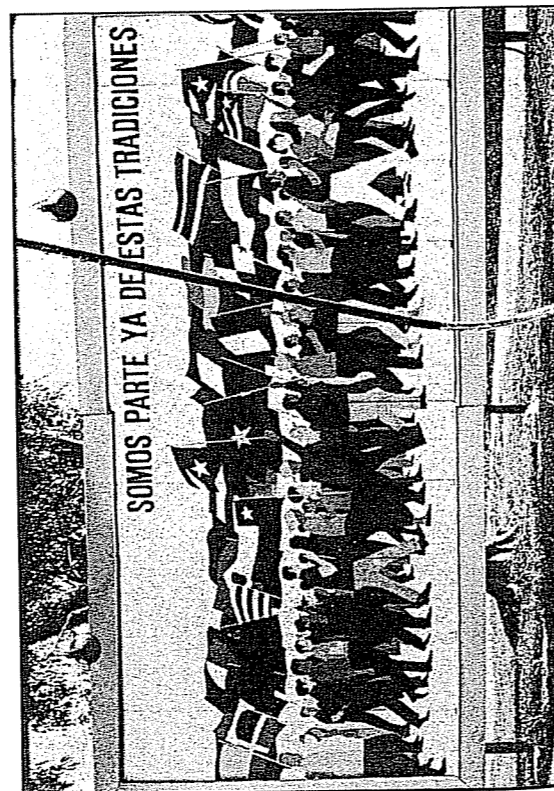
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Naturally, we cannot assume that this will happen. But, for our part we can state that this will be our stand on the problem of copyrights. And we believe that it is correct to state this frankly, no matter who may be discomfited.

We can, naturally, come to mutually convenient agreements with any country, they sending us their books published in large editions, and we sending them our books published in large editions. Any type of exchange of already published books, any type of agreement of this sort, we can do perfectly well, meeting the convenience of any country. But this will be the policy that we shall follow. We shall do the same with what are called "patents." We, for our part, it is true, have not yet invented great things or many things, and it is not a matter of our planning to become inventors, but any gadget that we do invent will be at the disposal of all humanity, as well as any success in the technical field, any success in the agricultural field.

And it should be said that we have high hopes in these fields. Yes, we expect to have considerable success. It will not be long before many people in many parts of the world will have to turn their eyes toward what we are doing here, to see how this country, situated in a tropical zone, solves many of the agricultural problems still unsolved in other tropical countries of the world. Because, above all, poverty has been mainly confined to the tropical countries; there are practically no tropical countries in the so-called developed areas of the world. And we, beyond any possibility of doubt, will be in the vanguard of agriculture among the tropical zones of the world and our solutions, our techniques, will be available to all who care to learn from them.

It is known, for example, that our Institute of Sugar Cane Investigations is carrying on research to obtain new and improved cane varieties. Very well: each time that we obtain a new variety of cane, we, a cane-producing country, will put this knowledge at the disposal of every other cane-producing country interested in that variety. We shall not stoop to weak and miserly egoism.

## Julio Garcia Espinosa FOR AN IMPERFECT CINEMA (Cuba, 1969)

Nowadays perfect cinema — technically and artistically masterful — is almost always reactionary cinema. The major temptation facing Cuban cinema at this time — when it is achieving its objective of becoming a cinema of quality, one which is culturally meaningful within the revolutionary process — is precisely that of transforming itself into a perfect cinema.

The "boom" of Latin American cinema — with Brazil and Cuba in the forefront, according to the applause and approval of the European intelligentsia — is similar, in the present moment, to the one which the Latin American novel had previously been the exclusive benefactor. Why do they applaud us? There is no doubt that a certain standard of quality has been reached. Doubtless, there is a certain political opportunism, a certain mutual instrumentality. But without doubt there is also something more. Why should we worry about their accolades? Isn't the goal of public recognition a part of the rules of the artistic name? When it comes to artistic culture, isn't European recognition equivalent to worldwide recognition? Doesn't it serve art and our peoples as well when works produced by underdeveloped nations obtain such recognition?

Although it may seem curious, it is necessary to clarify the fact that this disquiet is not solely motivated by ethical concerns. As a matter of fact, the motivation is for the most part aesthetic, if indeed it is possible to draw such an arbitrary dividing line between both terms. When we ask ourselves why it is we who are the film directors and not the others, that is to say, the spectators, the question does not stem from an exclusively ethical concern. We know that we are filmmakers because we have been part of a minority which has had the time and the circumstances needed to develop, within itself, an artistic culture, and because the material resources of film technology are limited and therefore available to some, not to all. But what happens if the future holds the universalization of college level instruction, if economic and social development reduce the hours in the work day, if the evolution of film technology (there are already signs in evidence) makes it possible that this technology ceases being the privilege of a small few? What happens if the development of video-tape solves the problem of inevitably limited laboratory capacity, if television systems with their potential for "projecting" independently of the central studio renders the

This text was first published in *Cine Cubano* (Havana), 66/67 (1969). It was translated from the Spanish by Julianne Burton and published by *Jump Cut* (Berkeley, California), 20, May 1979. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

ad infinitum construction of movie theaters suddenly superfluous?

What happens then is not only an act of social justice — the possibility for everyone to make films — but also a fact of extreme importance for artistic culture: the possibility of recovering, without any kinds of complexes or guilt feelings, the true meaning of artistic activity. Then we will be able to understand that art is one of mankind's "impartial" or "uncommitted" activities [*una actividad desinteresada*]. That art is not work, and that the artist is not in the strict sense a worker. The feeling that this is so, and the impossibility of translating it into practice, constitutes the agony and at the same time the "pharisee-ism" of all contemporary art. In fact, the two tendencies exist: those who pretend to produce cinema as an "uncommitted" activity and those who pretend to justify it as a "committed" activity. Both find themselves in a blind alley.

Anyone engaged in an artistic activity asks himself at a given moment what is the meaning of whatever he is doing. The simple fact that this anxiety arises demonstrates that factors exist to motivate it — factors which, in turn, indicate that art does not develop freely. Those who persist in denying art a specific meaning feel the moral weight of their egoism. Those who, on the other hand, pretend to attribute one to it, buy off their bad conscience with social generosity. It makes no difference that the mediators (critics, theoreticians, etc.) try to justify certain cases. For the contemporary artist, the mediator is like an aspirin, a tranquilizer. As with a pill, the artist only temporarily gets rid of the headache. The sure thing, however, is that art, like a capricious little devil, continues to show its face sporadically in no matter which tendency.

No doubt it is easier to define art by what it is not than by what it is, assuming that one can talk about closed definitions not just for art but for any of life's activities. The spirit of contradiction permeates everything now. Nothing, and nobody lets himself be imprisoned in a picture frame, no matter how gilded. It is possible that art gives us a vision of society or of human nature and that, at the same time, it cannot be defined as a vision of society or of human nature. It is possible that a certain narcissism of consciousness — in recognizing in oneself a little historical, sociological, psychological, philosophical consciousness — is implicit in aesthetic pleasure, and at the same time that this sensation is not sufficient in itself to explain aesthetic pleasure.

Is it not much closer to the nature of art to conceive of it as having its own cognitive power? In other words, by saying that art is not the "illustration" of ideas which can also be expressed through philosophy, sociology, psychology. Every artist's desire to express the inexpressible is nothing more than the desire to express the vision of a theme in terms that are inexpressible through other than artistic means. Perhaps the cognitive power of art is like the power of a game for a child. Perhaps aesthetic pleasure lies in sensing the functionality (without a specific goal) of our intelligence and our own sensitivity. Art can stimulate, in general, the creative function of man. It can function as constant stimulus toward adopting an attitude of change with regard to life. But, as opposed

to science, it enriches us in such a way that its results are not specific and cannot be applied to anything in particular. It is for this reason that we can call it an "impartial" or "uncommitted" activity, and can say that art is not strictly speaking a "job," and that the artist is perhaps the least intellectual of all intellectuals.

Why then does the artist feel the need to justify himself as a "worker," as an "intellectual," as a "professional," as a disciplined and organized man, like any other individual who performs a productive task? Why does he feel the need to exaggerate the importance of his activity? Why does he feel the need to have critics (mediators) to justify him, to defend him, to interpret him? Why does he speak proudly of "my critics"? Why does he find it necessary to make transcendental declarations, as if he were the true interpreter of society and of mankind? Why does he pretend to consider himself critic and conscience of society when (although these objectives can be implicit or even explicit in certain circumstances) in a truly revolutionary society all of us — that is to say, the people as a whole — should exercise those functions? And why, on the other hand, does the artist see himself forced to limit these objectives, these attitudes, these characteristics? Why does he at the same time set up these limitations as necessary to prevent his work from being transformed into a "tract" or a sociological essay? What is behind such pharisee-ism? Why protect oneself and seek recognition as a (revolutionary, it must be understood) political and scientific worker, yet not be prepared to run the same risks?

The problem is a complex one. Basically, it is neither a matter of opportunism nor cowardice. A true artist is prepared to run any risk as long as he is certain that his work will not cease to be an artistic expression. The only risk which he will not accept is that of endangering the artistic quality of his work.

There are also those who accept and defend the "impartial" function of art. These people claim to be more consistent. They opt for the bitterness of a closed world in the hope that tomorrow history will justify them. But the fact is that even today not everyone can enjoy the Mona Lisa. These people should have fewer contradictions; they should be less alienated, but in fact it is not so, even though such an attitude gives them the possibility of an alibi which is more productive on a personal level. In general they sense the sterility of their "purity" or they dedicate themselves to waging corrosive battles, but always on the defensive. They can even, in a reverse operation, reject their interest in finding tranquility, harmony, a certain compensation in the work of art, expressing instead disequilibrium, chaos, and uncertainty which also becomes the objective of "impartial" art.

What is it, then, which makes it impossible to practice art as an "impartial" activity? Why is this particular situation today more sensitive than ever? From the beginning of the world as we know it, that is to say, since the world was divided into classes, this situation has been latent. If it has grown sharper today it is precisely because today the possibility of transcending it is coming into view. Not through a *prise de conscience*, not through the expressed determination of any particular artist, but because reality itself has begun to reveal symptoms (not at all

utopian) which indicate that "in the future there will no longer be painters, but rather men who, among other things, dedicate themselves to painting" (Marx).

There can be no "impartial" or "uncommitted" art, there can be no new and genuine qualitative jump in art, unless the concept and the reality of the "elite" is done away with once and for all. Three factors incline us toward optimism: the development of science, the social presence of the masses, and the revolutionary potential in the contemporary world. All three are without hierarchial order, all three are interrelated.

Why is science feared? Why are people afraid that art might be crushed under obvious productivity and utility of science? Why this inferiority complex? It is true that today we read a good essay with much greater pleasure than a novel. Why do we keep repeating then, horrified, that the world is becoming more mercenary, more utilitarian, more materialistic? Is it not really marvellous that the development of science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, is contributing to the "purification" of art? The appearance, thanks to science, or expressive media like photography and film made a greater "purification" of painting and the theatre possible (without invalidating them artistically in the least). Doesn't modern day science render anachronistic so much "artistic" analysis of the human soul? Doesn't contemporary science allow us to free ourselves from so many fraudulent films, concealed behind what has been called the world of poetry? With the advance of science, art has nothing to lose; on the contrary, it has a whole world to gain. What, then, are we so afraid of? Science strips art bare and it seems that it is not easy to go naked through the streets.

The real tragedy of the contemporary artist lies in the impossibility of practicing art as a minority activity. It is said — and correctly — that art cannot exercise its attraction without the cooperation of the subject. But what can be done so that the audience stops being an object and transforms itself into the subject?

The development of science, of technology, of the most advanced social theory and practice, has made possible as never before the active presence of the masses in social life. In the realm of artistic life, there are more spectators now than at any other moment in history. This is the first stage in the abolition of "elites." The task currently at hand is to find out if the conditions which will enable spectators to transform themselves into agents — not merely more active spectators, but genuine co-authors — are beginning to exist. The task at hand is to ask ourselves whether art is really an activity restricted to specialists, whether it is, through extra-human design, the option of a chosen few or a possibility for everyone.

How can we trust the perspectives and possibilities of art simply to the education of the people as a mass of spectators? Taste as defined by "high culture," once it is "overdone," is normally passed on to the rest of society as leftovers to be devoured and ruminated over by those who were not invited to the feast. This eternal spiral has today become a vicious circle as well. "Camp" and its attitude toward everything outdated is an attempt to rescue these leftovers and to

lessen the distance between high culture and the people. But the difference lies in the fact that camp rescues it as an aesthetic value, while for the people the values involved continue to be ethical ones.

Must the revolutionary present and the revolutionary future inevitably have "its" artists and "its" intellectuals, just as the bourgeoisie had "theirs"? Surely the truly revolutionary position, from now on, is to contribute to overcoming these elitist concepts and practices, rather than pursuing ad eternum the "artistic quality" of the work. The new outlook for artistic culture is no longer that everyone must share the taste of a few, but that all can be creators of that culture. Art has always been a universal necessity; that it has not been is an option for all under equal conditions. Parallel to refined art, popular art has had a simultaneous but independent existence.

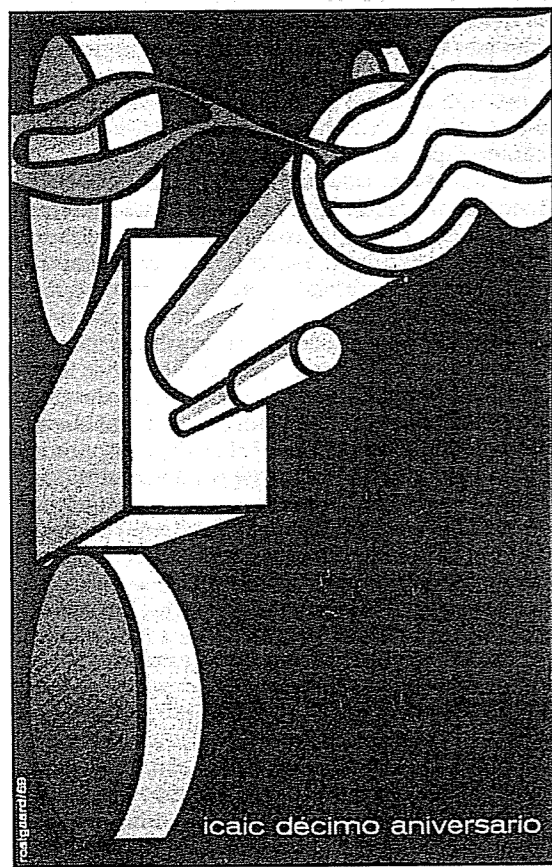
Popular art has absolutely nothing to do with what is called mass art. Popular art needs and consequently tends to develop the personal, individual taste of a people. On the other hand, mass art (or art for the masses) requires the people to have no taste. It will only be genuine when it is actually the masses who create it, since at present it is art produced by a few for the masses. Grotowski says that today's theater should be a minority art form because mass art can be achieved through cinema. This is not true. Perhaps film is the most elitist of all the contemporary arts. Film today, no matter where, is made by a small minority for the masses. Perhaps film will be the art form which takes the longest time to reach the hand of the masses, when we understand mass art as *popular art*, art created by the masses. Currently, as Hauser points out, mass art is art produced by a minority in order to satisfy the demand of a public reduced to the sole role of spectator and consumer.

Popular art has always been created by the least learned sector of society, yet this "uncultured" sector has managed to conserve profoundly cultured characteristics of art. One of the most important of these is the fact that the creators are at the same time the spectators and vice versa. Between those who produce and those who consume, no sharp line of demarcation exists. Cultivated art, in our era, has also attained this situation. Modern art's great dose of freedom is nothing more than the conquest of a new interlocutor: the artist himself. For this reason it is useless to strain oneself struggling for the substitution of the masses as a new and potential spectator for the bourgeoisie. This situation, maintained by popular art, adopted by cultivated art, must be dissolved and become the heritage of all. This and no other must be the great objective of an authentically revolutionary artistic culture.

Popular art preserved another even more important cultural characteristic: It is carried out as but another life activity. With cultivated art, the reverse is true; it is pursued as a unique, specific activity, as a personal achievement. This is the cruel price of having had to maintain artistic activity at the expense of its inexistence among the people. Hasn't the attempt to realize himself on the edge of society proved to be too painful a restriction for the artist and for art itself? To posit art as a sect, as a society within society, as the promised land where we can fleetingly fulfill ourselves for a brief instant — doesn't this create the illusion

that self-realization on the level of consciousness also implies self-realization on the level of existence? Isn't this patently obvious in contemporary circumstances? The essential lesson of popular art is that it is carried out as a life activity: man must not fulfill himself as an artist but fully; the artist must not seek fulfillment as an artist but as a human being.

In the modern world, principally in developed capitalist nations and in those countries engaged in a revolutionary process, there are alarming symptoms, obvious signs of an imminent change. The possibilities for overcoming this traditional disassociation are beginning to arise. These symptoms are not a product of consciousness but of reality itself. A large part of the struggle waged in modern art has been, in fact, to "democratize" art. What other goal is entailed in combatting the limitations of taste, museum art, and the demarcation lines between the creator and the public? What is considered beauty today, and where is it found? On Campbell's soup labels, in a garbage can lid, in gadgets? Even the eternal value of a work of art is today being questioned. What else could be the meaning of those sculptures, seen in recent exhibitions, made of blocks of ice which melt away while the public looks at them? Isn't this — more than the disappearance of art — the attempt to make the spectator disappear? Don't those painters who entrust a portion of the execution of their work to just anyone, rather than to their disciples, exhibit an eagerness to jump over the barricade of "elitist" art?



Poster for the tenth anniversary of the ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematografica), 1969 (By A. Rostgaard).

Doesn't the same attitude exist among composers whose works allow their performers ample liberty?

There's a widespread tendency in modern art to make the spectator participate ever more fully. If he participates to a greater and greater degree, where will the process end up? Isn't the logical outcome — or shouldn't it in fact be — that he will cease being a spectator altogether? This simultaneously represents a tendency toward collectivism and toward individualism. Once we admit the possibility of universal participation, aren't we also admitting the individual creative potential which we all have? Isn't Grotowski mistaken when he asserts that today's theater should be dedicated to an elite? Isn't it rather the reverse: that the theater of poverty in fact requires the highest refinement? It is the theater which has no need for secondary values: costumes, scenery, make-up, even a stage. Isn't this an indication that material conditions are reduced to a minimum and that, from this point of view, the possibility of making theater is within everyone's reach? And doesn't the fact that the theater has an increasingly smaller public mean that conditions are beginning to ripen for it to transform itself into a true mass theater? Perhaps the tragedy of the theater lies in the fact that it has reached this point in its evolution too soon.

When we look toward Europe, we wring our hands. We see that the old culture is totally incapable of providing answers to the problems of art. The fact is that Europe can no longer respond in a traditional manner but at the same time finds it equally difficult to respond in a manner that is radically new. Europe is no longer capable of giving the world a new "ism"; neither is it in a position to put an end to "isms" once and for all. So we think that our moment has come, that at last the underdeveloped can deck themselves out as "men of culture." Here lies our greatest danger and our greatest temptation. This accounts for the opportunism of some on our continent. For, given our technical and scientific backwardness and given the scanty presence of the masses in social life, our continent is still capable of responding in a traditional manner, by reaffirming the concept and the practice of elite art. Perhaps in this case the real motive for the European applause which some of our literary and cinematic works have won is none other than a certain nostalgia which we inspire. After all, the European has no other Europe to which to turn.

The third factor, the revolution — which is the most important of all — is perhaps present in our country as nowhere else. This is our only true chance. The revolution is what provides all other alternatives, what can supply an entirely new response, what enables us to do away once and for all with elitist concepts and practices in art. The revolution and the ongoing revolutionary process are the only factors which make the total and free presence of the masses possible — and this will mean the definitive disappearance of the rigid division of labor and of a society divided into sectors and classes. For us, then, the revolution is the highest expression of culture because it will abolish artistic culture as a fragmentary human activity.

Current responses to this inevitable future, this

uncontestable prospect, can be as numerous as the countries on our continent. Because characteristics and achieved labels are not the same, each art form, every artistic manifestation, must find its own expression. What should be the response of the Cuban cinema in particular? Paradoxically, we think it will be a new poetics, not a new cultural policy. A poetics whose true goal will be to commit suicide, to disappear as such. We know, however, that in fact other artistic conceptions will continue to exist among us, just like small rural landholdings and religion continue to exist.

On the level of cultural policy we are faced with a serious problem: the film school. Is it right to continue developing a handful of film specialists? It seems inevitable for the present, but what will be the eternal quarry that we continue to mine: the students in Arts and Letters at the University? But shouldn't we begin to consider right now whether that school should have a limited lifespan? What end do we pursue there — a reserve corps of future artists? Or a specialized future public? We should be asking ourselves whether we can do something now to abolish this division between artistic and scientific culture.

What constitutes in fact the true prestige of artistic culture, and how did it come about that this prestige was allowed to appropriate the whole concept of culture? Perhaps it is based on the enormous prestige which the spirit has always enjoyed at the expense of the body. Hasn't artistic culture always been seen as the spiritual part of society while scientific culture is seen as its body? The traditional rejection of the body, of material life, is due in part to the concept that things of the spirit are more elevated, more elegant, serious and profound. Can't we, here and now, begin doing something to put an end to this artificial distinction? We should understand from here on in that the body and the things of the body are also elegant, and that material life is beautiful as well. We should understand that, in fact the soul is contained in the body just as the spirit is contained in material life, just as — to speak in strictly artistic terms — the essence is contained in the surface and the content in the form.

We should endeavor to see that our future students, and therefore our future filmmakers, will themselves be scientists, sociologists, physicians, economists, agricultural engineers, etc., without of course ceasing to be filmmakers. And, at the same time, we should have the same aim for our most outstanding workers, the workers who achieve the best results in terms of political and intellectual formation. We cannot develop the taste of the masses as long as the division between the two cultures continues to exist, nor as long as the masses are not the real masters of the means of artistic production. The revolution has liberated us as an artistic sector. It is only logical that we contribute to the liberation of the private means of artistic production.

A new poetics for the cinema will, above all, be a "partisan" and "committed" poetics, a "committed" art, a consciously and resolutely "committed" cinema — that is to say, an "imperfect" cinema. An "impartial" or "uncommitted" (cinema), as a complete aesthetic activity, will only be possible when it is the people who make art. But today art must assimilate

its quota of work so that work can assimilate its quota of art.

The motto of this imperfect cinema (which there's no need to invent, since it already exists) is, as Glauber Rocha would say, "We are not interested in the problems of neurosis; we are interested in the problems of lucidity." Art no longer has use for the neurotic and his problems, although the neurotic continues to need art — as a concerned object, a relief, an alibi or, as Freud would say, as a sublimation of his problems. A neurotic can produce art, but art has no reason to produce neurotics. It has been traditionally believed that the concerns of art were not to be found in the sane but in the sick, not in the normal but in the abnormal, not in those who struggle but in those who weep, not in lucid minds but in neurotic ones. Imperfect cinema is changing this way of seeing the question. We have more faith in the sick man than in the healthy one because his truth is purged by suffering. However, there is no need for suffering to be synonymous with artistic elegance. There is still a trend in modern art — undoubtedly related to Christian tradition — which identifies seriousness with suffering. The spectre of Marguerite Gautier still haunts artistic endeavor in our day. Only in the person who suffers do we perceive elegance, gravity, even beauty; only in him do we recognize the possibility of authenticity, seriousness, sincerity. Imperfect cinema must put an end to this tradition.

Imperfect cinema finds a new audience in those who struggle, and it finds its themes in their problems. For imperfect cinema, "lucid" people are the ones who think and feel and exist in a world which they can change; in spite of all the problems and difficulties, they are convinced that they can transform it in a revolutionary way. Imperfect cinema therefore has no need to struggle to create an "audience." On the contrary, it can be said that at present a greater audience exists for this kind of cinema than there are filmmakers able to supply that audience.

What does this new interlocutor require of us — an art full of moral examples worthy of imitation? No. Man is more of a creator than an innovator. Besides, he should be the one to give us moral examples. He might ask us for a fuller, more complete work, aimed — in a separate or coordinated fashion — at the intelligence, the emotions, the powers of intuition.

Should he ask us for a cinema of denunciation? Yes and no. No, if the denunciation is directed toward the others, if it is conceived that those who are not struggling might sympathize with us and increase their awareness. Yes, if the denunciation acts as information, as testimony, as another combat weapon for those engaged in the struggle. Why denounce imperialism to show one more time that it is evil? What's the use if those now fighting are fighting primarily against imperialism? We can denounce imperialism but should strive to do it as a way of proposing concrete battles. A film which denounces those who struggle against the evil deeds of an official who must be executed would be an excellent example of this kind of film-denunciation.

We maintain that imperfect cinema must above all show the process which generates the problems. It is thus the opposite of a cinema principally dedicated to celebrating results, the opposite of a self-sufficient

and contemplative cinema, the opposite of a cinema which "beautifully illustrates" ideas or concepts which we already possess. (The narcissistic posture has nothing to do with those who struggle.) To show a process is not exactly equivalent to analyzing it. To analyze, in the traditional sense of the word, always implies a closed prior judgment. To analyze a problem is to show the problem (not the process) permeated with judgments which the analysis itself generates a priori. To analyze is to block off from the outset any possibility for analysis on the part of the interlocutor.

To show the process of a problem, on the other hand, is to submit it to judgment without pronouncing the verdict. There is a style of news reporting which puts more emphasis on the commentary than on the news item. There is another kind of reporting which presents the news and evaluates it through the arrangement of the item on the page or by its position in the paper. To show the process of a problem is like showing the very development of the news item, without commentary; it is like showing the multifaceted evolution of a piece of information without evaluating it. The subjective element is the selection of the problem, conditioned as it is by the interest of the audience — which is the subject. The objective element is showing the process — which is the object.

Imperfect cinema is an answer, but it is also a question which will discover its own answers in the course of its development. Imperfect cinema can make use of the documentary or the fictional mode, or both. It can use whatever genre, or all genres. It can use cinema as a pluralistic art form or as a specialized form of expression. These questions are indifferent to it, since they do not represent its real alternatives or problems, and much less its real goals. These are not the battles or polemics it is interested in sparking.

Imperfect cinema can also be enjoyable, both for the maker and for its new audience. Those who struggle do not struggle on the edge of life, but in the midst of it. Struggle is life and vice versa. One does not struggle in order to live "later on." The struggle requires organization — the organization of life. Even in the most extreme phase, that of total and direct war, the organization of life is equivalent to the organization of the struggle. And in life, as in the struggle, there is everything, including enjoyment. Imperfect cinema can enjoy itself despite everything which conspires to negate enjoyment.

Imperfect cinema rejects exhibitionism in both (literal) senses of the word, the narcissistic and the commercial (getting shown in established theaters and circuits). It should be remembered that the death of the star-system turned out to be a positive thing for art. There is no reason to doubt that the disappearance of the director as star will fail to offer similar prospects. Imperfect cinema must start work now, in cooperation with sociologists, revolutionary leaders, psychologists, economists, etc. Furthermore, imperfect cinema rejects whatever services criticism has to offer and considers the function of mediators and intermediaries anachronistic.

Imperfect cinema is no longer interested in quality or technique. It can be created equally well with a

Mitchell or with an 8mm camera, in a studio or in a guerrilla camp in the middle of the jungle. Imperfect cinema is no longer interested in predetermined taste, and much less in "good taste." It is not quality which it seeks in an artist's work. The only thing it is interested in is how an artist responds to the following question: What are you doing in order to overcome the barrier of the "cultured" elite audience which up to now has conditioned the form of your work?

The filmmaker who subscribes to this new poetics should not have personal self-realization as his object. From now on he should also have another activity. He should place his role as revolutionary or aspiring revolutionary above all else. In a word, he should try to fulfill himself as a man and not just as an artist. Imperfect cinema cannot lose sight of the fact that its essential goal as a new poetics is to disappear. It is no longer a matter of replacing one school with another, one "ism" with another, poetry with anti-poetry, but of truly letting a thousand different flowers bloom. The future lies with folk art. But let us no longer display folk art with demagogic pride, with a celebrative air. Let us exhibit it instead as a cruel denunciation, as a painful testimony to the level at which the peoples of the world have been forced to limit their artistic creativity. The future, without doubt, will be with folk art, but then there will be no need to call it that, because nobody and nothing will any longer be able to again paralyze the creative spirit of the people.

Art will not disappear into nothingness; it will disappear into everything.

## Sebastião Coelho

### INFORMATION IN ANGOLA: PERSPECTIVES

(Angola, 1976)

#### INTRODUCTION

The advance of the Angolan Revolution makes it urgently necessary to define a National Information Policy.

Many of the old colonial structures still persist in today's Angola. In the field of information there have been adaptations and readaptations, but the fact is that we are still operating what is really an emergency system, which needs to be modified beyond mere improvisation.

The lack of definition gives rise to doubts whenever decisions have to be made, leaving the way open for guesswork and speculation, with all the inaccuracy that this implies. A vicious circle is generated, with Radio Nacional transmitting news already published in the newspapers, while the newspapers repeat what is said on Radio Nacional. Or the newspapers copy one another, each corroborated by the fact that the other has already published it.

As a consequence, despite the repetitions, official communiques and interminable speeches, the amount of actual information transmitted is in fact extremely small. In the absence of clear criteria for selection a climate of uncertainty is generated, leading to a fear of taking up positions which may be misinterpreted.

In addition, the weight of political, administrative and social structures in the capital, Luanda, is very great, and newspapers, radio and television are keenly aware of this. The excessive importance of Luanda usurps some of the legitimate rights of the provinces, as for instance in the unequal share it gets of the national communications media. Luanda takes advantage of, and abuses, the privilege of being the headquarters of the media organisations, appropriating them as its own local news organs; something which is not only unjust but goes against the very ideals of the Revolution.

This deformation to which we refer, which is another consequence of the lack of clear definitions, and a direct inheritance from the colonial era, involves a permanent over-emphasis on the capital at the expense of the other regions. The fear which we have mentioned is also a reflection of the old systems of censorship and policing, though its most immediate cause is the misrule of the so-called Government of Transition.

This text was first published in the weekly magazine *Angolense* (Luanda, Angola), 98, 23 October 1976. It was translated from the Portuguese by Phil Gunson. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

The Government of Transition, and the confusion resulting from the intervention of elements of the puppet organisations which sought to gain a foothold in the country, disoriented all journalists, including the reactionaries who were still at work, by their bewildering sequence of orders and counter-orders. Radio Nacional, at that time the official Angolan broadcasting station, was the body most affected by the contradictions of that troubled period. The group of progressive journalists who tried to keep the flame of liberty alight there felt it necessary to resort to subterfuge in order to escape the constant provocation and persecution to which they were subjected. It was this which gave rise to the habit of not writing news bulletins based on communiques, but rather reading out the communiques themselves, complete and with painstaking reference, at the beginning and end of each, to the body which had issued it.

This habit remained, and still persists, as a clear indication that the information system, unsure of the path it is treading, and subject to pressures resulting directly from the fluidity of the situation, is unsound. It is constantly being accused, insulted and maltreated, then, the next minute, being pressed into service, the object of devoted attention, only to be rejected again shortly afterwards. The journalist, meanwhile, feels "damned if he speaks and damned if he doesn't".

All this is, essentially, practical proof of the important role played by information in the modern world, as the motive force of the revolution, and naturally, of the counter-revolution. Everything depends on how it is used. For this reason colonial and imperialist interests always fought to control information through their economic domination of the communications media. Through it they were able to manoeuvre at will, placing their agents, in disguise, in journalistic jobs. Their departure seemed to produce an information vacuum. We have few journalists today; but then, also, we had very few, and the thinning-out process has in fact operated in our favour, allowing us to construct almost from scratch, our own National Information Service.

The process of technical re-equipment and the training of specialists demands a plan which will guarantee correct guidance at every step and the eventual setting up of an information system at the service of the people.

In order for this to take place, and for the present half-hearted approach to be abandoned, a number of specific measures must be taken, in particular:

1. Judicious regrouping and reactivation of the print workers;
2. Reconstruction of the broadcasting stations so that they cover, as efficiently as possible, the entire national territory; and
3. Giving the information system more dignity through respect for information workers, providing them with basic material and directives, which are fundamental in ensuring sensible statements and the provision of correct and unequivocal information.

The reactivation of the National Information Service must be carried out in accordance with a slogan which needs to be constantly reinforced if it is

to fulfil its true potential: Make the Revolution and Inform Truthfully.

In order that this may in fact occur, and that all these recommended measures may have a real meaning, it is important to define, both rigorously and as a matter of urgency:

- (a) Priorities for information and transmission;
- (b) The attitudes of press organs and journalists towards facts and situations;
- (c) Who are the authorised spokespersons of the Party and of the Government, and under what circumstances;
- (d) The proportional use of space on the air and in the newspapers;
- (e) The scope of each information organ;
- (f) Norms for each field of operation;
- (g) The journalist's latitude to make decisions;
- (h) A code of ethics;
- (i) A labour code, with clear statements of rights and obligations;
- (j) The position of journalists in the face of possible threats from reactionaries, violence, abuse of authority, bribery, corruption and simple opportunist pressure;
- (k) Permanently valid credentials, used and respected in the name of the Republic of Angola, which should constitute an unquestioned safe conduct throughout the country, subject to legislation concerning its validity, and sanctions for unauthorised use.

This series of definitions will be the practical result of the intended, and necessary, formation of a National Information Policy, based on the existence of a Party Newspaper.

It will be for the Party Newspaper, through the authority and independence conferred on it by its status as Official Party Organ, to indicate, in a clear and unquestioned manner, the correct course of action. Thus the newspaper must be a daily publication, since its task will be to redefine directives on a daily basis.

*The Party Newspaper will be the guide indicating the sure and undisputed way to be followed by all those who, among the ordinary people or by reason of their jobs as journalists, have to perform the difficult and thankless, but revolutionary, task of keeping the country properly informed.*

The present study is our modest contribution to the analysis of the daily work of those comrades who are responsible for keeping the country informed, and may also serve as an outline for the National Information Plan which must be drawn up once the basis—in other words, a NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY—has been laid down.

## THE FIELD OF INFORMATION

There are two well-defined fields of information. Firstly, there is information *from Angola*, aimed at an audience outside the country, and secondly, information *for Angola*, aimed at the country itself, and thus an internal sphere of operations. The two fields are completely distinct, but undeniably complementary, and it is therefore important to define the parameters of both.

## I. The International Service

In the international field the aim is to project abroad an image of the People's Republic of Angola, its People and its Institutions.

This image must reflect all aspects of Angolan life, including opinions on international events or situations.

It must be the channel for the transmission and distribution of expressions of Angolan culture, and a link with all the peoples of the world; an instrument of cooperation and friendship as well as of enlightenment and understanding.

The scope of this service is very wide, in that it must cover the whole field of the exchange of ideas and the whole range of forms, including news, commentary, newspapers, magazines, books, films, photographs, music, records; anything at all in fact of which use may be made.

## II. The National Service

The national information service (or internal service) aims to bind the masses together through information.

It will have to use all the means at its disposal to ensure that every citizen benefits from the constitutional right to information. This is the ultimate aim of a plan which must be prepared and developed to the fullest possible extent, and whose minimum objectives are defined in accordance with the guidelines laid down by UNESCO as an immediate aim for all the countries of the world; that is, to place at the disposal of each group of 100 inhabitants:

- 10 copies of a newspaper
- 5 radio receivers
- 2 cinema seats
- 2 television receivers

At present this quota is not being met, and it can be assumed, in fact, that the actual situation is very much worse. These minimum requirements were never attained during the colonial period, and the situation deteriorated markedly during the period of transition to independence.

## INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

When we come to define the scope of what is considered to be the International Service, we find that the tasks to be undertaken go far beyond the orthodox forms of press, radio, television and cinema, and take on all-embracing dimensions. This is due to the belief that it will be possible to centralise in a single organisation, if large enough and appropriately equipped, responsibility for all the work required to present the desired image of Angola abroad, as far as the field of information is concerned. Thus we have included under "forms of action" the *raison d'être* and plan of work for this coordinating body of the International Service.

### International Distribution Media

1. Direct transmission:
  - (a) INFORANG; International Coordinating Agency
  - (b) ANGOP; National Agency for News and Associated Affairs
  - (c) RADIO NACIONAL; International Department

- (d) IMPRENSA
- (e) CINEMA
- (f) TELEVISION
2. Indirect transmission:
  - (a) FOREIGN MINISTRY
  - (b) INFORANG; International Coordinating Agency.

Agency.

The transmission agency itself identifies different forms of activity, thereby covering all possibilities for the international representation of the People's Republic of Angola.

## Forms Of Action

### I. INFORANG

INFORANG is short for INFORmaciones de ANGola, the International Coordinating Agency for Information Activities of the People's Republic of Angola, the creation of which has been recommended.

Instead of creating a small department, poorly housed and equipped, within each of the Ministries involved, either directly or indirectly, in activities abroad which require information work, it seems better to devise a coordinating body for this type of activity, capable of responding to all kinds of requests, and able to carry out specific tasks in any given place, either employing its own resources or calling upon Angolan or foreign specialists from many different fields.

The specific ideas and needs of each ministry will thus be able easily to be put into practice, since INFORANG is a multifaceted and multidirectional body, dealing with politics, the country's image, the law, education, science, culture, physical education, sports, youth, trade, industry, etc.; in other words, all those fields of activity which go to make up "information".

In short the plan of action of INFORANG covers all areas of concern not specifically dealt with by direct or indirect transmission abroad, providing them also with structural support.

Over and above what will be specifically laid down in the agency's own statutes, it will be able to:

- (a) Undertake the production and distribution of special publications, designed for use abroad, either on its own editorial initiative or at the request of ministries, autonomous bodies, etc.
- (b) Receive and distribute abroad all propaganda material from Angola, whether its own editions or those of other bodies, specifically books, magazines, newspapers, records, photographs, films, etc.
- (c) Organise and mount exhibitions, stands, pavilions, showcases, etc. in foreign countries.
- (d) Provide Angolan diplomatic missions with necessary technical support in their task of providing information, to which end it will have delegates or delegations wherever and whenever it is considered necessary.

(e) Provide technical and informational or logistical support to delegations or national groups on missions abroad, etc.

Although it may seem unnecessary to have a body of this type, such a view is not consistent with reality. In practice it will be necessary to carry out all the aforementioned tasks, and the consequent dispersal of human and technical resources will be

prejudicial to the People's Republic of Angola. We recall the multiplicity of departments which served this purpose in colonial times; the Coffee Institute, the Diamond Company, the Industrial Association, CITA, and so on. If we include all these activities, along with other similar ones, in one specialised department, whose headquarters will be in Angola, for instance, by reviving the old FILDA on a revolutionary basis, we will have created infrastructures of incalculable value.

## II. ANGOP

ANGOP, ANGOLA Press, is the National News Agency. According to its own terms of reference, its job is to distribute news, either directly or through the foreign or international news agencies with which it is linked by cooperation agreements.

Essentially, its sphere of operations in the International Service is determined by three objectives:

- (a) To collect, channel and distribute abroad news about Angola.
- (b) To collect, channel and distribute abroad foreign or international news in accordance with the point of view of the Angolan people.
- (c) To collect, channel and distribute inside Angola news from abroad which is of interest to Angola.

## III. RADIO NACIONAL

An International Shortwave Service should be created as soon as possible, with its own identity and special production services, with the aim of providing for foreign listeners a radio image of the people of Angola, their thoughts, their way of life and their customs.

Broadcasts by the International Radio Service are aimed primarily at the overseas audience, in accordance with a specific plan, which is to be supported by the Exchange Service. Its specific mission is:

- (a) To distribute abroad news about Angola.
- (b) To distribute abroad news from progressive countries and to report on their achievements.
- (c) To distribute abroad international news in accordance with the viewpoint of the Angolan people.

## IV. THE PRESS

The national written press will impinge on the international sector to the extent that its exchange arrangements permit, and that its work merits transcription or quotation.

Its operations will be extended when conditions allow special foreign editions to be produced.

Within this area we include all printed publications, whether periodical or otherwise, which may be sent to overseas readers.

## V. CINEMA

This will be one of the most valuable means of presenting at an international level the artistic, cultural and documentary expressions of the Angolan people.

It can take the form of exchanges, festivals or the use of commercial circuits, according to circumstances.



## VI. TELEVISION

This is closely linked in some ways to cinema, but its particular properties allow it to carry out more profound and specialised work in the field of documentaries and news, thanks to parallel agreements which can be signed with counterparts elsewhere. It will operate by selling or lending, in accordance with international usage.

## VII. FOREIGN MINISTRY

The Foreign Ministry can and should carry out its work in this field within a framework of close cooperation with other ministries, especially the Ministry of Information.

Whether directly or through the proposed INFORANG system, the Foreign Ministry will operate in the information field to the limits of the dedication of its diplomatic representatives in distributing the material placed at their disposal, whether in the form of books, newspapers, magazines, photographs, records, special publications, or other items.

Active cooperation is the recommended form of action, and in particular:

(a) The maintenance on embassy premises of up-to-date and carefully preserved collections of Angolan publications. (Old and dog-eared documents should be withdrawn, since they tarnish the image of Angola).

(b) The maintenance of friendly links with local journalist's providing them regularly with up-to-date information.

(c) The offer of regular and up-to-date collections to local radio stations, press and libraries, etc.

## NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

The National Distribution System, or SDN, encompasses several different services, scaled according to their area of activity. Each area is determined by various considerations arising from geographical, economic, ethnic/social, linguistic and other circumstances. In addition to these and other factors each area must take into account the specific population which it covers. We propose three levels of action:

- (i) The NATIONAL or GENERAL level
- (ii) The PROVINCIAL or REGIONAL level
- (iii) The LOCAL or RURAL level

The definition of each level's parameters demands prior analysis and adjustment, given that it is on this basis that the National Distribution System, as the foundation of informational activities, at the service of unity, education, culture, politicisation and mass organisation, can best be planned.

We aim to systematise and adapt various aspects of the national situation in proposing an outline for future work. Many other aspects will have escaped us, and it will be necessary to add these to our suggestions in order to incorporate them into what has been laid down as the National Information Plan, within the guidelines of what is defined as the National Information Policy. The Plan will therefore be the practical expression of the directives formulated by the MPLA (Movement For the Liberation of Angola),

encompassing all the national media.

## Media Available To The "National System"

## The Capacity of the Media

We must first classify the various media according to how they can be used:

- (a) Collection
- (b) Production
- (c) Transmission
- (d) Distribution
- (e) Restricted audience
- (f) Mass audience

## Media available

- (a) Collection: ANGOP; Complete Service Agency CPC; Cultural Promotion Centre
- (b) Production: CPC; Cultural Promotion Centre
- (c) Transmission: ANGOP; National News Agency
- (d) Distribution: ANGOP; National News Agency CPC; Cultural Promotion Centre
- (e) Restricted Audience: JANGO; Collective Audience Centre WALL NEWSPAPER SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION MEDIA; records, tapes, cassettes, photographs, slides, etc.
- (f) Mass audience: RADIO; National networks, provincial or regional networks, local or rural stations. PRESS; National, provincial or regional. TELEVISION; National, provincial or regional. CINEMA; Fixed or mobile.

Each medium has its own structure. There is however a new tool proposed, namely, the CPC, the Cultural Promotion Centre, which will correspond inside the country to the international operations of INFORANG, without wanting to endow it with a huge, unwieldy structure. Like INFORANG, the CPC should carry out its activities autonomously, at the service of the Special Distribution Media. It will either become a specialised Department of INFORANG, or act independently but in close collaboration with the latter as regards technical and human resources, this being the only way to achieve optimum efficiency on both sides.

## Capacity of The "National Distribution System" (SDN)

The extent of the media at the disposal of the SDN does not, however, mean perfect coverage of the national territory, either now or in the future. The National Information Plan will have to be drawn up and developed within the limits of what is possible.

Coverage of the country at the general level presents very serious problems which, in some cases, are insurmountable, either for financial or technical reasons.

As an example we can point to the case of the

Soviet Union. In spite of its economic and technological strength, which is placed entirely at the service of the people, the USSR has still not fully resolved the problem of how to ensure complete coverage of its territory. Some regions, especially in the mountainous areas of the country, remain isolated from the mass media, leaving the task of informing the people solely in the hands of activists. Algeria faces similar problems, and the use of satellites has still not completely solved them.

It is also worth pointing out that the United States of America, where the transmission of capitalist propaganda dominates all the media, and where government propaganda could be expected to have shown spectacular successes in territorial coverage, has still not found a complete solution, and is currently extending CTV (cable tv) systems in order to improve reception in so-called "white", or isolated, areas.

Thus in Angola the objectives must be planned in concrete terms in a practical rather than a theoretical way.

## Demographic Distribution

The major concentrations of population occur in small geographical areas, creating serious problems for information distribution. Only the few will be able to receive such services. According to statistics published in 1972, the population of Angola has the following characteristics:

- (a) More than HALF the population inhabits less than ONE-TENTH of the land area.
- (b) More than 90% of the population inhabits less than HALF the land area.
- (c) Less than ONE-TENTH of the population inhabits more than HALF the land area.

If, on the one hand, the above factors allow coverage of the most populous areas to be attained with relative ease, more than half the country will only be able to receive coverage within small nuclei, which will have to be systematically enlarged until a satisfactory infrastructure is attained.

This must also be reflected in the planning of the information system itself. Those concepts which are of *general application and can be employed in particular situations* must be carefully distinguished from those which are of *strictly local application and from which generalisations must not be made*.

## Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)

## VICTORY IS CERTAIN: GUIDE FOR THE LITERACY INSTRUCTOR

(Angola, 1968)

Comrade Literacy Instructors,  
YOU KNOW HOW TO READ AND WRITE.

But in our country, however, 99 people out of 100 do not know how to read or write.

This is one of the terrible consequences of the situation created by colonialism and imperialism in Angola. The Portuguese colonialists never cared to give a minimum education to the Angolan people, and they even prevented them from teaching themselves. Due to economic difficulties, the lack of schools and racial segregation, the sons of our country have not been able to read and write.

For a people which does not know how to read or write it is more difficult to understand the causes of their own poverty and to organise, because it is more difficult to communicate. It is for this reason that illiteracy suited the colonialists, and all sorts of exploiters, so well.

We are leading a Popular Revolution against colonialism and the structures of exploitation which it imposed on our country. We should thus remove all the evils engendered by foreign domination; and one of these evils is ILLITERACY. To fight it, for us, revolutionaries, is one of the most important obligations.

In helping other comrades to read and write, you are engaging in an act of patriotism and revolutionary spirit. To communicate with others what you have been able to learn under different conditions, constitutes an important contribution to the National Revolution, for the Angolan People.

You will certainly encounter great difficulties.

But you can surmount these difficulties with your militant will and the illiterate comrades' desire to learn.

During the time you will be teaching, you will see that you will be learning many things from the illiterate comrades.

Reading this "Guide" will permit you to resolve the major part of your difficulties. Other difficulties will arise for which there is no solution in the Guide; in this case you should note them down and transmit them to the person responsible in the MPLA. If, during your practical activity, you resolve these difficulties, you should explain how you have done

This text, and the accompanying illustrations, were published by the Edição do Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, 1968, and was reprinted, translated and published in Italian by Lerici Editore, 1970. It was translated from the Italian by Beatrice Propetto. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.



DÉCIMA SÉTIMA LIÇÃO (17)

1. Vamos ler:

As bombas não fazem recuar os guerrilheiros  
 bom - bas  
 bas bes bis bos bus



VIGÉSIMA SEXTA LIÇÃO (26)

1. Vamos ler:

Hoje o povo de Angola sabe que é preciso  
chegar à independência

che - gar

che cha chi cho chu

az ez iz oz uz

so, so that your experience can aid other comrade literacy instructors.

This Guide is a first attempt to establish a simple and efficient method of literacy instruction adapted to Angolan problems. In contributing to it with your criticisms and suggestions, this manual will be improved and enriched.

Comrade Literacy Instructors,

Thanks to your efforts and dedication, many Angolans will learn to read and write. Thanks to your efforts and dedication, our Popular Revolution will continue to advance.

With courage and perseverance we will also win this battle.

**THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE WILL CONQUER ILLITERACY!**

**VICTORY IS CERTAIN!**

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Comrade Literacy Instructors,

You should always take the following general recommendations into account:

1. You are not a teacher and your comrades are not students. You are only one of those who, for specific reasons, have had the possibility to learn something your comrades have not had the opportunity to learn. Now you are fulfilling your revolutionary duty by communicating this knowledge to others. Together, your illiterate comrades and yourself form a group in the service of the revolution.

2. Concerning your illiterate comrades, you should maintain relations of friendship, equality and mutual respect. You should not think that you are rendering a personal service, but that together, you each are fulfilling your obligation; that of teaching and learning.

3. You should be constantly interested in their problems, their work and their life.

4. You should always be ready to pay attention to their difficulties and their preoccupations.

5. Remember that certain illiterate comrades may have trouble seeing or hearing; help them more than the others.

6. During the course, never give orders and do not lose your patience.

7. Do not forget that the work is collective.

8. Change the lesson when you see that the comrades are tired of it.

9. Do not forget that you learn as much from the comrades as they learn from you.

10. Absolutely avoid any action with a comrade which could humiliate or hurt another, less gifted, comrade. This is the only way to obtain a comradely spirit within the group.

11. In the group, especially during the first lessons, try to quietly introduce a way of behavior in which each person can freely express his opinion.

12. Before each lesson, study it attentively with the aid of the explanations contained in this Guide.

13. Never begin a lesson without having studied the **POLITICAL THEMES** found at the end of this Guide.

14. Each instructor should work with a group of no more than twelve comrades.

15. Be sure that the comrades take care of their manual; read them the instructions on the cover.

## Jorge Rebelo

### SPEECH TO THE OPENING SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

(Macomia, 1975)

Comrades,

Today we shall be beginning the work of the National Conference of the Information and Propaganda Department of FRELIMO.

The Conference is being held in a Province which has much to offer us in terms of its experience of struggle. It was in fact right here, in this very District, a few kilometres from Macomia, in Chai, that on 25 September 1964 the first battle was fought in the struggle for national liberation, the battle which lit the beacon which signalled the beginning of the end of colonialism in our country.

It is perhaps useful, in order to have an idea of the development of the struggle in this region, to recount some of the military actions which were carried out by our combatants. For example, this is what War Communique No. 9, issued by the Information and Propaganda Department in January 1965, almost 11 years ago, had to say:

—On 31 December 1964, our guerrillas attacked the enemy in the area of the CHIWIYA régulo, in Macomia. Eight Portuguese soldiers were killed in the attack.

—On 3 January 1965, FRELIMO combatants staged an ambush 15 kilometres from the Chai administrative post, in Macomia. Five Portuguese soldiers died in the ambush, and their weapons were captured.

—Two days later, on 5 January, the head of the Chai post sent two Mozambican soldiers to search for the FRELIMO guerrillas. After receiving the order the soldiers left the post, but with a different aim in mind; instead of reporting the presence of FRELIMO forces, they gave themselves up to the local people. They were received by the FRELIMO area secretary, who took them to our base. Those two soldiers joined the ranks of FRELIMO with their weapons and ammunition. When he saw that they were not going to return, the head of the post sent two more soldiers after them. One of these fled when confronted by our forces; the other was killed.

—On 7 January 1965, our military forces attacked the Chai administrative post, killing the



The three following texts were all originally presented at the National Conference of the Department of Information and Propaganda [DIP] of FRELIMO [Front for the Liberation of Mozambique] held in Macomia, Mozambique on 26-30 November 1975, and were published in *Documentos da conferência nacional do departamento de informação e propaganda*, 1975. They were translated from the Portuguese by Phil Gunson. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is their first English publication.

head of the post and two of his agents, and capturing several pieces of military equipment.

Also by way of illustration, here is a different type of communique, concerning Portuguese atrocities:

—On 20 February 1965, the administrator of Macomia, in the District of Cabo Delgado, sent out messengers to inform the people that they must return to their villages, because all blacks found in the bush would be killed. Those who returned home, on the other hand, would not be harmed. Some of the people allowed themselves to be duped by the Portuguese, and returned to their villages.

—On 22 February, groups of Portuguese soldiers were sent to all the villages, where they arrested all the people, later taking them by truck to one of the main towns in the area. They put the prisoners into one of the huts and set fire to it, whilst at the same time firing bursts of machine-gun fire into the hut. The only survivors were a woman and her 4-month-old son, both of whom were severely burned.

We feel that this description of battles and massacres is sufficient to give us an idea of the atmosphere of the war, and of the difficulties and suffering which afflicted the whole population, not only here but in all the war zones. It also indicates the spirit of courage and determination, and the way in which these qualities were tempered and forged by the struggle. We chose a region liberated a long time ago for holding the Conference because we are aware that this spirit and this experience will have a positive influence, and contribute to the success of our work.

Now we must turn to the *raison d'être* of this Conference.

We have come here to discuss problems of Information and Propaganda. In particular, we have come to study the role of Information and Propaganda in the new phase which is about to begin; and above all, to determine the correct methods for practical work at all levels and in all fields—Political, Ideological and Organisational. This meeting must, therefore, provide a wide-ranging interchange of experiences regarding the way in which new situations and problems which have arisen throughout the country are being dealt with and solved. Only in this way will we be able to examine and clearly define the relationships between Information and Propaganda and the accelerated development of the revolution in the present historical context in our country.

This historical context is the following:

(a) The Mozambique people, after an armed struggle lasting 10 years, under the leadership of FRELIMO, defeated Portuguese colonialism, won their independence, and created the Popular Republic.

(b) The Mozambique people, under the leadership of FRELIMO, are now engaged in the task of consolidating their recently-won independence, extending popular democratic power throughout the country, and intensifying their efforts to reconstruct the country.

(c) The forces of reaction are worried, and in some cases even desperate at the progress of our revolution. They are attempting by all possible means, both within the country and abroad, to undermine our

development through acts of sabotage, the infiltration of their agents at different levels, attempts to intimidate the people (as, for example, in the recent distribution of pens filled with explosives), and even through the kind of subversion employed by religious groups issuing directives against FRELIMO and popular power.

These are the principal characteristics of the new phase which has now begun in Mozambique. It is therefore necessary to define the role to be played in the present context by Information and Propaganda; in other words, what role must Information and Propaganda play in fulfilling the objectives of FRELIMO, in order to meet the demands of the present phase of our revolutionary process.

First, though, we must analyse, however briefly, our past work in this area, so we know the point we have arrived at. For what we are today, and what we shall be tomorrow, have roots in our past.

The Department of Information and Propaganda was created as soon as FRELIMO was set up, as one of the main branches of the organisation. It was given, as its basic task, the job of mobilising our people and international public opinion in support of the struggle for national liberation. In fulfilling this objective, the Department of Information and Propaganda had to follow a strategy which was naturally dependent on the realities of our country.

This reality was characterised by an extremely high percentage of illiteracy, particularly in rural areas. This was due to an almost total lack of equipment and material, and to an almost total lack of information cadres. And for many years, until our revolutionary line was victorious in 1970, internal struggle within FRELIMO between two opposing tendencies made it impossible to provide information and propaganda with a clear and correct content.

Experience, however, was showing us the value of this area of work. In those regions where it was possible to carry out intense information and propaganda work before beginning the armed struggle, immediate victories were won in the struggle itself. On the other hand, where this was not possible, our combatants often had to face indifference, and even hostility from the local people, who had for centuries been subjected to intensive colonialist propaganda. The same thing happened on the international front. A considerable amount of international support was lost because we were not capable of ensuring that sources of potential support received news of our struggle.

Faced with this situation, in which the high illiteracy rate made the large-scale use of written texts ineffectual, we planned a method involving documents, a national bulletin, *The Voice of the Revolution* and pamphlets, aimed not at the mass of the people but at cadres, and, in particular, at the Political Commissioners. Basically these were texts which backed up the work carried out by the Commissioners in the individual communities. They were the ones who, at this stage of the struggle, played the principal role of mobilising communities, by means of oral communications. We also encouraged the use of drawings, posters, easily-understood photographs. The main emphasis, however, for obvious reasons, was on radio, which due to its

specific characteristics could open any door, and be heard even within the best-defended of the enemy's bases. It was not, however, so effective a method as it might have been, since communities usually did not possess radio receivers; group listening was practised, but even this demands at least one receiver.

This situation did not change much with the arrival of independence. It is true that the material, technical and human resources available are greatly superior since we took power. But illiteracy cannot be eliminated from one day to the next; we have no more radio receivers than we had then, and the price of newspapers is prohibitive for most people.

Even so, today there are new prospects, new possibilities, and it is these which we must discover or create.

The starting point remains the same: information and propaganda are just as important today as they were during the liberation struggle. This is because in order to reconstruct our country we have to mobilise all our resources, and among these resources the most important is, without question, man; his determination, his will, his capability. However, the mobilisation of man requires adequate information and propaganda work. The building of popular democratic power demands that the people be aware of their rights and obligations, of the tasks that must be carried out, and, conscious of their sovereignty, have pride in their culture and individuality. And this is achieved through information and propaganda, which must inform and form politically, educate, and contribute to the transformations which are taking place.

As well as the starting point, the objectives and principles remain the same. Information and Propaganda are designed to serve the people.

This is something which we all repeat, often without bothering to learn how it can be put into practice. Many of us, especially in the Press section, are still tied, consciously or unconsciously, to the capitalist system, under which newspapers are private property, a means of making a profit by providing information to the rich on subjects which interest the rich alone, and an instrument of confusion and brutalisation for the working masses. And mainly in the case of a certain press, attitudes which blend ideological confusion with the most blatant opportunism give rise to petit-bourgeois radicalism and ultra-leftism which bear no relation to the concrete circumstances of our people and our revolution. Whether consciously or unconsciously adopted, this facilitates or opens the way to reactionary manoeuvres by causing confusion and agitation among certain sectors.

Riddled as it is with capitalist conceptions, or totally divorced from reality, this is a form of information which interests neither the people nor the revolution.

To consolidate our independence and unity, to extend popular power, to intensify the work of national reconstruction, to denounce the activities of the enemy both inside and outside the country, and to maintain our militant internationalism against capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism; these remain our objectives and principles. In order to assimilate them, we will have to eliminate completely

the remnants of the capitalist and bourgeois ideas of the colonialist era. Many of these are self-evident, but others are not. Their destruction will only be possible through persistent efforts, through our total commitment to the Revolution. The newspapers must be for us an instrument for informing, educating, mobilising, and organising the people. And this is another important matter: it is in the people that we must seek our information and ideas, for it is in them that we find the experience and the knowledge, and it is for them that we write.

Moreover, we must put an end to the preconception that only the few know how to write for the newspapers; we must rid ourselves of the complex that it is necessary to be trained, or to possess special qualities, in order to write. We must create a situation in which everyone has the chance to write, because everyone has something to say: and it is through the creation of a vast network of correspondents that we shall be capable of covering the whole country and turning our news organs into an expression of the aspirations of our people.

The professional writer, on the other hand, working for a publication, must conform to the discipline and guidance given by FRELIMO, regarding both content and form. The material which appears in our newspapers and on our radio must never be divorced from the cause of the Revolution.

It is obvious that this demand is not of an oppressive nature. It is not a question of killing personal initiative, the inclinations or the imagination of the writer. But it is necessary that everything written should conform to the guidelines laid down by the Party. Nor should it be imagined that press freedom is thereby denied. On the contrary, it is under capitalist regimes that this freedom does not exist, since there the writer can only write what is decided by the editor/owner of the newspaper, or determined by the decadent taste of the bourgeoisie public. This is especially the case for subjects such as pornography and gratuitous violence, these being the only ones that "pay". The press is only free when freed from the debasement imposed by capitalist competition, when it is of the masses, by the masses and for the popular masses.

What to write? We have an inexhaustible supply of experiences which derive from the ennobling struggle both past and present. It is therefore a question of recounting these experiences to the whole people, making them the heritage of the masses in order to enable them to take on, and the better to carry out, their tasks.

Write about our everyday reality, our achievements, our difficulties, facts and realities. Use living, concrete examples and models. But in order to do so it is necessary to go to the people, and to come from the people.

#### COMRADES,

We must leave this Conference with clear ideas and correct policies on the way we should work.

At the present time in our country, work in our area is uncoordinated; the result of a lack of planning, guidance and structures. In order to resolve our problems, and bring about a situation in which we shall be capable of producing what is

expected of us, we must concentrate in some depth on the various points on the agenda.

Of course, there is the question of structures. The lack of a structure at national level is the major cause of our shortcomings. A structure which covers the whole country and allows us to deal with all situations, according to the principles of democratic centralism. A simple, operative structure, which allows us at the same time to control all organs of information. Let us make use of the experience of the liberated zones and of the other Party organs.

For this structure we must take as the central element the communal village. During the course of the armed struggle, and especially at the beginning, one of the great problems of Information was the fact that the population was very scattered. In the course of carrying out the plan to organise the whole of our people into communal villages, we must create in these villages a system which will ensure that the political line of FRELIMO is correctly disseminated. This work is greatly facilitated by the concentration of the population, and we must take the greatest possible advantage of this fact. At the same time we should use information and propaganda to promote the communal movement itself.

Mistaken ideas, individualism, stereotyped style, elitism, demagogy, and ultra-leftism must disappear forever from our publications. To know and to understand in depth the anxieties, aspirations, problems and achievements of the working masses of our country; this is the path to follow, and thus the prime task of the journalist. True knowledge of the situation is only possible by becoming one with the people, about whom and for whom one is writing. In writing, the journalist should begin with reality and an analysis of the facts, not from definitions. Informing and contributing to the education of the masses means, above all, informing oneself and educating oneself together with the masses. We would even say that this should not only be the concern of the journalist but of all those who are responsible for information and propaganda, at all levels within the Party and throughout the Country.

We must then move on to study the question of relations and coordination between the structures of the Department of Information and Propaganda and those of the Ministry of Information. The lack of a correct definition in this area has caused conflict in the Provinces.

We must analyse in detail each of the publications; its current position, its efficiency, and the adjustment or otherwise of its activities to the political line of FRELIMO. We must study ways of ensuring that the Party is present on the radio, in the cinema, in the bookshops, and in the libraries. Today there is no FRELIMO radio programme with instructions or commentaries. This represents a step back from the days of the armed struggle, when there were two programmes from FRELIMO per day, lasting one hour each, broadcast via Radio Tanzania and Radio Zambia.

Cinema in our country has been defiled; the most repugnant films are shown in Mozambique by unscrupulous exhibitors whose only concern is to make a profit at the expense of the alienation and corruption of our youth.

Books do not fulfil their function; those which are imported are foreign to our principles, and are just as alienating as the films. Booksellers continue to be mere tradesmen. As we can read in a report presented by the recently-created Book and Record Institute: "On visiting a large exhibition of books on sex and politics, on violence and rose-tinted romance, one can see everywhere newspapers and magazines which satisfy the needs of a tiny minority as well as containing propaganda for imperialist principles". The same thing can be said about records: "The producers of records continue to behave as if they had no responsibility towards the country, and calmly and unconcernedly go on producing records which the country does not need, those which we can do without because they are inimical to the formation of the New Man we wish to create in Mozambique."

But the cinema, books, and the press are still not the real instruments for informing the masses in this country. Posters, drawings, oral description, cartoons, and above all the wall newspaper are all media which our present difficulties have transformed into important channels of information, training and political mobilisation. Their use, or rather the intensification of their use at all levels, taking advantage of the collective experience of the whole country, should take up a major part of our discussions and debates at this meeting. We must take into account, when debating this topic, that we have also to be willing to make use of the appropriate forces, and that there are no insurmountable obstacles to the revolutionary process now under way.

This, in broad terms, is the situation in our country. It is not a very bright picture, but it is one which can and must be rapidly improved. This will be our task at this Conference. This is a meeting of the Party, whose duty it is to guide the whole nation, since, as our Constitution says, "FRELIMO is the guiding force in the State and in Society". Let us begin our work conscious of the fact that we have a great responsibility.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

## FRELIMO RESOLUTION ON PARTY BOOKSHOPS (Macomia, 1975)

1. The National Conference of the Department of Information and Propaganda (DIP) of FRELIMO, meeting in Macomia between 26 and 30 November 1975, under the leadership of the National Secretary of the DIP, comrade Jorge Rebelo, discussed the problem of the need for Party Bookshops to be introduced by the Department. The debate on this issue took up part of the Sixth working session, on the morning of the 28th. Prior to this, the Conference heard reports from all the Provinces, grouping the references to this matter under the following three headings:

- (a) Organisation;
- (b) Acquisition of material;
- (c) Operation.

2. All provincial reports stressed the importance of Party Bookshops. Also emphasised was the need for books, documents, reference and reading texts to be put at the disposal of comrades who lack the material means to acquire them.

3. This led the Conference to discuss not only aspects relating to the creation of Party Bookshops but also those relating to the creation of Libraries. The distinction between the two was, however, underlined.

4. On the question of Libraries, the Conference debated the need for already existing structures to be made use of, but recommended their extension, both as regards fixed libraries and, particularly, mobile ones. The Conference considered a high priority be given their extension to Communal Villages, local areas and all the places where the vast mass of our People are being politically organised, with the aim not only of supporting and developing this work of organisation, but also of assisting the literacy campaign now under way.

5. Regarding the creation of Party Bookshops, the Conference felt that there should be at least one in each Province.

6. The next topic to be discussed was the problem of the organisation and provision of reading and reference material, both for Libraries and Party Bookshops. In particular, the Conference debated the question of the type of books which should be available in Libraries, and put on sale in future bookshops. After considering and analysing a number of proposals, it resolved to recommend that, despite the fact that priority should be given to Party documents and publications, both Libraries and Bookshops should also hold other books of a political nature, entertainment books which conformed to our political line, revolutionary literature which brought out the spirit of militancy, production, heroism in the service of the People, etc.

7. Another issue which was immediately raised

was the question of the location of Libraries and Bookshops. It was felt that in the installation, or itinerary, of such facilities, it should always be remembered that the ultimate aim was to serve the People. It was noted that a small Party Bookshop could, for example, be installed on one shelf of a People's Store. It was also suggested that the Party Bookshops themselves might have a section of secondhand books, for loan, according to systems to be set up for the Libraries.

8. Also with regard to the provision of material, it was recommended that the need for support from other Party structures be considered. Likewise, emphasis was given to the importance of concrete proposals being presented to the Department of Education and Culture to speed up the creation of Libraries at all levels.

9. With this aim in mind, and with the intention of establishing correct working principles regarding Party Bookshops, the Conference resolved that, under the aegis of the Ministry of Information, the National Book and Record Institute should be put in charge of the task of making a basic, nationwide study of all the aspects of this matter. In particular, such a study would deal with concrete problems of organisation, provision and distribution of books and of documentary and reading material, office and administrative structures, prices, types of literature to be included, mobile and fixed Libraries, the ideal location for Libraries and Party Bookshops, etc. In view of the complexity of creating a distribution network of this kind, which is unprecedented in our country, and of the relative urgency with which it must be done, the Conference felt that it was essential that a study should be carried out on which future DIP decisions and directions could be based.

## FRELIMO RESOLUTION ON DOCUMENTATION (Macomia, 1975)

1. Meeting in Macomia between 26 and 30 November 1975, under the leadership of the National Secretary of the Department of Information and Propaganda (DIP) of FRELIMO, comrade Jorge Rebelo, the National Conference of the DIP analysed in detail the problem of the principles and methods to be adopted in the area of documentation, during part of the sixth working session, on 28 November. The basis of the discussion was provided by the prior reading of the provincial reports.

2. The majority of these reports not only emphasised the need for Documentation Centres to be set up at the various levels of the DIP structures, but presented the results of useful experiences, procedures already followed, and suggestions and proposals. The Conference took into account this vast array of practical and theoretical knowledge, but stressed the need for it to be reduced to a coherent and uniform system, for use at all levels within the DIP. Only by systematising working methods throughout the country will the correct practise of democratic centralism be possible. At the same time, our working methods must also contribute to the consolidation of the profound revolutionary unity which characterises our people.

3. The Conference began by defining the fundamental task of a documentation centre as being to operate as a consultative body for all sections of the DIP structure, providing permanent information, up-to-date facts and theoretical reference documents. To this end, each Documentation Centre will not only have to acquire, collect, classify and assemble theoretical and informative texts of the most diverse nature and origin, but also concentrate on studying them, making use of techniques of synthesis, cross-reference and political re-working, according to the circumstances and needs of different sections of Information and Propaganda. It will also have to provide support for mobilisation, politicisation, the work of the Political Commissioners, the campaigns decided on by the Party Leadership, etc.

4. Thus, in this sense, the Conference agreed that the documentation service has tremendous importance for our immediate, practical needs. It must also be equally prepared to operate in support of other Party structures.

5. The National Conference of the DIP went on to discuss organisational aspects of these Documentation Centres, whilst always taking into account the need for uniformity, flexibility and adaptation to real needs. It was agreed that documentation sections would always attempt to respond to the—necessarily diverse—requirements of the different levels of DIP structures.

6. These documentation sections should al-

ways function in accordance with the following basic scheme, adopted by the Conference, which can be summed up under three headings:

(a) The administrative function: basically, an administrative-type archive, designed for the classification and ordering of correspondence received, and copies of that sent out by all sections of the DIP, plus circulars issued and received, etc. In short, a type of archive which all national and provincial secretaries are obliged to maintain.

(b) The documentation function: texts and theoretical documents issued by the Party, cuttings from national and foreign newspapers, political documents of varying origin and nationality, etc.

(c) The collection of oral documentation records dealing with the historical tradition of our People, descriptions of the conditions of life under the colonial regime, of foreign oppression, of resistance, and above all the National Liberation struggle. Also recorded should be the results of surveys into the present living conditions of our People, the results of the communal movement which is currently under way, notes on daily life in our cities and communal villages, etc. The need for encouragement to be given to the collection of oral documents and for the above-mentioned surveys to be carried out as regularly as possible was also mentioned. In both cases care should be taken in putting together the results of these collections carried out among the people, so that they can then be distributed throughout the country. The outcome will thus be that information and experiences derived from the people are returned to the people. It is important that they should form part of the provincial organisms and of a great national archive.

7. As regards the collection, classification and archiving of all this material, the Conference also felt that this required a particular kind of organisation, one based on a number of universal rules which would permit and facilitate its operation. This organisation and set of basic rules will permit uniformity to be achieved in accordance with the DIP structures.

8. In conclusion, the Conference recommended that this should be made the subject of a study, and that, as rapidly as possible, a document should be distributed containing these guidelines and basic rules for the uniform operation of the DIP documentation sections at all levels.

## H. TOWARDS A GLOBALIZATION OF STRUGGLES

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New Technologies, Decentralization and Public Service

Michael Chanan

## LABOUR POWER AND AESTHETIC LABOUR IN FILM AND TELEVISION IN BRITAIN

(UK, 1980)

Britain's commercial television network has just gone through the longest and costliest strike in its history. A lock-out, in fact, which demonstrated not so much a confrontation over pay as a deliberate attempt by the companies to weaken the unions before the introduction of the fourth television channel. This is the channel the new Tory Government recently decided to allocate to the commercial broadcasting system by declaring it would be placed under the supervision of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The companies' intentions became clear the moment they put the subject of new technology on the agenda for negotiation. They are obviously glad of the decision, but there are now a number of problems they have to face up to. Their studio complexes are like factories employing up to 2,000 people working to tight schedules, in which capacity can only be raised in the short term by unpopular shift-work. As one commentator recently put it,

skilled staff are scarce, and training — after 20 years — scarcely occurs. By redeployment and use of advanced technology, the companies might just cope. The alternatives are to expand the already dismal factories — with still more technicians locked into rostered work-patterns and alienating divisions of labour — or watch the small independents grab a larger share of the action.<sup>1</sup>

The unions, however, were ready for this confrontation. There has been a higher degree of awareness among them than among most other sectors of trade union membership, of the central issues raised by the lock-out at *The Times*, which was already approaching its first anniversary when the television strike began. As media workers, those involved in the television strike had greater knowledge and understanding of the going-ons at *The Times* than what filtered through the media to the mass of other workers in typically disconnected fragments. This is due to at least two reasons. First because the news, and perhaps more importantly, the rumours behind the news, are more accessible to them. Secondly, because at this particular juncture, the issues in both industries — press and television — are closely similar: the introduction of new technology in both threatens

This text is part of a larger work in progress which will constitute a new edition of the author's *Labour Power in the British Film Industry*, London, British Film Institute, 1976; a history of trade unions in the British film industry up to the end of World War Two. The new edition will bring this history up to date. Reprinted by permission of the author. This is its first publication.

great changes in the labour process. In particular, it threatens to displace workers who have traditionally been the occupants of a number of key positions. Typesetters, for example, are threatened by computer typesetting, which can be done by journalists and classified advertisement copy takers themselves. In television, news film cameramen are threatened by ENG (Electronic News Gathering) equipment and so are other jobs that might be affected by a general reduction in the use of celluloid here and elsewhere in television programme making.

There is special significance in these two disputes — or will be, if the experience is built upon. Look at the poor intelligence of the media coverage devoted to them, a question not of reporters failing to do their job but of the media not wanting to wash their dirty linen in public. The ideological authority of the media has suffered (time will tell how much) not merely through omission, but because commentators nevertheless managed to get themselves heard loudly criticising certain media proprietors — especially *The Times* — now that it could be seen their own industrial relations were pretty disastrous, for their habitual pontification on the very subject of industrial relations, which management and unions have often had equal occasion to dislike. This revealed something more than usual of the extent and nature of the effect — or lack of it — which media coverage exercised over the conduct of the two struggles. There is anyway little enough reason to believe that workers involved in a struggle are ever particularly duped by the media, though it's a common error of left-wing adventurists to imagine no-one but they themselves can see how the media always slant everything. On the contrary, probably few workers could fail in a concrete situation they were themselves involved in to be pretty aware of the distortions, omissions and often sheer stupidity of what was being said about them in the news. Should we be surprised if this effect is more acute in the case of struggles within the media, like these two? The ideological effects of the media as they're operated under capitalism begin to be learnt even through economic trades union struggles by workers engaged in those struggles when they are themselves media workers. And the knowledge they thus acquire is of a kind that ought to lead not only to more intense economic militancy, but also to a politicisation of militancy. In any other industry, because they lack access to the means of production and dissemination of information, workers could easily possess considerable political consciousness without anyone they're not in direct contact with really knowing. But in the case of media workers? First, they would become doubly aware of the ideological form of the media. From outside, as ordinary receivers, and from inside. This means, as both subjects and senders, in whom, however, because of the structure of the labour process in the media currently under threat, the functions of sender in the technical sense and of the subject as author have been separated. Would they not then demand to become their own senders, authors of the messages about them-

1. Gus MacDonald, "Television's High Technology Warfare" *New Statesman* (London), 14 September 1979.

selves? Politicisation of this kind could experience a qualitative general advance if not only could media workers make their own voice heard but other workers too could be enabled to speak out and openly. This needs political organisation and leadership, and the self-confidence of a sense of class which only can ensure them. It needs proper access to and due control over the public media. But it also needs increasing information, producing adequate knowledge of the workings of society, government and capital. It could be one of the tasks of a politicised media labour force to disseminate enabling information of this kind.

Brecht had a utopian vision of the social function of the media. In 1932 he wrote:

To speak the truth, the task of the radio isn't limited to a simple retransmission of information. Apart from this it must organise the collection of information, that is to say, it must transform information given by those who govern into response to questions posed by those who are governed. Radio must render exchanges possible. It alone can organise great discussions between major sectors of the economy and consumers on the standardisation of consumer goods, debates on the rise in the price of bread, arguments between municipalities.

"If you still find this utopian," he added, "ask yourself why it's utopian".

But the level of political consciousness within the unions that have just been involved in these media confrontations should not be over-estimated. It has long been held back and is only just beginning to shudder into action. By sketching an historical perspective for film and television, this essay will try to suggest the current ideological weight that needs to be shifted in the media.

## II

Film came first. Film production stumbled towards its formal division of labour from two directions, the same two directions which Marx identified in *Capital* as the twofold origin of manufacture. On the one hand, it took up workers from a number of established trades and crafts, such as carpenters, scene-painters, hairdressers and costumiers, even the new electrical trades. On the other hand, it evolved its own specialised jobs, which split up into different functions and grades as the technology and techniques of film making grew more complex. In this way the film crew on the studio floor and the general body of film workers beyond it acquired its typical complex hierarchy. This hierarchy is intimately bound up with trade union organisation and history both within the film industry and beyond it. However, a number of paradoxes and contradictions have arisen within the union organisation of the film industry in Britain, and within television where, with one or two others in addition, the same unions operate. This situation can be traced on the one hand to general aspects of the British trade union movement which are themselves problematic, and on the other to various peculiarities within the film industry itself.<sup>2</sup>

2. This essay concentrates on the latter; some of the former are discussed in my monograph, *Labour Power in the British Film Industry*, London, British Film Institute, 1976.

There are two directions of approach to the peculiarities of a medium such as film: on the one hand, though investigation of the labour process and the inevitable conflict between the nature of aesthetic labour — a term I shall examine in a moment — and the demands of commercial production; on the other by examining the special characteristics of film as commodity. These two lines of approach correspond to the paired concepts of production and consumption. Film is by no means unique in respect to the paradoxes and contradictions that arise here. Each and every form of cultural production under capitalism involves contradictions in the labour process and manifests some peculiarity as a commodity. By the forms that these features take on depend on the material characteristics of the medium in question. The study of the political economy of any form of cultural production must therefore be concerned with an examination of the material nature of the forces and relations of production on the one hand, and the factors affecting the mode of consumption on the other.

This is a dialectical approach and ought not to be contentious. But the concept of aesthetic labour which I just mentioned is problematic; especially since one of the oldest conceptual stumbling blocks in the study of film is the question whether film is art or industry, as if there were something incompatible between the two. There is indeed an incompatibility in the concepts, but it is a conceptual error, and survival of idealist thinking compounded by an undialectical response, to suppose that these categories are mutually exclusive. When you move from the abstract back into the concrete, the initial incompatibility of the categories in the realm of thought becomes a real contradiction to be traced precisely in the labour process.

The fundamental problem in all fields of cultural production is that the production of the content and cultural forms cannot, in the last instance, be mechanised (and since form and content are not entirely separable, this means that neither can formal questions be mechanised, though they may be very heavily rule-governed). In other words, cultural production is bound to depend in the last instance on judgement by individuals or collectively by groups of workers however compromised they become with the institutionalised values of the medium they work in, and however much they conform, consciously and intentionally, or unconsciously and unwittingly, to the restrictive conditions imposed on their labour. 'Cultural forms' here obviously means more than 'Art'. The term must take in all forms of persuasion where the classical concept of Rhetoric may be usefully applied: in the dissemination of news, advertising, consumer journalism, in all the phenomena of 'mass entertainment'. All of them are forms of persuasion, of rhetorical address. Dialectically understood in relation to this, the concept of aesthetic labour displaces the concept of art but at the same time extends the realm of applicability of aesthetic criteria, by recognising that mental processes identified in bourgeois philosophy with the creative imagination are exercised not only in producing what can be hallowed as a work of art, but also in the

production of other kinds of human communication; such processes are equally characteristic in all human communication systems, linguistic and non-linguistic.

In the various recognised forms of artistic production the work of the creative imagination can be seen to take on a specially and peculiarly disciplined nature. But the word 'Art' has become problematic for us because it has come to be associated with a particular (though variable) body of works and performances invested with institutionalised aesthetic approval awarded or withheld not for aesthetic but for socio-political reasons. Not only does this exclude traditional, popular culture, just as it delays the acceptance of avant garde works until their experimental quality has lost its sting; it also serves to exclude consideration of the process of production. Yet in the nineteenth century the word 'art' was still often used (and is still sometimes so used today) to refer to practices which required the exercise of judgement, usually but not always aesthetic, on the part of the practitioner, whether the product was to be deemed a work of art or not. We still speak of the surgeon's art. Photography was early described as an art, until a few voices began to object that because the process was automatic it wasn't truly artistic. The term "art" and its ambiguities thus became problematic mainly because for the educated classes, new modes of cultural production began to displace previously undoubted aesthetic values and canons of taste — a situation which was compounded by the incorporation, in commercial interests, of many of the values of traditional popular culture which had been repressed in the course of the growth of bourgeois culture as coarse and vulgar, inartistic and uneducated. With the multiplication of new kinds of cultural products, the concept of aesthetic labour therefore returns us to the primacy of the process of production, whatever the material, and shaped by whatever aesthetic or cultural traditions. Wherever in cultural production some aspect of the labour process remains within the realm of the worker's judgement, however repressed or automatic that exercise of judgement may be, we may speak of a conflict between the supposed nature of aesthetic labour and the demands of capitalistic production. This is true not only for traditional types of artwork, but also for certain new jobs, like those of the recording engineer, the television camera operator, even the advertising copy writer or artist. As long as some element of judgement is needed on the worker's part in order to produce a product which is deemed effective, in which certain standards, technical and otherwise, are supposed to be necessary, then *the full resources of real control over the labour process cannot be applied*. Something, however slight, escapes mechanization and automation, and capital has to resort to *formal and ideological* controls which induce a *subjective* automatism in the worker's exercise of judgement.

In many instances, the workings of the systems of formal control are bound to go unchallenged by the workers concerned because simply having chosen to work in such an industry they are necessarily compromised by its inescapable ideological function. Advertising is the most obvious case. The introduction of commercial television has meant that a con-

siderable number of union members now find their sole employment in making advertisements, and many more depend on it less directly. In other areas the function of the product is not so pre-determined. Television, whatever its characteristics as a medium of communication, could clearly be used in lots of ways that are now effectively prohibited, whose prohibition amounts to — at the very least — indirect censorship. The question of whether the products of these media meet traditional aesthetic criteria, whether they're artistic or not, is therefore an idealist question, and worse, an ideological red herring. In contrast, using the concept of aesthetic labour to displace the concept of art, and analysing out the points at which formal and ideological controls overlay the labour process, in this way the question of the ideological operation of these media is exposed from within, so to speak. Moreover, this approach is not only a materialist one, but because it places the conditions of labour in the foreground — as opposed to a theorisation of ideology from a position outside the point of production — it suggests a strategy for political agitation and the politicisation of trade union struggles.

## III

There is one fundamental paradox about the consumption of film that frequently escapes attention but nevertheless explains in large part why trade union struggle in the film industry has hardly ever taken issue with the dominant ideological nature of the product and has been limited instead to mainly economic aims; that is, in addition to those aspects of trade unionism which generally orient union struggle towards economic aims. Many people think of film as the most typical and indeed characteristic of twentieth century art forms, and yet, in this age of mechanical reproduction, which has not only given us what is euphemistically called 'mass culture' but has also provided for the mentality of the 'culture vulture' through the mass production of copies of artworks, the film has until recently escaped the possession of the private individual. Mechanical reproduction has affected the other arts in an opposite way. The gramophone, for example, totally reshaped the music market by making the very performance of music into a commodity of a conventional kind, something which could be bought over the counter and taken away, and collections acquired, whereas previously music was only able to produce an exchange value through the activities of music publishers and by means of the gate money paid for admission to a concert, a different type of collection. The collective nature, the collectivity of the two publics, is equally different. On the level of technology there is of course a similarity between the gramophone record and the film. Like the record which needs a gramophone and loudspeaker for its reproduction, the film needs a projector and screen. But as commodities, the behaviour of the record and the film differ. The consumption of film was not primarily designed to accommodate to the privacy of the home. The costs of production and of copies were too great to stimulate the development of an atomized home market of this kind, while the preferable



size of the screen and the throw of the projector were ideal for consumption by large audiences. The paradigmatic forms developed by film were therefore those of the cinema, with its populist aesthetic — the 'movie', rather than the 'film', with its appeal to the same culture of individual sensibility as in the evolution of modernism in the other arts.

Commercialism has had similar effects in all the arts: aesthetic principles get reduced to gross uniformity, and institutionalised sets of formulae are simply redeployed according to a limited set of conventions to produce an illusion of novelty and variety. In truth this is more like the annihilation of art, art as a cognitive means of expression, enriched by concrete forms of ambiguity, metaphor, polysemy and symbolic imagery, which provide for the vicarious exploration of the ever-changing social world, the sharpening of the process of perception. Film inherited the scope of art because not only was cinematography a new instrument of perception; in addition, filmic montage was a new means of aesthetic synthesis. But caught up in the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, film workers were captured in the ideological bind of film's very success. They were captured by an aesthetics of populism based largely on forms of nineteenth century popular culture, elucidated here and there by appeals to educated art, but reduced to the unidimensional functions of commercial evaluation. As a result the bulk of film workers was only marginally affected by the elaboration of other kinds of film use such as those developed by the avant garde in the 1920s. Even more marginal in effect were the possibilities which might have followed the marketing of non-professional 16mm equipment in the 1930s (and subsequently 8mm), precisely because the 1930s was the period (in Britain) of the unionisation of technicians, and hence of a new wave of institutionalisation of techniques, procedures and standards which workers themselves helped to articulate in order to support their claims to special status as craft workers, modern engineers of the aesthetic. Meanwhile amateur cine was promoted under the sign of consumerism, where it was seen as a way of 'democratising' the means of production only according to the already established canons of consumer photography. Only in recent years have non-professional groupings of users begun to articulate and publicly demand new radical uses for these tools, these media.

It is true that the workers' film movement of the 1930s saw the availability of 16mm equipment politically. They grasped the new 'substandard' equipment as a means of production of information free from interference, although on a limited scale, and set about the production of films as an instrument of opposition. These films were mostly devoted to the purposes of solidarity, especially international solidarity. Yet with few exceptions, even when they were made with inventiveness and artistry, they didn't challenge the already commercially established values of film as a suggestive and emotive medium rather than an intellectual one — in spite of the example available to them in the Soviet cinema of the 1920s. They did not, in other words, challenge the commercially dominant paradigmatic codes of screen representation. Following the dictum that the camera

cannot lie, these codes present the images on the screen as veridical. Accordingly the screen itself is taken as a window into the world, rather than being seen as the carrier of a system of signs, which behave accordingly to their own protocols, and produce an imaginary world, similar to the real one but rendering much of it fantastical and some of it necessarily invisible. The productions of the workers' film movement attacked commercial cinema not in the same way as the avant garde, by challenging the representational system, but simply by saying 'the capitalists are not letting us see the truth: these are the images of life under capitalism, here are the images of protest they refuse to show, of the Spanish Civil War, of the behaviour of the Nazis on the streets' and so on. But the commercial apparatus of cinema was not to be displaced in this way, even discounting the restricted viewing of these films due to the impossibility of distributing them within the capitalist cinema itself.

The reason is that cinema as an institution consists in more than just the paradigmatic codes of screen representation. These codes were reinforced even as they were still emerging by a marketing apparatus which implicated all other available forms of mass communication, forming an ideological web designed to gratify what after all are very real needs for diversion and entertainment on the part of the audience, however malformed those needs and their satisfaction become as a result. The reasons why people went to the cinema were in order to fulfill substantially the same needs as those traditional popular culture had always fulfilled, which cinema, since it was born in the milieu of popular culture, had taken over and adapted. The workers' film movement could not compete in these functions, any more than the avant garde which tried to oppose commercial cinema with various kinds of aesthetic experiment.

Integration within the labyrinthine apparatus of 'mass culture' was a vital necessity for an industry and a commodity as peculiar — and as risky — as film. The riskiness of it was due to a combination of factors that found expression in the seemingly unbounded rise in the costs of production, which increased hugely as the industry grew up and discovered the full scope and means of its operation — while only uncertain predictions could be made of expectable consumption, of the way the market would behave, since audiences retained something of their popular identity and exercised their prerogative in the unpredictable vagaries of popular aesthetic taste. The industry attempted to minimize its difficulties by means of the star system and the supporting aesthetic of the genre movie. This cemented a social habit of movie-going in the audience while holding them in a manipulated condition of frenzy as fans and passivity in front of the moving image itself. The contradiction of this configuration has been rendered invisible in the industry's ideological appeal to the most old-fashioned of market philosophies. To the present day — every issue of the US cinema and entertainment trade journal *Variety* reeks with it — the industry continues to declare that the public shows its judgement through the box office. What should not be forgotten in branding this as an ideological stance is that originally it was a thoroughly pragmatic philo-

sophy, belonging to the early days of cinema when that was precisely what the audience did, thus imposing an apparently irreversible direction on the aesthetic development of cinema through pronouncing popular collective aesthetic judgement. The collectivity of the popular audience has been undermined and transformed by the manipulations of the market. Yet just how shallow the commercialized basis of the movie-going habit, and how unreliable for the continued prosperity of the industry the passivity of the viewer, is clearly demonstrated by the widespread, staggered but rapid and *in toto* enormous fall in attendance which came about when people were offered alternative, cheaper, but not dissimilar gratification in their own homes in the form of television.

#### IV

Among the factors that make film so risky there are various further peculiarities of film as a commodity that also lie at the basis of the industry's economic structure, and which derive from several factors. In the first place, like any aesthetic product, film does not need physically to change hands in order to be consumed. No physical act of exchange but only the exchange of symbolic content is necessary for aesthetic consumption. Thus before the age of mechanical reproduction, exchange value could only be realized in the case of performance by means of gate money, the price of admission. Perhaps it can be maintained that film still involves a certain measure of performance by some of those who contribute to it, but it is clearly not a performance art: the performers are no longer present to the audience. The film thus also possesses a form of durability which is typical of non-performance arts which do not need to be re-created for each audience.

It can be said that all aesthetic forms consist in an *ideal* durability unlike, say, foodstuffs, which are not only physically exchanged but which are also then physically consumed. But the particular durability of film is material, not ideal. This makes film different from such cultural goods as books and records whose sale removes them from the market (though a second-hand market for them may exist). Film's special form of durability permits repeated exhibition and continued realization of exchange value until the copy is physically worn out and no longer viewable. (There is an equivalent point where records and books drop out of the second-hand market). Lastly, film also differs from such aesthetic objects as paintings in that as in the case of books there is no unique original. The film exists in the form of multiple copies.

This combination of factors accounts for the whole structure of ownership and control in the film industry. The owner of the film never need let go of it in order for its exchange value to be realized. What is sold is the right of admission to view it. But if there is no need for the film to pass physically into the hands

3. See Peter Bachlin, *Histoire Economique du Cinema*, Paris, La Nouvelle Edition, 1947; also my own *The Dream That Kicks: Prehistory and Early Years of Cinema in Britain*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

4. Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, New York, Viking Press, 1971.

of the consumer, there is also no need for its legal ownership to pass into the hands of the exhibitor, as in the early days when films were sold to exhibitors on an open market by producers and dealers. Instead it is possible for dealers or producers to become distributors who retain legal ownership of the film and only rent it out. This is exactly what happened. The accumulation of capital by distributors, which led to their domination not only over exhibition but also over production when they were not already producers, began when they hit on the device of film rental.<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect of the film as commodity is captured in the observation that because films cannot be sold over the counter like ordinary commodities, the audience cannot inspect the goods freely before deciding whether or not to buy: to inspect the goods in this case is to consume them. (Is this the true 'spectacular' nature of cinema?) The priority in the producers'/distributors' way of thinking was thus inevitably drawn to whatever would induce a *social habit of film going* in the audience; the means were variety of production, novelty, and surprise, all within the necessary bounds of the star system and the aesthetics of the genre. In the end this eliminated all but the semblance of consumer choice except in the language in which the films were marketed. Trailers in the cinemas, poster advertising, film fan magazines, fan clubs, the whole extra-filmic promotional apparatus, were all devoted to building up the phenomenon of the star, expanding the qualities the screen already lent to its personages. For as Stanley Cavell has pointed out<sup>4</sup>, there is a crucial difference between stage and screen: the stage actor projects, the screen actor is projected; this difference shows itself in the fact that the stage character is always larger than any particular actor in the part, whereas on the screen, it is precisely the reverse. The role belongs to the star, it is the star's incarnation. The star system draws on this phenomenon, inserting the personality of the star into the genre system as an added protection. What are they protecting? The apparatus which sells the star's reputation to the audience is twinned by another, the market for the very body of the star in which production companies trade these most valuable, but paradoxically most insubstantial assets, as they buy and sell their stars' contracts among each other. Because they are thought of as properties rather than as labour power, they become objects of speculation and command their own fantastic fees. The higher grades of production workers, those whose 'artistic' provenance is credited, benefit from this by also often being able to command considerable fees. The trades unions follow suit: if the industry can afford to pay these moneys to some, it must be able to afford to pay its 'ordinary' workers accordingly.

The consequence of the stars' astronomical fees and the effect of this on other specialist workers is that as the industry developed its means and techniques of production, production costs rose without any improvement in the organic composition of capital, nor of course in productivity. The consolidation of the rental system, however, in a way that

increased the efficiency of exploitation of each copy, meant that although what the industry calls 'negative costs' — the costs of producing the final negative from which copies are printed — were rising, conversely the cost of making copies was proportionately falling. This made it possible for a strong film industry to extend the market at very low cost; in particular, to invade foreign markets without having to deprive the home market.

The first condition for the development of such a strategy was provided by the entry of finance capital into the North American film industry in the period leading up to the First World War. They pulled the industry out of its small entrepreneurial beginnings by imposing on producers the requirement of proper accounting. For the industry's pioneer artists, this soon came to mean the restriction of time for aesthetic exploration and experimentation. It was a form of control which Charles Chaplin, for one, sought to escape from when he joined the small group that set up United Artists. The second condition was provided by the War — the same War that shot the same Chaplin into international stardom. For it was Charlie's immense popularity in Europe, especially among the soldiers in the trenches, at a moment when his popularity in the U.S. had begun to wane, that served as one of the main elements in persuading the US film industry of the importance of the overseas market, reinforcing their resolve to take advantage of the effect the War had in curtailing European production. Emerging Hollywood here began with a distinct circumstantial advantage: the enormous size of the US market, the largest in the world at the time, which enabled them to mount lavish productions and still recover negative costs without recourse to foreign sales. With the cost of copies being so small, they were subsequently able to undercut foreign producers in overseas territories. Although prior to the Second World War, these foreign earnings represented no more than 15-25% of the total, they were key. This was already rather confusedly acknowledged by the industry itself in the 1920s. According to one industry spokesman, discussing the question of "how we are trying to lessen sales resistance in those countries that want to build up their own industries":

We are trying to do that by internationalising this art, by drawing on old countries for the best talent that they possess in the way of artists, directors and technicians, and bringing these people over to our country, by drawing on their literary talents, taking their choicest stories and producing them in our own way, and sending them back into the countries where they are famous. In doing that, however, we must always keep in mind the revenue end of it. Out of every dollar received, about 75¢ still comes out of America and only 25¢ out of all the foreign countries combined. Therefore you must have in mind a picture that will first bring in that very necessary 75% and that secondly will please the other 25% that you want to please. If you please the 25% of foreigners

5. "Distributing the Product", in J.P. Kennedy, ed., *The Story of the Films*, A.W. Shaw & Co. 1927, pp. 225-6. My thanks to Simon Hartog for this source.

6. Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*, Riofrancos, trans., London, Merlin, 1973; see especially Part II.

to the detriment of your home market, you can see what happens. Of course, the profit is in that last 25%.<sup>5</sup>

The last sentence gives the game away. To put it more simply and precisely: it was the foreign earnings which guaranteed industry's rate of surplus profit which they needed to sustain in order to promote investment and continue expansion.

The tactics which the North Americans employed overseas in this process included a number of distributive malpractices. They did not merely saturate the market, but proceeded to regulate it by such means as block booking and blind booking, which require exhibitors to hire films they don't want for the sake of getting the ones they do want. Not only, therefore were successful films able to maximise their profit through drawing larger audiences and being shown for longer runs, but a presale agreement guaranteed a minimum return on the least successful films — at the exhibitor's cost. (The successful films of course provided the paradigms for the elaboration of the genre system.) The same processes now operate in the sale of television film series, which are really block and often blind booking systems in disguise, and are sometimes virtually given away as part of international aid programmes. You can be sure the companies and corporations do not lose by this 'gesture'.

## V

Although multiple copies of films are made in laboratories, films are not really mass produced. A film can be successfully exploited with only a few dozen copies, and the most successful does not require more than a few hundred worldwide. In any normal mass production industry, the costs of producing a prototype are sunk into very lengthy production runs. This doesn't happen in film. The commercial life of a film may be spread out over three or four years, but as we saw, so-called negative costs are enormous in relation to the cost of prints. It is as if the film industry cannot get away from the need constantly to create new prototypes. The genre system ensures that these prototypes are held within set formulae; nevertheless it is precisely in the individual character of the film that its aesthetic aspects lie (which is why the best genre movies are invariably those that use the genre only as a framework to be somehow subverted).

Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez has argued<sup>6</sup> that since every original aesthetic product is unique and unrepeatable — a proposition which evidently continues to apply to film in spite of its industrial aspect — so the kind of labour which goes into it must be highly concrete and cannot be measured abstractly: it is the quality and not the quantity of work which is aesthetically embodied in the finished work and gives it its worth. Indeed, as he explains, the time spent in creation varies from one individual to another, or even with the same individual. The same must ideally apply, and did so before the age of film as well, to all forms of collective aesthetic labour, though earlier it was generally in the context of performance under different conditions.

By the 1920s, the film industry has learnt enough about its production process to have started hiving off the laboratories into separate units, because it was

here that something close to factory conditions could be obtained (though still imperfectly, since films go backwards and forwards to the laboratory during the course of production and it is only at the end of the process that multiple copies are made). When the film technicians' union (ACT — Association of Cinematograph Technicians) was set up in Britain in the 1930s, it had the intelligence, following its more radical leaders, to realize that the union needed to bring both laboratory workers and production personnel into the same body, and it quickly became a key point of ACT policy to devote considerable energies to organising the laboratories. They knew production workers would be isolated without the laboratory workers, who constituted in their eyes the real base of industrial power in the industry; and that the support of production workers in organising the labs would earn the support of the lab workers in studio struggles. For the lab workers had the power to stop a production by refusing to process the film, just as certain workers in television have the power to black — or should it be blank? — the screen.

Nevertheless, the key to the labour process lies in the studios and not the labs. The creative role of the main production specialists, such as the director of photography on the studio floor and the editor in the cutting rooms, has generally been recognised alongside the role of the director and in partnership with those of the writer, actors and composer — and sometimes the producer. But in ignoring such roles as that of the camera operator who works under the director of photography in feature film production, film theory and criticism has accepted the industrial hierarchy uncritically. In fact everyone in film production is able under what are admittedly rare ideal conditions to exercise some creative prerogative, however small. Even the smallest contribution can be aesthetically significant as long as it's directed towards what appears on the screen; and in some cases even the tiniest detail may find itself foregrounded — like the role of the triangle player in the Liszt Piano Concerto. Because of this, independent craftworkers aim to become specialists in the application of their craft to the film. Such specialisation has several dimensions. A hairdresser, for example — and I deliberately pick on an occupation of modest prestige — is called upon for expertise in styles that may be out of fashion and even quite dated, perhaps purely historical, a capacity rarely within the compass of the ordinary hairdresser. Further called upon to contribute to the make-up of monsters and all kinds of imaginary figures, the film hairdresser has to become more inventive. On top of this, he or she needs to be aware that their work is not an end in itself but has to fit highly specific aesthetic requirements deriving from the overall dramatic idea of the film. This calls on something beyond inventiveness: the disciplined intelligence to interpret and realize an expressive need which is created collectively (even if it's determined and occasionally censored by one or two hierarchically senior persons). The film production worker is therefore not a detail worker completely isolated from the others in the production process. Constant interplay and feedback is required — and this remains true even fairly ordinarily — between different workers in the production of a film, so that,

ideally, suggestions are able to suggest suggestions which suggest suggestions.

All this implies a quite different development of the worker's capacities from the normal one which Marx classically ascribed to the detail worker in the ordinary manufacturing process, in which dull routine impairs "the intensity and vigour" of the worker's "animal spirits", and in which she or he is reduced literally to the equivalent of a machine tool. What Marx describes as the characteristic alienation of industrial production is the result of the intensification of exploitation consequent upon the development of machinofacture. Capital gradually learnt to impose the machine on the worker in a way that was entirely indifferent to the human character of its operator and which coerced the worker into accepting a speed and mode of operation determined not by the worker's own comfort but by the needs of capital as embodied in the machine. With the further development of technology leading to automation, these alienating work norms could be built into the machines themselves and the worker was thus totally depersonalised. In this way capital established its calculable work routines — they called it scientific management — and has taken control of the production process entirely out of the worker's hands. But in spite of the fact that cinematography was the product of development of the productive forces of nineteenth century capitalism and was improved by the advances of twentieth century technology, very few of these techniques of control are possible in film production, because, strictly speaking, the technology of film consists not in machines but in tools and instruments; these are extensions of the worker not the other way round.

It is surprising (or is it?) that film theorists have not made this a cardinal point of discussion. One of the few who did, Umberto Barbaro, showed that it is one of the most fundamental aspects of the material nature of film, and its consequences mean that the old arguments about whether film is art or not are idealist and illegitimate. Barbaro explained (quoting the Soviet film historian Lebedev) that the camera cannot be regarded as a machine because while the machine is indifferent to its operator, and the product of twenty different workers will be identical, the camera is not: give twenty operators a camera to shoot the same scene and the results of each one will be quite different, according to their different mentalities, states of mind, wishes, expressive capabilities and intentions. One can add that not even two operators of equal capabilities following the same instructions could even produce quite the same result except by accident. The analysis can be extended: some pieces of film equipment might be regarded as tools in the hands of craftworkers, who retain control over the method and pace of working but will produce work of equal value even if not identical results; a few parts, mostly apparatus involved in the manufacture of film stock and in processing and printing, might be correctly called machines; but certain key items, and principally the camera, are instruments in the full sense: like musical instruments. We don't speak of operating a piano but of playing it; and as with the playing of music, film technique is inseparable from the style and creative value of the result. As Barbaro

put it, "it is not as if in the creative act there is artistic inspiration on the one hand and the technique of execution on the other, the one is not guided by the other; both constitute a tight unity, that of a single activity".<sup>7</sup> Because of this Barbaro refuses the opposition that so many film theorists have posed between the automatism of the camera and the artistic nature of film. "Until now", said Barbaro, "one of the axioms of the artistic nature of film has been to negate the automatism of the camera, considering it not as a machine, that is, something that automatically fabricates identical products in series, but as an artistic instrument. Similarly the contrary position has always negated the artistic nature of film, by saying that it is no more than the mechanical reproduction of reality."<sup>8</sup> The negation of one position by the other here is undialectical. Because the camera is an artistic instrument, it is therefore a cognitive one. It is a means of appropriating the photogenic world (in semiological language, the world of pre-filmic events) — the world that is reproduced by the camera's automatism. Thus it becomes a vicarious means of investigation, whose images can be recombined in a fictional or non-fictional exposition of an artistic nature (whether any individual example seems worthy of being called a work of art or not). This is so fundamental in the way it orients the production process that what is true of the operation of the camera is also true, to a lesser degree, all the way down the scale. It means that with the exception of only a few elements, the labour process in the production of film is not *mechanical* although the instrument is. Again like music. There's nothing mechanical about playing even the simplest repetitive rhythm — or there shouldn't be. (And some musical instruments, like pianos, *are* mechanical.)

Because of the nature of aesthetic labour it is impossible to apply to film the calculation of production in terms of the normal conditions of labour and of average skills which applies theoretically to the measurement of the socially necessary labour power employed in regular industrial production. Consequently there are very few strict forms of time economy that can be effectively introduced into film production, and as any are attempted, the stricter they are, the more aesthetically disastrous. Time economy works when an acceleration in the work speed of each worker can be achieved through the simplification of precisely defined work movements and their co-ordination across a collectivity of workers. Film production is indeed collective, but not in the same way. The co-ordination of film workers is co-operative, not imposed. Consequently, for example, you can have the working day extended in length to increase productivity, but that's not time economy. What you cannot do is introduce methods designed to eliminate slack periods such as those which are needed in film production for adjusting equipment, lighting a set, rehearsing and so forth: tasks pre-

liminary to shooting. The workers who perform these jobs, anyway a number of them, are necessarily idle while shooting is actually in progress. This is why a film studio or location always presents the spectacle of people hanging around doing nothing for a good deal of the time. Usually there's always somebody waiting to be able to start their next job.

This is not to say capital didn't try to find more 'efficient' ways of working, or at least attempt to impose controls and restrictions. The production conditions of what were called 'quota quickies' in Britain in the 1930s represent one major attempt to do this. These were films which were produced in order to satisfy the quota requirements of the 1927 Cinematograph Act, introduced as a measure of protection for the British film industry in response to its faltering in the face of North American competition. In addition to a considerable extension of the working day (sometimes fifteen hours a day, seven days a week!) or the shooting of two films in the same studio at the same time, one during the day, the other at night, strict budgets were imposed according to which, following agreement among themselves, distributors paid a standard price for a film of a pound per foot. Under these conditions, aesthetic criteria went by the board, and only the most basic technical criteria were allowed (correct focus, exposure, etc.). But as Barbaro argued, there is no clear division between aesthetics and technique, and it is the entire aesthetic system of the film which suffers thereby. The same thing happened wherever the conditions of competition imposed by Hollywood induced the production of quickies, whether for quota or otherwise. As a director of such films in Mexico in the 1930s explained:

In the first place, I reduced the use of the clapper to a minimum. Second, I didn't bother to frame up, which seemed to me unnecessary...I filmed like this: a wide shot with one camera, and when I called 'cut' I only stopped the main camera and left the lights burning; then I approached the actors with a hand-held camera and took close-ups. In the third place, I never repeated a scene. If an actor made a mistake it didn't worry me. I changed the position of the camera and went on filming from the point where the mistake had been made.<sup>9</sup>

Many of the quota quickies in Britain were so bad they had to be written off. At best they might be used as supporting pictures but many of them ended up being shown only in the mornings when nobody but the cleaning women were in the cinema. However, shown they had to be. Although nowadays there are provisions to avoid it, the Quota Act was then policed by numerous prosecutions of cinemas which failed to fulfill their quotas. Consequently these films came to be little more, in many cases, than a standing charge on distributors' budgets, to be swallowed up in overheads against the profits of the successful prestige pictures.

However, the quota quickies created employment and contributed to the circumstances for the establishment of the technicians' union to fight for better conditions. At the same time they provided a form of training for a generation of directors and other personnel. The growing ranks of skilled tech-

nicians, however, were dominantly middle class, attracted to cinema because of its appeal as a modern art form, and then frustrated to find their aesthetic ambitions constrained. While they realized the need for some protective organisation, many of them wanted the union cast in the traditional image of a craft union and a few saw it only as a professional body, going so far as to propose that members should be called 'Senior Fellows', 'Fellows' and 'Licentiate'! This only strengthened the resolve of the founding leadership, who had strong links with the labour movement and included members of the Communist Party, to insist that the strongest film union could only be one based on the principle of industrial organisation, bringing workers of all types within the industry together on the strength of their commonality within cinema, including therefore laboratory workers. The aim of an industrial union, however, could not be properly achieved, because there were already two other unions operating in the field. These were the Electricians' Trade Union (ETU) for electricians, and the theatre workers' union now known (1979) as the NATTKE (National Association of Theatrical, Television and Kine Employees) for the bulk of non-technical workers. The NATTKE originated in the theatres in the last part of the nineteenth century and expanded into cinema and then television as its workers moved the location of their jobs. Consequently, in spite of the inclusion of laboratory workers, ACT had from the beginning a dominantly middle class membership leaving out the bulk of the industry's 'proletariat'. This goes a long way to explaining some of the contradictions which have developed within the union in the distribution of political consciousness, which have been exacerbated since the Second World War with the development of television and the industry's changing structure. The film technicians' union as it is today, including the technicians in the whole of commercial television, is characterised by a leadership conscious of the overall nature of the industry that is well to the left; and a thoroughly conservative rank-and-file; with a small but often vociferous minority of intellectuals more or less strongly inclined to the left and often more extreme than the leadership.

Equally paradoxical, the union has a highly democratic structure, expressed in a General Council of representatives elected by each shop or section, as opposed to an Executive Council, found in many other unions, consisting of representatives elected by Annual Conference. And yet some of the most militant film union stewards are Conservatives and proudly so. As one account of the recent lock-out puts it: "At a discussion prior to the present dispute, one shop committee was at pains to state that their attitudes were purely economic, and not political. 'In fact,' said one of them, looking around the table, 'there's probably not one of us here who is a socialist'. 'Just a minute', said the Controller [of the tv company] under attack, 'I'm a socialist'.<sup>10</sup> What lies behind this is that first in film and subsequently in television, when capital realized what strength the union had because of the workers' relative autonomy within the

labour process, it bought off the labour force and turned them into a new aristocracy of labour. That they were able to do this is a consequence of the huge profits of their industries. These of course were less secure in film than they now are in television. Alexander Korda was known for a philosophical attitude towards this: "if you hope to make millions in this industry," he is reported to have said, "you must expect to lose millions". More typical of commercial television is the famous remark by one of the early commercial company bosses after the network's first trying years had given way to rising profits, that running a commercial television station was like having a licence to print money.

## VI

The function of hierarchy in the film crew can be seen most clearly in the classic context of the Hollywood production system. Unfortunately, for all the attention that has been given to the Hollywood product by film semiologists, this is one aspect that has escaped them. They have not truly understood the fundamental grounding of the conventions of Hollywood cinema in the need to establish formal controls over the labour process. Critics and theorists who have recognised this have argued against 'auteur' theory, against the emphasis given by a previous generation of critics to the concerns of the individual who is identified as the film's author (usually the director). They have spoken instead of the studio as the author. In cinema the system is more flexible now. The age of the classic studio boss is well over, and writers, directors and stars nowadays often serve as their own producers.

In television, however, the studio set-up still operates and has actually multiplied the levels of subordination among production staff. In a British television studio, producers stand over directors, although in some cases they may hold them in artistic respect. But series editors stand over producers. Moreover, programme controllers (channel controllers in the BBC) stand between all programme makers and the company directorate (or higher management in the BBC, which is responsible to the Board of Governors appointed by the Government. It should be added that these appointments do not come automatically under the patronage of every new government: they are made for statutory periods, since governors are supposed to stand above politics and to represent the interests of the establishment as a whole rather than a particular party).

This added weight on top is in a way matched by the differences at the bottom. Television technology makes the tv studio a far more alienating place to work in than a film studio. Communication between crew members is mediated by microphones and earphones; the director and technical controllers are isolated in a box above the studio floor. The lines of communication between box and floor go only in certain directions. They determine who can talk to whom and when. Instead of one camera operator there are three or four, their autonomy reduced to following instructions from above. In the interests of controlling electronic feedback, human feedback — the kind that generates suggestions — is suppressed.

7. Umberto Barbaro, *El film y el resarcimiento marxista de la arte*, Havana, Ediciones ICAIC, 1965, p. 236.

8. Barbaro, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

9. Quoted by Enrique Colina and Daniel Diaz Torres "Ideologia del melodrama en el viejo cine latinoamericano" *Cine Cubano* (Havana), 73-74-75, p. 26, note 12.

10. Gus MacDonald, *op. cit.*

Thus, the conditions of television are not so free, the studio floor is far more regulated, by an equally more regulated control box, there's much more of a production line feeling. Yet the fundamental relations of production are the same. This was more obvious in the earlier days of television than now, just as it was in film and radio. The BBC didn't take long to establish its own routines, those in television modelled on those in radio with certain relaxations or modifications, but when the commercial network was set up there were still as yet few generally accepted criteria for 'proper' programmes and programming, and the companies had to rely heavily on workers' initiative at several levels.

There is further evidence for this in the history of labour relations in the early period. The power of the technicians was not only manifest in numerous 'wild-cat' actions, often involving blanking the tv screens for short periods, with which battle between workers and management in television is now traditionally conducted; but also in the confrontation which took place in 1968 when the renewal of the companies' franchise for the network by the ITA (Independent Television Authority as it then was), led to changes among the companies which threatened disruption of the conditions of labour, including potential redundancies. The union took strike action, and succeeded in obtaining provisions in their favour. The whole process of switching over operations when the new arrangement came into effect further demonstrated the extent of the range of initiative which the production process granted to the workers.

This shows the situation as it stood after the successful initial battle for the unionisation of commercial television, which, because of the way the leadership of the film technicians' union demonstrated good industrial nerve, had been short, sharp and decisive. Their preparedness at that initial point was the product of the struggles they'd been through against the film bosses, and the understanding this had given them of the overall exigencies of the media industries.

## VII

Before the Second World War, cinema was a recognisable industrial sector in its own right. It is only since the end of the War that the evolution of the mass media, and of television in particular, has raised serious problems about how the film industry is to be defined. With these changes, the focus of union disputes also changed. In the earlier period there was little unity between the different unions in the film industry, and at least one major confrontation occurred, between NATKE and the ETU over the organisation of cinema projectionists, in which the evidence reveals that NATKE blacklegged on the ETU during a strike.<sup>11</sup> This was a legacy of one of the general problems of British trade union organisation, a dispute over which union had the right to organise a particular group of workers, exacerbated in this case by the fact that the ETU was far more militant than its rival. The ACT tried from the outset to bring the different film unions together, and was instrumental

11. See my *Labour Power in the British Film Industry*, *op. cit.*

in achieving a tripartite interunion agreement soon after the War ended. But the structure of the media industries soon began to alter, and in the 1950s when the commercial television network was set up, the ACT and the other established film unions clashed with new rivals over the right to organise technicians and certain other workers in television. These rivals were the ABS (Association of Broadcasting Staff), or rather, as it was still known at the time commercial television started, the BBC Staff Association; and the GMWTU (General and Municipal Workers Trades Union). How did this situation arise?

The performers' unions — Actors' Equity, the VAF (Variety Artists' Federation) and the Musicians' Union — signed agreements with the new commercial television companies in the Summer of 1955 without too much difficulty. Similarly there were few problems with the recognition of NATKE (or NATTKE as it became) and the ETU. These agreements were accomplished because of the connection between the bosses of the new companies and theatre show business. For the same reason, however, the new bosses knew little about television. They admitted as much. Lew Grade, head of ATV (Associated Television), for example, boasted that he was just an agent engaged in booking talent (which is exactly what he was). Since the similarity between theatre show business and television is in certain respects more apparent than real — there are differences in the nature of the labour process — this was a recipe for disaster in industrial relations. The workers most affected were precisely the technicians. Show business is an affair of single one-off productions, offering little or no security of employment. As far as performers were concerned, television promised no essential change in this pattern. But although the film industry had also operated in this way, television now promised secure employment to the workers behind the screen. It is true that initially there was opposition within the ACT to the establishment of commercial television. This was mainly because of a fear that the sudden turnover of film studios to the production of filmed television programmes — because of the initial lack of television studio facilities — would permanently damage the cinema film industry. But the ACT quickly changed its attitude when the BBC Staff Association stepped in with the claim to organise television technicians and the new companies signed an agreement with them, with the GMWTU.

Apart from the question of rights of organisation, the ACT was in any case highly suspicious of the BBC Staff Association — which now proceeded to change its name to the ABS — which it did not regard as a real trade union at all but as a BBC house organisation and no more. Indeed the Association's roots lay in a refusal by a large number of BBC employees to regard themselves as industrial workers. This refusal is connected with the idea of broadcasting as a public service, and may be linked to the difference between the commodity nature of film and that of radio and television programmes.

The ideologically captivating hold which television has achieved on its physically non-captive audience arises in large part from an illusion, which it shares with radio, about its commodity status: the fact that programmes don't seem to have any. And on one

level it's true: with the exception of special forms such as pay-tv (which didn't exist then), the programme is not a commodity from the point of view of the viewer, because no direct payment is necessary in order to obtain and consume it. Strictly speaking, programmes are commodities only for the people who buy and sell them among each other, a trade unknown in Britain before the establishment of commercial television. The commodity, from the viewer's point of view, is the receiving apparatus that turns her or him into a listener or viewer; to be a listener or viewer is the right of the purchaser of the set. The notion of broadcasting as a public service is the ideological expression of this, not unknown even in that stronghold of commercial broadcasting, the USA, where a small but politically significant network is actually called the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). But the idea is ideologically much stronger in Great Britain because of the history of the BBC, which stamped it in the passport of official doctrine as one of the truths of bourgeois democratic wisdom when parliament voted for a licensing system to finance a national public broadcasting corporation in the 1920s. (When commercial television was allowed by the Tories in the 1950s, a new animal appeared, the autonomous public authority [ITA — Independent Television Authority, now with the addition of commercial radio the IBA — Independent Broadcasting Authority], designed to administer the structure in a way that could effect a marriage between commercial need and public service ideology.)

The concept of broadcasting as a public service led to an attitude of devotion to service on the part of the professional broadcaster which is perhaps little more nowadays than a cliché of the ideology of the upper echelons of the BBC in the classic gentlemanly days of the 1920s and 1930s. Yet it was strong enough to have affected technical and lower grade employees as well, and to ensure that they were relatively easily marshalled and constrained by the ethos of paternalism with which the corporation was run. The BBC was thus able to set up the Staff Association to counter any efforts by outside bodies to organize its labour. Initially, when the Staff Association then claimed the right to organise technical workers in commercial television, the ACT responded by pointing out to the companies that film workers were film workers, and they would expect the filming of programmes for television to be carried out under the appropriate film agreements. When Associated Rediffusion, the first of the commercial companies to go on the air, started filming at Shepperton Film Studios six months before their debut, in defiance of the ACT, claiming that they had recognised the BBC Staff Association as the appropriate negotiating body, the ACT called the members involved out on strike without more ado. The strike lasted all of three days. The company realized the weakness of its position and relented, recognizing the ACT. The precedent was enough to establish ACT claims for all other commercial television companies.

The first few commercial companies began broadcasting rather hastily and without at first great financial success. On the contrary, money was lost. This led to a crisis of confidence and as further companies began operations and the network grew,

the first companies in the race decided they were overproducing and announced a reduction in their output. The intention was clear: since parliament had decided against finance by means of the sponsorship of programmes, the network (which now comprises 15 companies organised on a regional basis) would form a cartel, exchanging programmes between themselves at controlled prices, a necessary provision to ensure maximum profits, which wouldn't come from the sale of programmes but from the sale of advertising time. The three film unions declared themselves totally opposed to these threatened redundancies and entered into negotiations with the companies together with the ABS. But the ABS had not yet learnt its lesson, and while the other unions declared an overtime ban, the ABS proceeded to talk about compensation. The three refused to continue negotiations with the participation of the ABS. In the face of this united opposition the companies had no choice. They gave three months' notice of termination of the agreement with the ABS, and thus the ACTT, as it now became (Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians) achieved sole rights to organise technical and production grades in commercial television.

## VIII

The growth of television led, by the 1960s, to a considerable growth in the freelance sector within the ACTT, corresponding to the overall growth in union membership which was very large, resulting from the union's successful organisation of commercial television. In fact, this growth was greater than commercial television accounted for, since the union followed a policy of relatively unrestricted entry within the BBC as well, in the attempt to build up strength there. Moreover the BBC was expanding at the same time, using the increased licence revenue that came from the general spread of television.

As this first phase of expansion in television came to an end, new problems appeared, or sometimes old problems in new guises. The arrival of commercial television created a television programme market in Britain. But as the sale of programmes between companies developed, so did the market for labour power. This consisted in several factors. For one thing, the BBC's monopoly of employment for television technicians was broken, and this in itself would have been enough to start an upward wage spiral, with the commercial companies prepared to buy their staff off and leave BBC wage rates behind. But the top production staff were even more mobile, more easily able to find alternative employment outside television and therefore able to play television off against other employers. In the case of film workers, there is another factor: here the new labour market wasn't only inside the new television companies, as it was until more recently for those who were strictly television technicians. Television created conditions of operation for a number of small production and service companies making programmes for sale to television when they get the chance, otherwise making television commercials and servicing television productions using film.

Commercials initially simply took up the slack among the so-called unemployed in the ACT, the

studio workers 'between jobs'. Such employment was originally regarded in the union as demeaning but necessary. But increasing numbers have come to depend on it — particularly feature film camera department workers recruited because of the commercials' penchant for sophisticated trick camera-work — and the union now regards it as a major area of employment. The ranks of non-commercials production workers — they rarely mix — have grown for other reasons. For one thing, as the spread of television slowed down and so did the growth in the BBC's licence revenue, the BBC found that an efficient way of reducing programme costs was to make relatively fewer filmed programmes of its own and to buy in more from independent producers. This in itself could not have offered regular freelance employment to a sector as large as the one that exists, however, but the BBC also used this sector as a reserve labour force, offering temporary work to service companies able to provide particular facilities (camera crews, rostrum cameras, editing rooms, dubbing theatres) when those facilities were in short supply within the organisation. The commercial companies did the same, but even more as a matter of principle. It enabled them to keep capital investment in film production facilities down to a minimum. Since they applied a similar approach to their television studios, which were therefore generally worked at full capacity all the time, this made the commercial companies into fairly stable employers of these so-called freelance workers.

Moreover the system serves other purposes. As the BBC allowed staff in established posts to leave and set up operations in the 'freelance' sector, in order to be able to buy in their work at low prices because it was after all a buyer's market, certain political advantages became apparent. The process encourages both aesthetic and political conformism (the two tend to go together) by means of the apparently free pressures of the market. This applies especially to the more senior production staff, writers, directors, producers, the ones who are the most strictly freelance workers on the market. The system provides a method of sustaining formal control over the labour process through the ever-present threat of the withdrawal of work for those who try stepping too far out of line. Perhaps there weren't very many of these, but at the beginning of 1972 a group of twenty-two people identified themselves as all being under such threat.

The truth is, however, that the term "freelance" is a misnomer. What actually exists is a system of sub-contracted labour. Only a few are really freelancers, seeking individual employment. Most of the so-called freelance sector consists of small companies relying for their business largely on the reputation of the company's principle member or members.

As Maurice Dobb has pointed out, sub-contracting, typical of the conditions of outwork and domestic labour in which capitalism developed, survived for much longer than has sometimes been recognised:

12. Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, London, Routledge, 1963, p. 266.

13. See Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974.

"Even in factory trades the system of sub-contracting was common: a system, with its opportunities for sordid tyranny and cheating through truck and debt and the payment of wages in public houses, against which early trade unionism fought a hard and prolonged battle."<sup>12</sup> And as Harry Braverman has pointed out, sub-contracting prevailed until the development of scientific management and production lines because it constituted a more effective means of control over the labour force than the still rudimentary means of real control prior to these developments.<sup>13</sup> This is particularly relevant to film precisely because of the inevitably limited extent of possible real controls. Further, sub-contracting was particularly strong in areas of skilled and craft working where there was a strong guild type of consciousness among the workers, and this is also true in the area of film.

Dobb also points out, "the survival of the individualist traditions of the artisan and the craftsman, with the ambition to become himself a small employer, was long an obstacle to any firm and widespread growth of trade unionism, let alone class consciousness". This still applies to the film industry even with its new kinds of jobs, precisely because these jobs consist in the development of new skills over which, because they're skills of aesthetic labour, the worker retains relative autonomy. Moreover, apart from its organisation of the laboratories, the ACTT organises precisely those workers in the technical and production grades where the conditions of aesthetic labour are stronger, while the less specifically skilled general proletariat of the industry falls to the ETU and NATTKE. The ACTT has thereby come to suffer from its most unusual characteristic: its upper echelons include members who may find themselves on either side of the negotiating table — either as aggrieved unionists or as accused employers.

This is just what began to happen at the end of the 1960s, the result of a conscious plan of action among a small group of unionists in the so-called freelance section, members of the union's Freelance Shop which had only recently been recognised by the union and given representation on General Council. Not long earlier, the 'freelance' members were without any union representation at all. This was because the expansion of television and the concurrent breakdown of the film studio system had disturbed the union's internal structure. General Council represented the union's constituent shops and sections. There were shops to represent the laboratories, the film studios, and with the unionisation of commercial television, the television factories. Film members, however, were previously also divided up into sections (camera, sound, etc.) with their own representation. Those working in the film studios thus had double representation and were easily able to dominate union policy. This double representation came to an end with the unionisation of commercial television. Combining with the laboratory workers, the new television shops were able to vote an end to the system. This, unfortunately, was what disenfranchised the growing ranks of the unemployed who were being transformed willy-nilly into 'freelancers' or sub-contracted labour. As long as a film member was working in a studio, he or she was

represented through the studio shop. With the end of section representation, they were disenfranchised not only when they weren't working but also when they were if, as was increasingly the case, it was outside a studio. Obviously such a situation couldn't last and the 'freelancers' fought for a new shop to be created. Their demands were met but only with delay and with disagreement over the level of their representation.

## IX

Political consciousness among film and television workers varies greatly, due to various combinations of the factors described here and of others, playing off against each other in various ways. A dominant aspect which still needs attention, because it's a further constraint on the exercise of aesthetic labour, is the division between mental and manual labour, which is conventionally known in the media as the distinction between 'creative' and 'noncreative' staff. (The terminology here derives, appropriately enough, from the advertising world.)

This mental/manual division is a major effect of capitalism in its more advanced stages, a general feature there is no reason to suppose the media should be exempt from. But there's also the particular history of cultural production to be considered: such a division was already strongly marked in the practice of the theatre in the nineteenth century, where it appeared as a concomitant of the idealization of creativity within bourgeois ideology. The creativity of ordinary workers was too lowly to count when the entrepreneur was viewed as a supremely creative person; the bourgeoisie was only prepared to accept as sufficiently ennobling a comparison with the ideal creations of the Artist, who served then as a paradigm of the fully freely developed and self-fulfilled individual. The workers whose self-esteem was first attacked in this way could still take pride in the sense of identity they received from their class, which encouraged them to oppose the effects of the commercialisation of theatre in the worsening of conditions and loss of status which it produced. Yet by the time cinema began taking away theatre audiences and forcing closures (as television later did to cinema) the union leadership was already too timid to fight effectively. The rank-and-file *were* so prepared, however, especially in the provinces. The union was actually split for a period by the issue during the First World War. But then as theatre contracted, theatre workers of various grades moved over into film at the same moment that the division between mental and manual labour was being reproduced within film production, as the cinematic division of labour took firmer and firmer root. Coming in from theatre, workers linked by the history of their trade and class to more militant traditions suffered further loss of status in the film industry, to the advantage of the new specialist technicians and production workers created by the mode of production of film itself. The only theatre workers who escaped this were those who were already the 'creative' workers of the theatre. However, although differentials within the media are enormous, nearly all film and television workers are pretty well paid when judged in relation to their class background. (Actors probably came off worst, relatively speak-

ing.) Moreover, though the unions had to fight hard to achieve this, there were evidently many factors in their favour during the years of bouyant film production and frequent surplus profits — a condition commercial television has turned into constant surplus profit, its 'licence to print money'. This is altogether hardly conducive to radical political consciousness, though it certainly makes a trade union active.

Theatres had closed in large numbers, or been taken over by cinema, and the experience was not a positive one for the workers involved. More recently, the ACTT has been successful in fighting against redundancies when they threatened in television. With the film studios, however, there is a problem in that recent closures have occurred for structurally different reasons than those which from time to time threaten television redundancies. Studios have closed not only because production has contracted, but also because they are needed less nowadays for making films in when those films can be shot on location — a practice that developed in the 1960s on a more substantial scale than ever before. In fact what this requires is not the disappearance of the film studio, but a change in the way the studio functions. What film production now needs is production houses fully equipped with shared facilities. This was already apparent in the 1960s in the way films shot on location used a particular studio as a home base and for post-production. But the real model that now exists for the production house in Britain is not the new style four-wall operation with its sub-contracting system; it is the film school. The commercial operation tailors the facilities to the particular film, and of course they're paid for piece by piece. The film school provides facilities as a matter of course for the whole activity of film making. (Except for laboratories, which arguably, however, should be re-incorporated.)

The television factories, of course, are production houses — and sometimes include laboratories, at least small ones for handling urgent news footage. (Or else a commercial laboratory may be maintained near television studios relying on its customer almost exclusively.) But these factories are not the kind of production houses I mean, because they function on the basis of the division between mental and manual labour. Television produced a great growth in the ranks of mental production workers, the multiplication of staff living in offices along bright new corridors in a part of the factory complex on their own, like the research and development parts of corporations. But the notion that the difference between television's mental and manual workers is the same as a difference between creative and non-creative personnel is a false one, and cannot even be maintained by those who use it for their own ideological purposes. What it really does, ideologically, is to separate those who work in the origination and planning of programmes from those who execute them — always with the exception of the producer and director who stand at the apex of the hierarchy on both sides of the divide.

Among other things, this situation reinforces a false divide between form and content, which complements the mentality of television programme scheduling. Though television has its own dynamic, the division of programmes into types harks back to the

forms of genre cinema, because this kind of systemization provides a way of scheduling not only programmes, but audiences as well, a way of characterising the audience according to the categories which make it saleable in bits and pieces to the advertisers. For it is the viewers themselves, in this new kind of collectivity, who form the other commodity in commercial broadcasting, the commodity which is delivered up to the advertisers by means of the airspace that the company sells to them. Television is in desperate need of the rationale which does this, which apports certain definite parts of the viewing public to certain viewing periods in various combinations so that the advertisers can be told who they're supposed to be reaching. Television needs this rationale because it doesn't even have the degree of contact with the audience that commercial cinema has. It's true that cinema admission figures are a poor guide to the real tastes and opinions of cinema goers, but television audience ratings are even less indicative. What society calls the television habit is not to watch, so much as to turn on the set with perhaps the intention of watching. How many people *actually* watch — and how, with what kind of attention: to concentrate is different from something catching your eye — is another matter. (Nevertheless, several weeks into the recent television lock-out, the newspapers reported incredulously that a million viewers around the country had their sets tuned in to the commercial network's card of apology for the absence of programmes due to an industrial dispute!)

The growing ranks of production staff, the television mental workers, are recruited in the main from the petit bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia — who can be defined here as those with some level of higher education at college or university. Technicians and engineers also need higher technical education qualifications, but school-leavers may be recruited as assistants. Production staff are not generally promoted from the ranks of manual or technical staff. Rarely does a film and even less a television cameraman find the opportunity to become a director or producer. In one rare instance where this occurred, the company concerned boasted about its aesthetic discovery, which proved not, as they liked to believe, how marvellous the company's working conditions were, but just how extraordinary they found it. And of course it *was* unusual — except that the company was naive to celebrate it so. Old patterns of recruitment are perhaps beginning to be disturbed, though as yet only slightly, by the expansion in recent years of specialist higher education in film, television and media studies. There is more disruptive potential here than has yet been developed. The leading members of the newest generation to be nurtured by the media have still generally been the products of traditional liberal higher education. Those entering from the new courses are destined to be regular workers. But this could change things in time, as long as the education in these courses is critical and passionate.

Those who have now reached the higher echelons of production — and this significantly includes previous programme makers who have become Programme and Channel Controllers — have suffered many stages of disillusion and have compromised by entertaining many illusions about their autonomy

and their 'objectivity' as observers of and commentators on what is going on in society at large. On these illusions, a by-product of the special nature of the production process they are engaged in supervising, the ideology which operates within the media has been able to build. The belief of many production workers that they are individually responsible agents has been reinforced. In Britain, with its particular ideological traditions of compromise and 'fair play', unwritten laws of self-censorship become especially effective.

Two incidents that occurred in the same television company indicate the problems of joint action across the mental-manual divide and illustrate the general state of play prior to the recent lock-out. In the earlier of these two incidents, technical workers blanked the screens at the request of production workers, to prevent the transmission of a replacement programme for one that had been withdrawn. The production workers, who had consistently over a period supported technical staff in their disputes with management over conditions as well as pay, explained the withdrawal of their controversial programme (one of those 'trial by television' investigations of a controversial public figure) as an infringement this time of their own conditions of employment. By putting it this way rather than by immediately shouting 'Political Censorship!', they vouchsafed the technicians' supporting action, which demonstrated at least the strength of their conviction directly to millions of viewers. The second incident has a comic opera quality about it. On this occasion, production staff belonging to a fraternal union, wishing to declare support for the technicians who had embarked on a work-to-rule, voted to refuse any extra workload the management might try to impose on them to replace the studio programmes the work-to-rule would inevitably delay. When the technicians were informed of this act of solidarity, they were less than gratified. 'Thank you very much,' they said, 'but if management takes any action against your members, we won't be able to offer you our support. What we've got is a work-to-rule. We don't want a bloody strike.' The offerers of solidarity were forced to go back and vote out the resolution they'd just voted in. What these two incidents show, I think, are aspects of the division between mental and manual workers which would certainly get worse if the companies succeeded in weakening the unions but which have been little improved by what the unions have achieved so far. They show that production workers are the more eager to pursue political struggles but have not yet learnt in great measure how to politicise the industry as a whole. The failing here might be the still relatively uncritical acceptance they have of the aesthetic norms of television. This is because the division between mental and manual jobs leads them, too, to undervalue the potential creative content of the manual workers' labour.

But this should be related to the general patterns of the social relations of production beyond television and its modification within. Within the advanced economies, automation, data processing and telecommunications increase the gap between mental workers, their ranks swelled in number precisely by the spread of advanced technology, and the ranks of

manual workers in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, eliminating a variety of skilled middle grades. In film and television the skilled middle grades cannot be eliminated like this: they are the programme technicians and engineering staffs. Denied the prerogatives of initiating programmes, they become increasingly isolated. Unable to identify with those above them, nor with those outside television's lower status in the social relations of production, their own status as a labour aristocracy is emphasised and their political consciousness suffers.

What happens to the ranks of the mental workers? They may derive from their position in the intelligentsia a degree of consciousness that can help the growth of political understanding. Under the threat of new technology they feel strongly the menace of the growing industrialisation of mental labour. On the other hand, political understanding is not as widespread among them as it might be, because of the position they occupy within the social formation as commentators on or behind the screen, which is to say a class position that identifies them with the means of increased exploitation of the bulk of the trade union movement. In certain areas of programming at certain moments, however, small groups of politicised programme makers are able to produce more explicit programmes. This is a result of the practice of 'repressive tolerance' which gives the critical their head in just enough measure to prevent a build-up of steam sufficient to explode the engine. In the early sixties, the cultural direction of social awareness combined with advances in film technology, in the form of new, agile, lightweight 16mm camera and sound gear, to radicalise and open out documentary and new presentation techniques (the stylistic revolution of *cinema verité* or direct cinema). Repression in this section inevitably followed, and activity shifted to television drama production. Here it became possible for writers, directors and producers unable to work in the production of cinema films to develop a socialist television drama style of considerable social impact. It is a bewildering sign of theoretical confusion among a generation of Marxist intellectuals in Britain — the post-68 academic generation — that the exploration of traditional dramatic idioms by these television play makers in order to reach a mass audience, has been subjected to the most obtruse criticism. In spite of their many insights, based on new theoretical studies such as those of semiotics and structuralism, these criticisms fail to grasp the fundamental political issue: the problem, in a word, that if this socialist drama falls into something of a vacuum; this is less because of its adaptation of traditional forms than because of the failures of the socialist left in Britain to understand and act upon the demands of cultural and ideological struggle, the need for a well-articulated cultural politics.

Many of these problems have been debated within the Independent Film-makers Association (IFA), formed a few years ago, which brings together more than 300 people including not only people actually making films but also community film and video workers, students, critics, teachers, academics and others grouped around activities which are partly financed by the British Film Institute through the award of film making grants by the BFI Production

Board, as well as through a handful of other outlets for the meagre sums the State makes available for these purposes, such as the Regional Arts Councils. The energy and determination of IFA members is clearly shown in the extent of the network that has grown up among them, with strong regional representation. Co-operative film groups of various kinds have just been able to survive, right across the country, though Government spending cuts seriously threaten them. (Several years' experience of hassling money may help them survive yet.) Yet there's very little homogeneity within the IFA. Its make up includes militant political film groups, working with trade unions and trade union members on the shop floor (not necessarily both at the same time), community film makers whose credo is more libertarian, 'underground' film makers, 'materialist' film makers, students and so forth. Very few of them are members of the film union, indeed of any union, though moves are now being made in this direction (and the ACTT's Educational Technology branch has also been growing). The position of the Association vis-a-vis the ACTT was summed up in a working party document for the 1977 Annual General Meeting:

We are arguing for our right and political necessity, as independents, for unionisation: yet at the same time we are upholding our own methods of film making — which by their nature contradict every shade of film practice which the ACTT is perpetually obliged to defend. Immediately, then, we are placing ourselves in what appears to be an untenable and contradictory position, because a large portion of the film work of IFA members has developed and will continue to develop in the sharpest opposition to the long-established forms of film practice emanating from the industry.

The IFA is primarily involved in non-commercial practices, and it is precisely here that political and ideological struggle can draw closest together: outside the market. Some of the militant film groups which are members of the IFA, such as Cinema Action and Newsreel, have obtained the tacit agreement of the ACTT to their practice of making films outside of union agreements, for the purpose of taking them into the heart of working class struggle — not to be shown in cinemas (which very rarely accept them anyway) but in factory canteens and at political meetings. These films too have been subjected to stringent theoretical criticism by the new generation of critical theorists, and it's true that they sometimes seem to evade some of the serious questions that have been raised about the ideological nature of filmic realism. But taken as a whole they undoubtedly get much closer than any other film making in Britain today to the political problem of how to engage with the working class at large through presenting images of struggle in contexts which allow those images to be taken up directly and immediately. In the long run, as film is shown to be capable of intervening outside the market and beyond the home-based consumption of television, this is bound to raise a fresh set of issues within the union about the nature of film itself, which react back on the commercial activities which union members are regularly employed in. The social nature of film is a neglected area of debate within the union, which was only aired briefly in 1930s when the union was founded.

Perhaps the IFA is an inherently weak grouping of petit bourgeois radicals, but there are other groups whose petit bourgeois radicalism takes quite non-socialist forms. There is that other new film makers' organisation that has appeared in the last few years with the deepening crisis, the Association of Independent Producers (AIP), whose members are drawn mostly from the ranks of the freelance producers, directors and writers within the union. While the union is supposed to represent their interests as employees of the big bosses, the AIP has been formed to represent their interests as little bosses, for these are often the people who rule the roost in the sub-contracting sector. And unlike IFA members, they do not form co-operatives to make films. The AIP gathers a lot of steam from sidelong glances at conditions in other European countries, which not only encourages them to press for relaxations in union crewing, but also to demand 'cultural' subsidies for film making on French or German models. Insofar as their policies are directed against the corporate interests which dominate the industry, they generally begin by articulating themselves in radical enough terms, but their arguments are typically clothed in the drapery of aesthetic idealism.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the fourth television channel, with its promised provisions for independent programme production, will finally divert them to back into television, though many of them have a strong drive towards cinema. But then there may also be a little room at least for the work of serious political programme makers.

The most contradictory aspect of the AIP's stance is its relation to the union. In order to support low budget production, the AIP has to argue for a reduction in labour costs; since variable capital represents roughly the same proportion of total capital in low-budget production as it does in big budget production, this means the demand to reduce the size of the crew. The putative little bosses, themselves are prepared, up to a point, to sacrifice the rates they earn as employees for the sake of being able to own and exploit their own product. They are ruled by the laws of property relations in these matters, including the ideology of intellectual property, which enables them to continue their career as the 'creative' people of the industry. The structure of the industry encourages them in this attitude, also up to a point. The industry needs them to play the role of innovators of style and ideas who do not challenge the fundamental relations of property. These are assured in the typical inherited bourgeois aesthetic idealism of AIP members, with its emphasis on the scope and 'democratic rights' of individualist creation. In this way capital is able to achieve aesthetic and ideological reproduction at minimum cost to itself. Meanwhile, the AIP looks to a reduction in labour costs as the principal means of 'rationalising' production. Whether they, or anyone else trying to do the same thing, stands any chance of success in Britain as things are at the moment, is another question.

14. See *What Film?*, transcript of a discussion on 7 June 1976, London, AIP.

## United Federation of Printing and Paper Workers; Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Political Science (Milan)

### BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE TRADE UNION EVOLUTION IN THE PRINTING SECTOR

(Italy, 1976)

We should point out by way of introduction, that this report is essentially a historical synthesis of the trade union position in this particular sector. Our aim is only to draw attention to the distinctive features which marked, and indeed still mark this sector; it is not our intention to present a complete and exhaustive analysis of the history of the printers' union.

The 'corporatist' face which characterized this sector, and which, to a certain extent continues to characterize it, must be studied and examined in respect to its worst points, as well as those tendencies and features, which, although also intrinsically unsatisfactory, nevertheless gave rise to a correct potentiality class position in the trade union.

#### I. FROM MID-1800 TO 1900

In the middle of the nineteenth century there was a general tendency on the part of the workers to group together to face the problems created by the first industrial plants to the country's social structure. As industry sprang up it was accompanied by the beginnings of organized working-class groups.

The Mutual Aid Societies were founded not only by the workers, but also the enlightened bourgeoisie and were of a defensive and mutualistic nature. The printers, together with several other sectors, also highly skilled, were among the first to found such societies on a professional basis. This same characteristic, of playing a leading role, can be also seen in their setting up the first Organizations of Resistance which gradually disengaged them from their employer's grasp and became real class structure engaged in the satisfaction of their grievances. There are at least three reasons why this sector had a leading role in the growing trade union organizations:

(a) these workers, because of the work they did, knew how to read and write. This is clearly of considerable importance when we remember that we are talking about the beginning of the nineteenth century;

This text was first published as a chapter in the author *Informazione de massa e lotta sindacale*, Rome, Nuova Edizione Operaie, 1976. Copyright Nuova Edizione Operaie 1976. It was translated from the Italian by Dian Hosker. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

(b) this sector had an important bargaining power because printed matter in general, and daily newspapers and periodicals in particular, must be issued at precise intervals;

(c) the very specialized nature of the printers' work meant that employers could not easily replace them should they go on strike. In fact, the sector deliberately cultivated this by maintaining controls and limits on their own labour market, so that a specialized worker could only be replaced by another one who had had the same apprenticeship and professional training.

These early distinctive features immediately imprinted on the printing sector a professional, closed and corporatist character compared with other sectors. In May 1848 the Society of Typographical Compositors was founded in Turin; their precise aim was to obtain a rate of pay for their work. This society, which also aimed to promote education and mutual aid, can be considered the first Italian trade union organization, and similar societies sprang up in its wake; for instance, those founded by printers in Genoa in 1852 and in Milan in 1860, and gradually in the other large cities.

At a meeting held in Rome in 1872, the Society of Typographical Compositors, which had branches in many cities, formed the "Association of Italian Printers", which in 1873 became the "Italian Federation of Book Workers", thereby widening its membership to include anyone involved in printing, and not, as it did at first, restricting it solely to typographers. From 1860 onwards, the printing industry underwent a period of noteworthy expansion, with occasional interruptions. The period was one of social ferment caused by the struggles of the Risorgimento and Unification of Italy which meant that publications of all sorts, newspapers, magazines, books, multiplied in the important cities. Thus, up until about 1890 the printing industry and its related typographic industry multiplied; while at the end of the century important technical changes were to take place. These changes particularly affected the press, which, with the advent of the first machines, saw a large step forward in the organization of work.

Taking into account the approximate and erratic nature of the statistics compiled by the Association of Italian Printers, they show, for example, that in Milan in 1878 there were a total of 58 printing houses with 588 typographers and 205 printers; in 1882 there were 65 printing houses with 653 typographers and 244 printers, and 1887 49 printing houses with 900 typographers and 176 printers.

These statistics, which we repeat, should be regarded as rough approximations, also give a general picture of the situation of the printing industry in the larger Italian cities.

As for the size of the printing houses, these were generally, with a few exceptions, small concerns, and the proprietor was very often the Jack-of-all-trades: typographer, printer, bookkeeper, etc. The introduction of machines in the printing houses led to an overall decrease in the number of printing workers, but it increased the number of children and women working, thus intensifying exploitation and paternalism.

The harshness of this exploitation is revealed, in

all its aspects, in the environmental conditions of the printing houses. The workers were obliged to spend from ten to thirteen hours per day breathing in lead and ink fumes in dusty and humid surroundings, as printing houses were usually located in basements or cellars. Thus, their health was greatly jeopardized as lead poisoning, tuberculosis and arthritis were often the price to be paid for the so-called "art of printing". The statistics dating from this era show that the average lifespan in this sector was around 40 years of age.

From the economic point of view the printers were not particularly well-off, and their constant battle to bring pay scales into line with the cost of living meant that the printers' struggles became increasingly tougher and more frequent. However, these rates were valid only on paper for the majority of the workers, because the bosses, large and small, were unanimous in their determination not to apply the new rates (and this is still the case today).

An important reason for the non-application of the rates can also be found in the organization of work within the printing houses. In many printing houses it was the practice to employ a "functionary", who was chosen from among the workers (nowadays we would call him a foreman), who received the work to be composed directly from the boss or director of the printing house and whose job was to return the work completed and ready for printing. The functionary was paid a salary which was made up of a sum of money for his services and another amount which varied according to the amount of typesetting (the rate was 35 *centesimi* per 1,000; the base unit of measure to fix the 1,000 was given by the letter N). It was up to the functionary to choose the number of workers he needed and then to job out the work. Thus, it is obvious that the other workers (called "pacchettisti") never received the complete rate but only part of it. The massive introduction of young people and women was another factor which contributed to the overall reduction of salaries.

In 1880 the typography workers were engaged in a struggle which lasted several months and which brought about the signing of a real contract for the Milanese workers.

Essentially, the demands centered around the accentuated conditions of exploitation, which aroused the worker's consciousness to begin to fight. The working day was fixed at ten hours, with the exception of certain special agreements with newspapers, whose proprietors were obliged to pay an extra 25% for night or holiday work. They also struck down the ruinous practice of jobbing through the intermediary "functionary". For the first time a single rate was established for all typographers working in different printing houses. But the most significant outcome of this struggle was certainly the limiting of apprenticeships to one in every ten workers. The apprentice, or pupil as he was called, had to prove that he had completed the fourth year of the elementary school; and it was also agreed that he would not receive any money for the first year of the apprenticeship, but would be directly dependent on the employer.

We have said that this was the most important result by far in that it directly influenced the pay rates

and started a policy designed to control the development of the labour-market in this sector, which the printers had always considered very important.

The employers' response to these first elements of "rigor" on the part of the labour force was to look around for an alternative way to control the workers and lower pay rates, which they accomplished by engaging women workers in the printing houses. Vallardi, one of the largest Milanese printing houses, was in the front line of such manoeuvres and employed more than 60 women typographers. Needless to say, the printers reacted in an extremely hostile manner, as this had an adverse effect on pay rates and the control over workers in the factories. The reasons which they gave for their opposition to the entry of women workers into the printing industry, apart from those already cited, were based on hygienic and sanitary grounds (i.e. the unhealthy surroundings), and for ethical and moral considerations, for instance, that it was not proper to have "girls" typesetting obscene publications, or that these "girls" were the object of the manager's amorous advances.

Clearly, all these reasons were closely connected with safeguarding the sector's specific interests and therefore paved the way for a concept of a highly professionalized sector, closed to outsiders and with corporatist undertones. This is illustrated even more clearly by the fact that the pay rates were renewed separately category by category within the printing industry itself. In fact, the printers did not acquire a standard rate of pay until 1888. Furthermore, printers still practiced the use of the "functionary". But when the new rates came in, the practice of the jobbing was phased out and higher and more stabilized salaries were fixed. The length of the working-day was reduced to 10 hours daily, and there were no restrictive clauses regarding under-age and women workers. This was because minors and women were assigned the simplest and most tedious tasks (cleaning the machines or setting-up and perforating pages), and as such were useful to the printers. In 1892 the two key job categories in the printing industry, the typographers and printers, joined forces demanding wage increases, shorter working-hours, jobs for more workers and a guarantee that their newly-acquired rights would not be taken away from them.

Most important of all, they managed to get a 9-hour day, which was quite an achievement bearing in mind that even in 1903 a 10-hour day was still the norm for most categories of workers. As for the typographers, following earlier lines, further regulations regarding under-age workers were stipulated: children under 14 were not to be hired, and the minimum qualification was the completion of the first level in technical or grammar school. This contract finally eliminated the practice of the individual "functionary", and was replaced by a limited partnership or collective jobbing.

## II. NOTES ON THE PRE-FASCIST PERIOD

Thus at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth we find a state of general industrial expansion which also affected the printing industry. It was a period in which arose the

first worker's associations having a noticeable class connotation in the different federations of skilled workers, including the Federation of Book Workers, and begins a cycle of struggles at the start of the century which led, in 1904, to the first national general strike.

The organization of work underwent profound changes due to the new machinery that appeared on the Italian market; because of the highly mechanized and professional capacity of these machines which did many of the workers' tasks, they led to a great number of workers losing their jobs. This sector began to discuss the possibility of an 8-hour day which was seen as a partial solution to the problem of the surplus labour-force. Significant in this respect was the strike of the Roman typographers at the beginning of the twentieth century over the mechanical typesetters (the first linotypes which had been invented in 1884 were only just beginning to be used in Italian industry). *I problemi del lavoro*, (1903, 3-4), had this to say:

Ten years ago print workers in Italy could impose conditions as they wished, and, if organized solidly, had every chance of getting their demands accepted, because a printer who was out on strike could only be replaced by another experienced printer, and not just by any worker. Nowadays things are very different, and the printer has to reckon with machines which eliminate two out of three workers.

The article continues:

Any attempt to hold back the development of the machine would only jeopardize the favourable conditions for the emancipation of labour and might even impede this emancipation. In fact, it is due to the mechanical typesetter that the 8-hour day can be won, for here in Rome, in contrast to all the other countries in the world, it has already made a 7-hour day possible, with the workers being paid for 9 hours.

Thus was the workers' movement just response to the introduction of technological innovation.

It was during these years that the most modern type of machinery began to be used in the printing houses. In particular, the period following World War I was used by the owners to considerably change the organization of work in the printing houses.

However, while certain sectors of the metal and machine industries underwent a real transformation, with important changes at plant level, production requirements changing overnight from war materials to the demands of a peace-time market, and lay-offs—skilled as well as unskilled workers—taking place on a large scale, the situation was different in the printing industry:

In the first place [it] was essentially indifferent to its market. To change from printing papers for the troops to the printing of literary works required only a minimal adaptation of the productive cycle. Neither the circumstances of war nor those of peace created any particular technological traumas for Mondadori; there was simply a horizontal expansion of machines and employees. Thus, the specialized workers still played an essential role in the production cycle. The technological tranquility of the sector helps to understand the essentially pacific attitude of the sector throughout the two-year "red" period.

Thus we arrive at the period immediately preceding Fascism. The newspaper of the National Federation of Book Workers, *Il Lavatore del libro*, at

that time carried a series of articles written by a certain Cesare Ratta, the first of which was entitled "Taylorism" In the Printing Industry":

One of Taylor's collaborators, Frank Gilbreth, managed to record the typographer's movements by means of his cinematographic method . . . The worker held an electric lamp, the current of which was cut off mechanically sixteen times per second. Each click therefore produced a luminous dot on the film, its displacement indicating the trajectory of the worker's hand. The time was calculated by means of a special chronometer which was accurate to a thousandth of a second. The wavering throughout his task, and the hesitations while the letters were being extracted were reproduced on the film as large dots corresponding to the intervals during which the lamp was not moving. The worker made precisely 3.5 movements per letter, proving that there was a high proportion of "extra movements", caused by both hesitations . . . and supplementary movements . . . In this respect Gilbreth noted that it might be possible to save the worker several movements. His left hand in particular, which Gilbreth calls the "idler", remains at the side of his body and does not make the slightest effort to meet the right hand half-way. Consequently, he insists that one of the main requisites for selection work (type and spaces, etc.) is that the worker should use both hands . . . Thus, the analysis, by recording the direct and indirect movements of typesetting work, and by studying each of these separately and determining their usefulness, enabled the organizer to alter the tools, instruments and work methods in such a way that the amount of indirect work was reduced to a minimum and the direct work proportionately increased. By the sole application of these organizational factors, they managed to increase the workers' productive capacity by around 45% . . . Another application of "Taylorism" to typesetting is based on the principle of the division of labour. When examining an industrial organism it is immediately obvious that production is split into two principal parts: preparation and execution. In the Taylor system these two functions are absolutely separate and each has its own clearly defined characteristics. On the one hand, the technician . . . in direct relation to the customers . . . The technician also determines the printing sequence, suggesting useful ideas to execute the work, together with the amount of time necessary to complete it. The worker (and here we enter the purely manual part of the system) has only the materialize the technician's conception . . . A glance at the information sheet tells the "manual" worker what he must do . . . the "manual" worker then goes to the shelf which holds all the necessary type and only leaves it when all the lines have been set; . . . and so the typesetting is completed not only with the minimum of unproductive movements, according to Taylor, but also with the minimum use of the worker's mental faculties, according to the writer.

Going back to the introduction of Taylorism in the printing industry, Ratta, in an article which appeared in the trade newspaper, had this to say:

As I have said, Taylor wanted to construct in the abstract a standard-worker using standard tools. This standard-worker does not correspond to our image of the modern worker: intelligent, active, full of initiative and creative in his area of competence. The worker, according to Taylor's data, is only a labourer, and his system tends to undervalue the skilled worker.

In June 1922 the same author wrote a third article, but this time he shifted his attention from typesetting and turned to printing:

In the previous two articles I discussed the method which Taylor had devised for the typesetting process. It

will not be a bad idea . . . to make a few brief remarks about this method and its direct relation to printing machinery and printing. The Taylor method did not come up with anything really "original" on this subject either. The division of labour and its intensification by means of the principles that modern industry has recently adopted and introduced everywhere, are ideas which are already outmoded. However, it is useful to briefly recall the principal elements on which Taylor based his method in order to get a maximum output from the printing machinery. In schematic terms they are the following: (a) the classification of the work for the machines; (b) the advance preparation of their sequence of use; (c) the preparation of the plates and paper; (d) the introduction of reduced margins and the systematization of type sizes prepared in advance, and, if possible, the introduction of special machinery. With automatically-fed paper.

Concerning printing, Ratta said:

Here, Taylor's method is far simpler to explain, since it is largely based on factors which have met with enthusiastic reception by many printers abroad, if not in Italy, and which have been introduced into their professional relations. Here it is the worker's task, rather than his movements which are integrated with the machine, along with the adequate preparation of his materials.

The article continues more or less along these lines, noting that when the division of labour is applied to typesetting it meets with an obstacle in the form of the skill and solitary nature of the worker's task; but when this division is brought into the printing departments it is accepted in one way or another. Clearly this stems from the historical divisions which arose in the sector, which have alternated between cooperation and division in varying degrees, according to circumstances.

But by this time Fascism was fast approaching and the print workers were severely hit by the roving gangs setting fire to Italian towns, destroying scores of printing houses, among other things. This caused a number of deaths as well as a considerable loss of jobs in the sector.

In March 1921, the National Council resolved that:

Gregori protests on behalf of the political victims and proposes a vote of solidarity with colleagues who were victims of the destruction of the printing houses and of other violent acts by the reactionary bourgeois forces. The Gregori proposals are accepted unanimously and it has been decided not to inform the bourgeois newspapers of these proposals as a sign of protest against the sectarian treatment to which the working classes are continuously subjected.

Exactly what the Fascist regime meant to the working class and the entire country is common knowledge. While, we do not have at our disposal specific statistics regarding the printers, it is certain that the damage caused by the regime in this particular sector was extensive.

## III. FROM THE POST-WAR PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY

With the struggle by the resistance and the fall of Fascism, democratic liberties were re-established in Italy.

The trade unions were reconstituted. In 1946 the sector's first national congress took place and in 1948, in Turin, a national central committee meeting of



Italian printers was held. This meeting celebrated the federation's hundredth anniversary, and voted to always keep the workers' unity alive.

The general situation leading to the trade union split showed that a break was inevitable, even though it meant sacrificing the workers' unity. And so, in the printing sector, as well as others, this split took place with the birth of the CISL and UIL. It is not the aim of this report to analyze how and why this split took place, so I shall pass over this important moment.

However, we should note that in 1954, when negotiating for the renewal of the work contracts, all three unions—CGIL, CISL and UIL—were there, trying to present a united platform against the employers.

These first contracts were mainly centred around:

- Wage increases;
- Revision of job categories and apprenticeships;
- Compensations in case of accident; and
- A printing school for professional specialization.

In addition, there was the big problem of the rigid economic division between men and women with notable differences in salaries, because of which the contract platforms demanded, among other things, higher increases for women. In the 1954 contract, the most important gains were the extension of differentials, and stricter regulations regarding the employment of apprentices which returned to the old ratio of one to every 10 workers.

These years were not easy; the country was being rebuilt and the trade unions were primarily concerned with finding a solution to the unemployment, hunger, and the employer's blackmail of the working class at all levels. Inter-union negotiations dealing with salaries, contingency measures and plans to guarantee and extend employment, were the most significant battles of this period.

A fierce attack was directed against the trade union organization; at factory level it took the form of reprisals, dismissals or department struggles (FIAT), and externally it resulted in repressive measures, police interference, and deaths in the ranks of the workers. The trade union division meant that the response of the workers' movement to this series of events was completely inadequate.

It was around this time that collective bargaining entered the Italian trade union debate. For the CISL this did not fit in with its logic as it adjusted the salaries from one factory to another, and even from one department to another, in relation to the higher levels of productivity which was made possible by the new machinery. This meant that the management of the organization of work was in the hands of the employers, while the workers could only demand more money through the initiative of their trade union.

The CGIL was opposed to this type of bargaining as it ran counter to their concept of trade union struggle, and since they felt that any break-up in a class front would only lay the way open to corporatist and commercial excesses. To analyze the reasoning behind these two attitudes would involve a lengthy digression. Today, in a very schematic way, we can

say that collective bargaining as the general line of battle against the particular type of economic system which was being constructed in our country was fundamentally correct. However, it is also true that this line virtually excluded the Federations in the sector from intervening in questions on the evolution in the organization of work and wages within the factories, which later weakened their position.

In the 1956 contract, the sector sought to reduce the number of working hours to 40 per week, raised the question of equal status between the various specializations and between men and women workers, and formulated other objectives concerning differentials.

The results were primarily economic. They did not succeed in altering their hours and thus still had a 48-hour week. At this time a contract was drawn up for those working on magazines based on the printers' national contract. The aim was to bring the earnings of those working on magazines into line with those of the newspaper workers.

Towards the end of the 1960s a general movement of struggle started up again. The first results of collective bargaining were just beginning to appear in very important sectors such as the machine sector. In the factories they were beginning to call into question the process of the capitalist organization of work and, in particular, they concentrated on the rhythm of work, job skills and environmental conditions. Trade union organizations began to exchange ideas once again and the strategy known as "unity of action" was initiated. The platforms presented a united front, when they announced strikes for instance, even if they were not always in agreement on their policies. In this respect, thanks to its "corporatist" traditions, our sector is perhaps more advanced than others inasmuch as it has always attempted to present similar platforms between various organizations. During this period the sector tackled the problem of working-hours.

In the 1962 contract they reduced working-hours down to 45; to 44 in 1965; to 43 in 1967; and at last, in 1969 they got their 40 hours which was introduced in the following stages: 1969, 42 hours; 1970, 41 hours; 1972, 40 hours.

The renewal of trade union activity and their successes met with an immediate reaction on the part of the employers, and from 1963–1964 until 1966–1967 there was a long phase of economic recession. The Confederations became once again the key figures in trade union activity and 1966 an agreement was reached regarding (a) individual lay-offs; (b) lay-offs due to cuts in personnel; and (c) internal commissions.

In 1967–1969 with the economic upturn there was an outbreak of struggles both at factory level and in society as a whole. Unskilled workers and immigrants who had been employed in the large factories on a massive scale throughout this period became the key figures and modified profoundly the line of struggle of the trade unions.

The fight for equality was certainly the most important aspect which characterized the struggles which hit out at capitalist exploitation both in the factory and in society. The participation of an enormous mass of workers in drawing up objectives and

managing their struggle became a fundamental support for trade union action. The unity that was necessary to modify the relations of power between classes so that the trade union organizations could press for demands, was very much in evidence.

In 1969 the printers' sector also came to a qualitative turning-point. The struggles which had begun in the more important factories against the mass down-grading of skills and the use of unskilled workers brought on by the break-down of the "printing craft" began to make themselves heard. It is in the 1969 contract that they won the right of collective bargaining concerning the problems of skills, office staff, and the re-training of workers. In addition, they won the right to meet on factory premises. The reply to the mass of blocked second-category workers was still of a traditional type (a 3% increase for the second-category workers on the machine staff) which did not affect the organization of work.

But, this is the last contract in which the sector replies to the division of labour by introducing differentials. An initiative within the company has become decisive in consolidating the position and operation of the newly-formed workers' councils and its delegates. I do not think it necessary to explain what happened since, as this is new ground which is still the object of long discussions within the trade union. It is a fact, however, that after obtaining the III element in 1973 concerning the elimination of classifications, and the subsequent abolition of differentials in 1975, the sector has embarked on a radically new road. As professionalism is more and more conceived as a collective fact, the fight to do away with the company's hierarchy and its organization of work is gathering more and more momentum.

## Democratic Federation of PTT Workers (CFDT)

### THE POST, TELEGRAPH & TELEPHONE: IS IT STILL A PUBLIC SERVICE?...OR THE RAVAGES OF A POLICY

(France, 1975)

Only a few years ago, the French public service, including the PTT,<sup>1</sup> enjoyed an international reputation for quality and efficiency. Today the 'telephone scandal' crops up periodically on the front page of newspapers, while the overloads in the postal service arouse strong reaction amongst users. A poster put out by the *Confederation syndicale des familles* summarises the grievances of users rather well: 'Users are fed up with the deterioration of the quality of the PTT's service!' Underneath this headline is a list of the principal grievances: longer and longer delays in the delivery of letters; high postage rate increases; long lines in post offices; concerning the telephone: the cost (the highest in Europe) and subsequent malfunctioning after waiting years for it to be installed; the delay in postal cheques; and the low interest rate of postal savings accounts (7.5% compared to an inflation rate of 15%).

Some still wonder how we have arrived at this situation. Others, especially the most reactionary element of the press, tries to pin the responsibility on the workers — privileged people who just want to loaf and are always on strike. However, today it is very difficult not to see the link between the deterioration of the public service and the way in which the authorities have influenced the PTT and the entire public service sector.

In legal terms, at the moment, the PTT is 'a governmental agency with a public service mission'. Does this law still express a concrete reality or is it a survival from another epoch? Before replying to this question, it is interesting to look at the content of the notion of public service from an historical viewpoint.

The administration of the PTT as we know it today, descends in a direct line from the Royal Post created by Louis XI. It is thus one of the oldest governmental agencies in the country, and its birth and history is mixed up with that of the centralised state. Thus, in France, from the beginning, the

1. PTT = Ministère des Postes et Télécommunications et Télédiffusion, formerly the Postes et Télégraphes et Téléphones [Translator's note (TN)].

This text was first published as a chapter in the author's *Des "idiots" par milliers: Du démantèlement des P. T. T. à la grève de 1974*, Paris: François Maspero, 1975. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

transmission of messages, at first written, then by telegraphic signs, was an act of political power. We may wonder why it was so, and why, even during the epoch of economic liberalism, the State, first monarchic then republican, conserved this monopoly for itself. There are several elements in the reply to this question.

The post, like the telegraph and the telephone later, needed considerable investment. The establishment of a communication network is a long, costly job which no private enterprise until the birth of the multinational firms, was in a position of undertaking on a national level. Such a large investment was even less interesting for a businessman, as the profit to be made was meager or even non-existent. The telephone itself, highly coveted today, was taken over at the level of its installation and operation by the State without any serious resistance from private companies. In effect, it is only during the last few years when monopoly capitalism has brought us into the era of the 'consumer society' that the telephone has become a mass consumer product whose commercialisation is 'profitable' (ie profit-generating) instead of only 'useful' to capital. To support our argument, it is sufficient to see, *a contrario*, the example of the attitude of the State towards the railways. Although it played a determinant role in the economic and social life of the nation since the Industrial Revolution, railway transport of goods and people remained in the hands of private capital up to 1945. This because during the whole period of liberal capitalism, there was no question of the State taking over a flourishing commercial and industrial activity. Seen in this light, the State's take over of the transmission of messages does not appear to contradict the principle of economic liberalism 'make yourself rich', inasmuch as there was nothing to get rich on.

But if the State granted itself a monopoly over long-distance communication, it was also because it was a political necessity. Before occupying their place in contemporary economic life, the means of communication played, and still play, a determinant role on the level of internal, national politics as well as external defence. In creating a Royal Postal service, the monarchy endowed itself with a particularly powerful instrument of government, enabling it to receive regular and rapid information from all parts of the country. Because the authorities saw the telegraph as a particularly efficient arm, especially in the case of internal or external wars, they took exclusive control of its installation and used as soon as it was born in the 18th century. The circumstances in which the 1789 Revolution took place, especially the external dangers and the Jacobin's centralising conceptions, preserved the State administration of the post when the monarchic State was destroyed. It thus remained under the direct control of the political power, attached sometimes to the Ministry of the Interior, sometimes to the Ministry of Defense, until the creation of its own special Ministry.

Since the reign of Henry IV, the Royal Post had

2. Two of the largest mail order houses in France [TN].

3. CEDEX = Courrier d'Entreprise à Distribution Exceptionnelle.

4. POSTADEX = Poste Adaptée à la Demande des Expéditeurs.

been authorised to transport private correspondence, but it was only at the end of the 19th century that the notion of 'public service' appeared. The Post Office and the School, which materialised the State's presence over the whole of its territory, became the spearheads in the propagation of republican ideology. They were institutions in the general interest — which thus could not be in private hands — to which every citizen had access, and in front of which all were supposed to be equal. This idea of the equality of users is the basis for the existence of the public service. The equality of users is notably expressed by an equality of prices. This places the public service at the margin of the capitalist system as it is in contradiction with the search for maximum profits. The prices of the public service do not take into account the rate of return of each operation and do not distinguish between different 'customers'.

What remains today of this 'equality' of citizens *vis-à-vis* the public service? Nothing or almost nothing. Let us take postage rates first. Whereas the ordinary user pays 80 centimes for an ordinary letter, some firms have been offered particularly low rates which are agreed to by contract, the terms of which remain confidential. This is especially the case for mail order firms who make considerable profits out of the existence of the PTT, without which they would never have seen the light of day. This type of firm has had an extraordinary expansion during the last few years. Who has the right to complain about the high cost of postal rates — the worker, the small businessman, or rather La Redoute and Les Trois Suisses?<sup>2</sup> The word 'user' here serves only as a mystification.

This inequality between users is not limited to postage rates, but also — and above all — to the quality of the service given and the methods implemented. The distinction between 'large' and 'small' customers is not only theoretical, but is concretised by the installation of mail routing networks differentiated according to users. The administration proposes the CEDEX system<sup>3</sup> to users with a large volume of mail; for the most part, business firms.

Each CEDEX is made up of a special postal code, and CEDEX mail can be sorted out as soon as it is delivered to a post office. After that it is routed more rapidly than ordinary mail to the distribution centre which is a central receiving office or a sorting centre. Thus the CEDEX user does not have to suffer as much as the private individual from the slowdown in postal service. The use of CEDEX only presents one inconvenience — very minor for firms — mail is not delivered, but the user must come and pick it up at the centre, which is never far away. In return, the administration itself goes to collect mail sent out by CEDEX users, who no longer have to deliver mail to the post office.

Another system proposed to business firms is POSTADEX<sup>4</sup>. This is a contract between the PTT and a firm in which the postal service agrees to collect mail from the firm and deliver it to given points in the country within a given maximum time in return for special payment. The PTT is thus constrained to mobilise its weak forces 100% for the benefit of a small number of people, because any delivery after the given time limit means the refund of the payment. In 1974 about 200 contracts of this type existed.

Not only does the administration treat customers unequally in function of their importance, but also it introduces a greater and greater discrimination between users according to where they live. The principal victims of this capitalist profitisation of the public services are the inhabitants of rural areas, who, having seen the train station and railway, school and teacher, disappear, now see themselves becoming more and more distant from the post office and postman or postwoman. With the CIDEX system<sup>5</sup> mail distribution to rural areas becomes almost completely anonymous — the postman no longer delivers mail to the home but to grouped letterboxes (up to 10) and only visits the home of the user for special correspondence (registered letters, etc.) or if the user specifically asks for it by a red signal attached to the letterbox. Should we consider this as a mere detail, under the pretext that it does not really affect the overall quality of the services rendered by the administration? Perhaps. But if we take the point of view of the CFDT<sup>6</sup> it symbolises the dehumanisation of society and sums up rather well the nature of the changes introduced in the PTT. Furthermore, it could have major consequences for the future of the administration. If we refer to the study carried out by *Publicis Conseil* in December 1972 and January-February 1973 on 'The Public Image of the Post and Telecommunications' we find that the PTT has a real important capital at its disposition, linked to the characteristics of a public service whose essential mission is the handling of messages. The study specifies that 'the postman remains the symbol of the relationship between the PTT and users within the framework of a humane society.' The conclusion: the administration knows full well the consequences of its policy and only cares about users if they are quoted on the Stock Exchange!

The term 'user' has been crossed out of the Ministry's official vocabulary and it now much prefers the term 'client'. To appreciate the difference between these two terms, we only need to open the dictionary *Petit Larousse* which defines 'user' (*usager*) as someone who uses a public service, whereas a 'client' is someone who buys from a shopkeeper. It logically follows that the transformation of user into customer is no more than a reflection of the transformation of a public service into a commercial enterprise.

### FROM THE STATUS OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE LAW OF CAPITAL: THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION OF PTT WORKERS

As well as having serious consequences for its users, the orientation imposed on the postal administration by the government also weighs heavily on the situation of the PTT workers. The modernisation of services, the systematic search for profit, the privatisation and dismantling of certain activities have multiple and cumulative repercussions on work conditions in the broad sense of the term, as much as on the very nature of work.

5. CIDEX = Courrier Individuel à Distribution Exceptionnelle.

6. CFDT = Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail; France's second largest trade union, [TN].

To spread confusion, the government and the postal administration hide behind the need to modernise services; and thus we would first like to clarify the CFDT's position on this question.

We have never denied that technological progress can improve the functioning of services, especially when they attenuate or do away with the tediousness of work. An example of this is the mechanisation of mail handling in sorting centres. We are not 'enemies of progress'! What we dispute is the way the authorities use the available new technologies. In our opinion, a technology is only neutral when it is not used; thus we pose the question: what improvements, particularly in work conditions, have the new technologies brought? For 15 years the CDFT Federation of the PTT has been calling for a round table discussion on modernisation so that all the problems posed can be examined and measures taken to ensure that the workers concerned do not have to bear the brunt of these changes. The political authorities have always refused this confrontation. A round table was to have been convoked in 1974 when a strike broke out.

[PPT Secretary of State] Pierre Lelong's list of propositions talked again of a round table which should have been held in the first quarter of 1975, but nothing came of it. We grant that Pierre Lelong is no longer in the government and that a new minister never feels bound by the promises of his predecessor, but nevertheless, the threats hanging over the status of the PTT and its employees are still there.

### THE AGGRAVATION OF WORK CONDITIONS

Generally, when one speaks of modernisation, the automation of telecommunications or postal cheques springs to mind; rarely other services like mail sorting, post offices or mail distribution. However, these services are also affected by the current technological evolution. The field of application of modernisation goes beyond the sectors of the enterprise affected by pure technology such as mechanisation, automation and electronification. It also embraces services where new techniques of management controls and accounting, and individualised budgeting are used.

Modernisation is not neutral and does not come about by chance; it aims at increasing productivity, ie the amount of work rendered by the wage earner. It leads to a reduction in costs and consequently, increased profits.

For workers, modernisation can mean a noticeable aggravation of their work conditions. For example, at the Paris-Brune sorting centre, the administration attempted to install 'more modern' sorting compartments which produced an immediate reaction from workers. In effect, these compartments offered one advantage: the sorter could sit down, which was not the case before. But, in return, workers found themselves totally cut off from their comrades because of the semi-circular shape of the compartment and the fact that they no longer had to get up and move about. They thus found themselves chained to their workposts throughout the whole

shift. We should add that with this type of sorting compartment, control of workers' output is greatly facilitated; the mail to be sorted out is brought in small boxes containing about a quarter of an hour's work. Nothing is left to chance. We would cite other similar examples such as those concerning postal cheques and the operation of the telephone, with the use of viewers and 'video consoles'.

If mechanisation has suppressed some particularly tedious jobs, it has not led to a slowing down of the work rhythm imposed on workers in the sorting centres, and the loaders in the post office depots, who still have to lift ten tons of mail sacks each shift. Generally, mechanisation only reduces the tedious, purely physical work; on the other hand, it tends to increase nervous fatigue.

The placing of postal cheques under electronic management has not reduced the considerable number of nervous illnesses still suffered by many women working there; unfortunately a very sad record.

The introduction of new materials can have consequences on worker's health which must also be taken into account; for example, noise, vibration, and lighting in the post office depots. While on the subject, we should also mention that in 1973 the frequency of work accidents was higher in the PTT than in the SNCF [State Railway System].

Modernisation is used by the government to deny the reality of the problem of the number of employees which is the key to improving work conditions. All of this does not prevent the Secretary of State, Pierre Lelong, 'who knows nothing about the PTT', from insulting workers by declaring that 'some have an easy life'. The truth is very different; today, the overall work conditions of post office workers are comparable to those found in private enterprises, and often worse.

**A MASSIVE DOWN-GRADING**

The comparison with the work conditions in industry is all the more justified in that PTT workers are currently undergoing a massive down-grading of job skills. This down-grading is the most direct consequence of the search for maximum profitability and the introduction of new technologies. Half a century late, today the PTT is adopting a division and parcellisation of work according to the methods of Taylorism. Furthermore, this is being done at a time when, following struggles led by semi-skilled workers, some employers are questioning the efficiency of these work methods.

The parcellisation of work tasks affects, of course, all sectors of postal operations such as telecommunications, but it also affects administrative services as well. The introduction of management

7. On this subject, see the pamphlet published by the comrades of the CFDT Bank Federation titled *La Mal des banques* (The Difficulties of the Banks) on the 1973 strike (available from: 26 rue de Montholon, 75009 Paris for 10 Francs).

8. This amounted to a monthly salary of about 1300 to 1420 Francs before the strike.

9. The term 'post office worker' (*postier*) should be understood in the broadest sense. It covers all PTT workers, whether they be in telecommunications, the post office, the financial or the administrative departments.

accounting, management controls and computer management leads to a total reorganisation of departments. The work becomes more and more like that of office workers in large industrial firms or in the tertiary sector (insurance, banking) who have been of called "semi-skilled workers with ties".<sup>7</sup>

The workers who are victims of this down-grading feel it as a profound injustice. This leads to reactions of indifference to their work which can go as far as total disinterest. This phenomenon is relatively new in a organisation which has generally been appreciated for its high professional consciousness and the quality of its work.

The problem is all the more serious for the administration when one notices the same sort of reaction among newly-recruited personnel — a reaction provoked by the gulf between the increasingly high level of qualifications (the result of longer schooling) and the type of jobs they are proposed. Furthermore, often due to this, young workers develop an opposition to the fundamental nature of work under the capitalist system.

The following table clearly shows in the structure of job categories the amplitude of this phenomenon of massive down-grading:

Category	1966	1968	1970	1972	1973
A	20254	20392	20111	20597	20998
B	58892	65477	71287	73651	75189
C	169808	179931	187130	193675	196202
D	4769	4865	5317	5543	5791

TOTALS: 253723 270665 283845 293466 298880

(Source: *Personnel Statistics*, 1974)

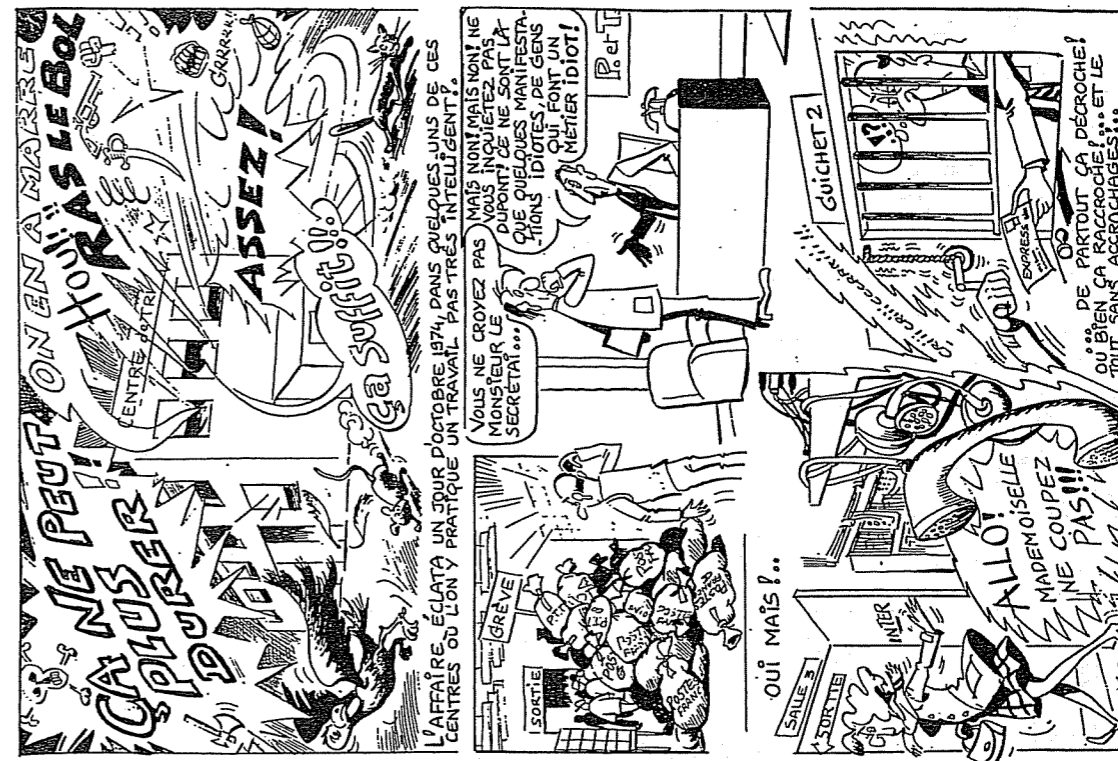
The number of executives, Category A, is stagnating; whereas categories B, C, and D are increasing.

To this should be added that the parcellisation and automation of tasks facilitates the employment of outside personnel, often without professional qualifications; over 50,000 in 1966, over 80,000 in 1973, and 100,000 today! This is more than the total number of workers at Renault. These auxiliary workers are classified for the most part between the indexes 168-190.<sup>8</sup> If we add up these facts, we see that for 400,000 post office workers,<sup>9</sup> over 300,000 belong to categories C and D, or non-tenured jobs.

**THE STATUS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN QUESTION**

The transformation of the public service and its management, based on that of the private sector, contradicts the status of the enterprise and its personnel, both of which are defined in the General Statute of the Public Service enacted in 1946.

The studies on which the present orientation are based, the Nora Report (1967) and the MacKinsey Consultants Report (1973), openly challenge this status, which they consider an obstacle to the "sound management" of the PTT. The government, for their part, have always been careful with their language, and have even proclaimed on many occasions their intention to conserve intact this Statute. However, we are forced to state that several facts flagrantly contradict these declarations of principle. A few examples follow.



Comic Book, "Work ... or Strike, A Comic Book of Adventure and Action (Not Political—Very Trade Union)", written and drawn by Réno for the Nice section of the trade union CFDT-PTT during the strike of

1974. (A translation is virtually impossible as language and allusions are so specific to French conditions, that it would take volumes to explain it properly).

ON DÉCIDE ALORS D'OUVRIRE DES NÉGOCIATIONS !!!

200F SALAIRES A 1700F

CONDITIONS DE TRAVAIL

EFFECTIFS + GARANTIE DE NON-DEMANTELEMENT

PRIMES

SERVICE ACTIF

DEFENSE DU SERVICE PUBLIC

TITULARISATION DES AUXILIAIRES

CGT F.O C.F.D.T F.N.

NON! NON! MESSIEURS!! C'EST TROP! C'EST TROP!

RENTRÉ CHEZ LUI, LE SECRÉTAIRE SE MÎT À RÉFLÉCHIR PROFONDEMENT...

À LA RENCONTRE, SUIVANTE IL SORTIT QUAND MÊME LE FRUIT DE SES (LE) LONGUES MÉDITATIONS.

ON SE SÉPARERA TRÈS TARD.

IL MARCHA TOUTE LA JOURNÉE DE (LE) LONG EN LARGE... ESSAYA DE PRÉPARER QUELQUES (LE) LONGUES PROPOSITIONS... ET FINALEMENT TROUVA QUE C'ÉTAIT LE JOUR LE PLUS (LE) LONG DE SA CARRIÈRE DE SECRÉTAIRE D'ÉTAT AUX P&T.

VOICI MES PROPOSITIONS! ELLES SONT CONTENUES SUR LE DOS DE CE TIMBRE DE 80 CENTIMES...

BIÈRE! QU'ELLE ENDURANCE!

ON CONTINUE À NÉGOCIER!

ET LES SALAIRES LES CONDITIONS DE TRAVAIL EFFECTIFS??

ET EN PLUS DE ÇA ILS NE DISENT RIEN! ET ILS SONT COMPLÈTEMENT SOURDS!

ON SE QUITTE À NOUVEAU.

ON ARRIVA AU WEEK-END DE LA TOUSSAINT

QUI SAIT??

GRÈVE 18 OCTOBRE 4 NOVEMBRE 1974

MAIS LE LUNDI 4, LES DÉRNIERS ESPOIRS S'ÉVOLENT...

SI ÇA CONTINUE JE VAIS ÊTRE LE SEUL À TRAVAILLER!

ON ADMINISTRE PLUS! ON FAIT GRÈVE

EN GRÈVE

CRAS LE BOL!

ON S'EN VA À LA MAISON

MINISTÈRE P&T

NOTRE P&T SECRÉTAIRE AVAIT ENFIN DES PROPOSITIONS CONCRÈTES À PRÉSENTER... C'EST APRÈS DE DURES ÉQUATIONS...

DONC! J'ADDITIONNE 8, JE RETRANCHE 2, JE MULTIPLIE 2 PAR 12, ET JE DIVISE PAR 5... ETC...

HOURRA! J'AI TROUVÉ! JE TITULARISE 6000 AUXILIAIRES...

TITULARISATION DES AUXILIAIRES

ce qui fait 6000 CREATIONS D'EMPLOIS TITULAIRES

6000 SUPPRESSION DE L'AUXILIAIRE EN MOYEN

TOTAL = 6000

VOILÀ DÉJÀ 18.000 CAS DE TRAITES!

ON CONTINUE À NÉGOCIER!

ET LES SALAIRES LES CONDITIONS DE TRAVAIL EFFECTIFS??

ET EN PLUS DE ÇA ILS NE DISENT RIEN! ET ILS SONT COMPLÈTEMENT SOURDS!

ON ARRIVA AU PROBLÈME DE LA "POLITISATION" ILY A DES GENS QUI FONT DE LA POLITIQUE? D'AUTRES NON! EXEMPLES:

CE MONSIEUR NE FAIT PAS DE POLITIQUE!

FINANCES

LE PROPRIÉTAIRE DE TOUT ÇA, NE FAIT PAS DE POLITIQUE!...

MAIS ALORS QUI FAIT DE LA POLITIQUE??

DU PAIN! DU TRAVAIL!

CELUI LÀ! POURQUOI!! PARCE QU'IL FAIT LA GRÈVE!

LE 11 NOVEMBRE APPROCHE... LE POURCENTAGE DE GRÉVISTES DIMINUE... LE TRAVAIL REPRENDRÀ NORMALEMENT MARDI!...

ENTRE-TEMPS ON DÉCIDE DE CONSULTER LA BASE POUR SAVOIR SI ELLE EST SATISFAITE DES PROPOSITIONS DE L'ADMINISTRATION!

SOMMET INTER-SYNDICAL

VOUS ÊTES CONTENTS À LA BASE?

NON! A 90%!!

HA! BON!

ILS EN SAVENT DES CHOSSES CES MINISTRES

D'ABORD LES PETITS BUREAUX, DITS "BUREAUX CALMES"!

..FERAIT MIEUX DE LAISSER TOMBER L'ASTROLOGIE!...

MARDI NOUVEAU LE QUOTIDIEN

P.T.T LE MOUVEMENT S'EST DURCI ET AMPLIFIÉ

TOUT LE MONDE NE PARTICIPE PAS À LA GRÈVE... ON PEUT DIVISER EN DEUX CATÉGORIES CEUX QUI SONT SATISFAITS,

QU'EST CE QU'ILS CROIENT LES SYNDICATS!?. NOUS EMPÊCHER DE TRAVAILLER!?

T'AS VU ON A DÉJÀ "ARRACHÉ" 550 "BALLE" DE PLUS SUR LA PRIME D'EXPLOITATION!

ET LA LIBERTÉ DE "BOSSER" ÇA EXISTE NON!?

P.T.T

JE ME DEMANDE CE QUE DEVIENT EDITH ET LES GOSSES?.. DEPUIS LE 21 OCTOBRE!?

LA PRESSE CONTINUE À INFORMER LE PUBLIC NON AVERTI.

GREVE P.T.T

QUE VEULENT ILS DE PLUS? UN PRÉPOSÉ DU TRI GAGNE 1926 F, UN AGENT D'EXPLOITATION 2050 F, SANS PARLER DU PERSONNEL D'ENCADREMENT, CONTRÔLEURS, INSPECTEURS... ETC.

CE QUI SUSCITE QUELQUES ENVIES ET BEAUCOUP D'ADMIRATION!

CELUI LÀ! IL A RÉUSSI DANS LA VIE! IL A UNE BELLE SITUATION... IL TRAVAILLE À LA POSTE!

AH! OUI!! OUELLE CHANCE!

JE VEUX CE JOUET!!

TU EST FOU?! TON PÈRE NE GAGNE PAS COMME UN POSTIER!

EN ENVOYANT LE CONTINGENT À LA RESCOURSSE.

C'EST L'ÉPOQUE OU ON PARLE BEAUCOUP DE LA FORCE DE FRAPPE... AUSSI ON DÉCIDE DE FRAPPER UN GRAND COUP...

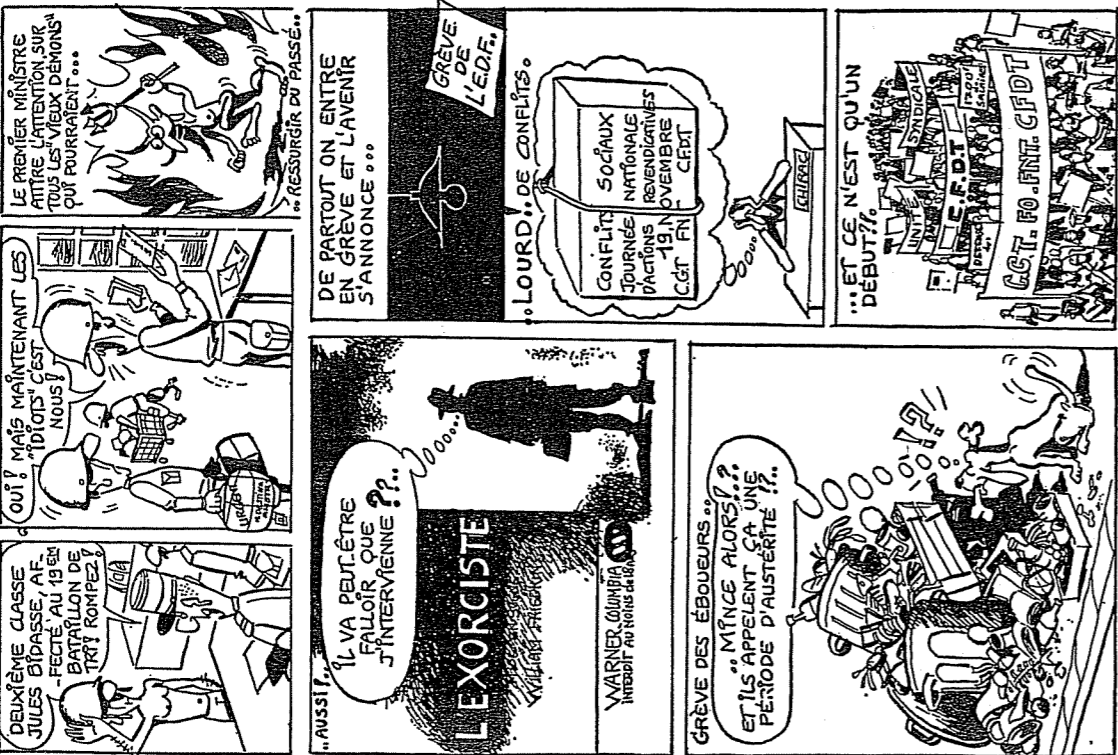
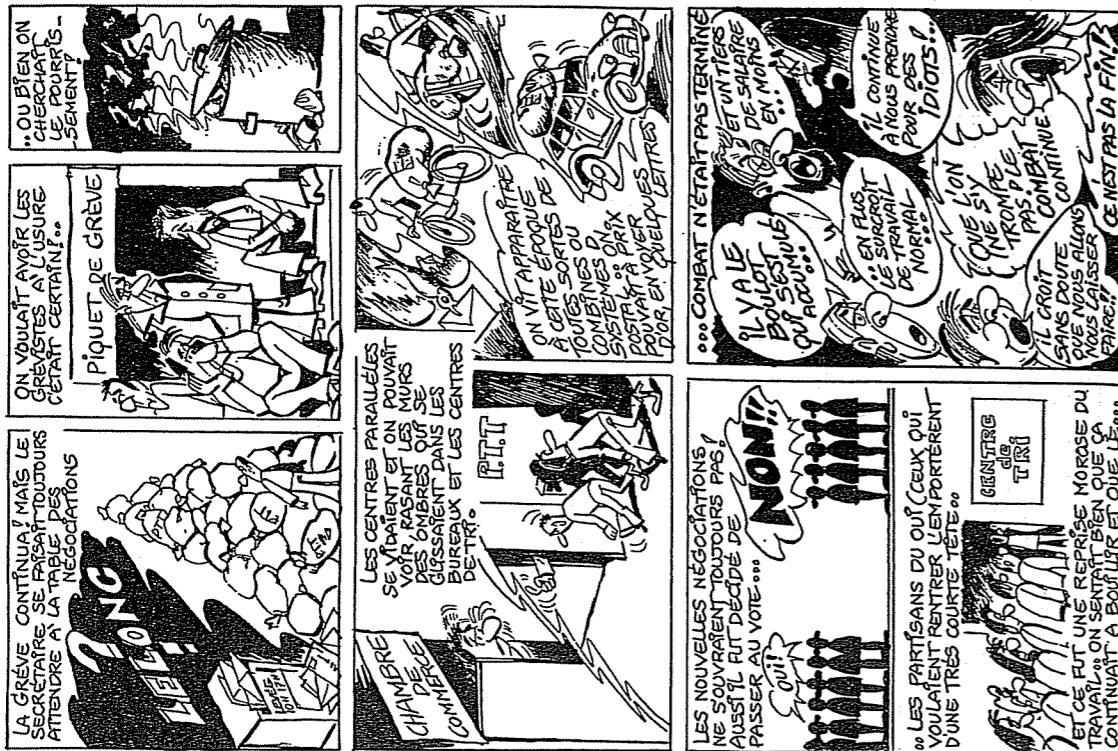
UNE NOUVELLE SPÉCIALITÉ VIENT DE VOIR LE JOUR!

MINISTÈRE DES ARMÉES

ENGAGEZ VOUS!

NOMBREUSES CARRIÈRES

ARTILLERIE GÉNIE CAVALERIE TRI POSTAL PRIMES D'ENGAGEMENTS... ETC.



First of all, *remunerations*. The 1946 Statute stipulates that a civil servant's remuneration depends entirely on his or her grade and seniority. No other factor, such as discipline, type of work or output should normally be considered. The salary received is therefore devoid of any personal character. In practice, this means that when two civil servants are found at the same grade with the same seniority, they receive the same remuneration. The MacKinsey Report stressed that such a principle contradicts sound, ie capitalist, management of the enterprise, as the personnel cannot be motivated at this level. Following the conclusion of this report, the administration is presently trying to multiply as much as possible bonuses linked to the job slot or to output, and to increase the relative part of such bonuses in the workers' take-home pay. Granted, we are still far from a totally individualised method of calculation for employees, but this process has begun and the speed of its evolution will depend on the relations of force between the government and the PTT workers.

Secondly, the example of *careers*. In this area, closely linked to the question of salaries, the gains are also not officially challenged. But in high places it is considered that the rigidity imposed by the Statute is harmful, and it is recommended that non-aligned job-slots be created for administrative careers. Recruitment methods and established rules for choosing colleagues have also been put into question. This questioning is put into effect in an indirect, round-about way, particularly through the employment at the management level of contract personnel who are outside the Statute's domain.

The Statute places the civil worker outside Common Law by regulating recruitment, careers, and remunerations. But above all, the tenured civil servant enjoys a job security which contrasts with the condition of other wage-earners who find themselves subjected to the law of supply and demand on the labour market, and whose situation is perpetually unstable, especially in times of economic crisis. This job security is tending to disappear in the PTT. The 100,000 auxiliaries, who do not benefit from the Statute are "precarious" employees. If they are laid off, the legislation does not give them all the rights and guarantees of the private sector. Tenured workers themselves, for a number of years, have been submitted to the 'needs' arising from the reorganisation of the departments; suppression of jobs, reduction of services, decentralisation etc. In such circumstances it is no longer possible to respect, for example, the rules concerning transfers and the reintegration of women on leave of absence. And, as everyone knows, a unapplied rule quickly becomes outmoded.

In addition to the changes within the administration, there is also a short-sighted personnel policy. Recruitment never corresponds to the real needs of the administration. This leads to the rupture of the statutory link between the job and the grade of the person fulfilling it. Pierre Lelong recognised as much in an interview in *Le Monde*, in January 1975:

The 'worn-out' state of Civil Service qualification levels is particularly obvious when we look at the case of the PTT. With the passing years, since 1946, the normal correspondence between grades and job function has

been destroyed. Currently, for the same function, ie to carry out the same job, side by side there often exists six or seven different grades. This is particularly true in the sorting centres. On the other hand, for a single grade there often corresponds a large number of functions of a very diverse nature and level.

If we are in total agreement with this, we do not share the 'explanation' given by the former Secretary of State. What is the cause of this 'worn-out' state? Is it, as we are lead to believe, a natural phenomenon due to the passing years in some way? Who runs the PTT? Who has the possibility to maintain and improve the public service qualification levels or to make them inapplicable by introducing anarchy into the different departments? People like to think that the trade unions have a great deal of power, but they do not have any control over this, which remains the government's exclusive prerogative.

All this proves that the General Statute of the Public Service is undergoing a total offensive attack from political leaders and high officials. This offensive has only one goal: to prepare for its total disappearance in the near future. The Statute is threatened to die because it constitutes the main obstacle to the realisation of the economic and political strategy of the government concerning the PTT. As we have seen, the rules set forth in the Statute for recruitment, careers and remunerations make the total privatisation of its management very difficult; and it is this privatisation which is the final objective of the government.

Moreover, the Statute is not a simple administrative regulation, but also reflects the relations of force just after Liberation between the workers in the public sector and the State-employer. In this sense, it represents the gains of 50 years of union struggles in which PTT workers have played a very active part. We are often told that the Statute is old-fashioned and that defending it is a rearguard action; of course, the CFDT does not consider the 1946 General Statute as a panacea or as something immutable and it is true that some of its provisions can lead to division among the workers. But should we throw the baby out with the bath water by saying 'we don't give a damn about the Statute?' We feel that we should wage an offensive struggle by making demands which work towards improving the Statute, such as the simplifying of classifications, for example. But a victory on these points would only be illusory if we let the right to strike and union liberties be put into question, as these are the civil servants' guarantees when confronted with the arbitrariness of governmental power, and their independence in relation to industrial enterprises. This is precisely what we defend when we say 'Defend the Statute'. Is this a rearguard struggle? In any case, this struggle concerns not only post office workers and those subject to the Statute, but the entire working-class movement. The disappearance of the rights guaranteed by the Statute would be a great defeat for the workers' movement and would constitute a serious setback for democratic liberties. The union movement, much better implanted in the PTT (about 60% unionised) than in most industrial sectors (20% unionised on the average), would be the first victim. Subjected to the arbitrariness of governmental power as in the time of

Napoleon, the civil servants risk becoming an instrument of the bourgeoisie against the popular forces. Thus, the stakes are important.

### AN IDEOLOGICAL OFFENSIVE WITHOUT PRECEDENT

The MacKinsey Report has drawn the administration's attention to the consequences of the inadaptability of the administration's personnel policy to the new operating requirements. In particular, it stressed the disapproval of the executives and personnel to the enterprise's objectives and recommended a series of solutions which can be summarised as follows:

- set up a planned personnel management policy; ie organise recruitment, and initial and continuing training, according to operation needs in function of a plan of development;
- master the development of data-processing;
- organise personnel management more operationally; and
- create motivations to win back the support of executives and personnel.

The administration has thus begun a vast ideological campaign; for several years we have seen within the PTT a multiplication of opinion polls, work motivation studies, the introduction of organisational counsellors, human relations seminars, and work-time studies, etc.

The administration is seeking first of all to obtain the goodwill and neutrality of workers, but its real objective is their effective support, and their acceptance of the 'rules of the game.' On the one hand, they are trying to make the personnel identify their own interests with those of the enterprise and thus interiorise the values of the capitalist system; while on the other hand, they are trying to turn the workers' attention away from real problems by proposing motivational bonuses; discounts on all types of things; and by 'interesting' them more and more in the PTT's commercial policy.

In the interview in *Le Monde* already cited, Lelong stated:

Inside the huge organism, information circulates very badly. Problems and solutions, sometimes poorly analysed and poorly explained, are often only partially or indifferently distributed. Rumours circulate, prejudices take hold, and propaganda abounds.

Thus, the administration organises its own information network to confront the unions' networks by setting up 'social correspondents'. It seeks to beat the unions on their own ground, workers' information, by discrediting them in the eyes of the personnel. It even pushes its desire to inform beyond the written text and advocates direct contact with the personnel, going so far as to hold a meeting of a department head in the workplace. An era of intoxication has been born.

However, the administration knows that it cannot hope to obtain in the immediate future 'positive' results with all the personnel; the strike made it lose its last illusions on this subject. Thus it concentrates most of its efforts on the executives.

Executives are an easier prey in so far as their eventual attachment to the public service and the

Statute can easily appear to them contradictory with the interests of their job category. To explode this contradiction, one only has to compare their situation, particularly their remuneration, with that of executives in the private sector. Thus, some executives could be more receptive than worker personnel to ideas of privatisation. Every means available has been implemented to instill these ideas into them, from seminars to increases in the rate of their output bonus. The executives are addressed first of all to persuade them that the decisions taken are 'natural', that it is impossible to do things otherwise, because everything is a result of technological evolution and that this technology is neutral.

One only has to read the newsletter, *Information et Documentation*, intended for the executives of the postal and financial departments, to understand the role that the administration wants them to play: 'Things must be taken in hand or "our house" will fall in.' In other words, it is up to you to ensure that 'social peace' reigns in the enterprise.

Paola M. Manacorda

## THE COMPUTER STRATEGY OF THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

(Italy, 1976)

### THE POSITION OF THE PCI [ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY]

Generally speaking, the workers' movement has paid close attention to the complex subject of the organization of work throughout the last twenty years. Since the 1960s a debate has also developed over the consequences of industrial automation, in relation to its introduction into the country's productive process.

However, the workers' movement has been understandably slow to take a stand on the specific subject of computers, for a number of reasons, but primarily because this phenomenon until not so long ago was limited to a purely business sphere and concerned office staff rather than the workers. It is only recently that several analyses of office work have examined the contribution of the computer in the determinations of office work and such studies are still relatively few in Italy.<sup>1</sup> However, in France there have been numerous analyses, and a still greater number have appeared in the United States, where they have often taken on the unscientific and mystifying character peculiar to most American sociological writing.

One might say that, in Italy, the workers' movement began to pay specific attention to the problem of computers at the seminar organized by the PCI at Frattocchie in October 1973.<sup>2</sup> This seminar was held at the request of several technical experts from the PCI who were acutely aware of the problem and was preceded by several interviews in *Rinascita*. Five reports were presented at the seminar: on the theoretical character of the problem of information science (Fantini), on the relations between computers and the organization of work (Libertini), on computers in public administration (G. Bianchi), on political trends and public intervention (Bracciali) and on market and production problems (Colojanni). The debate was lively and interesting and clearly exposed the need for a wide range of left technicians, office workers and researchers to produce a report on a subject which is still largely unexplored.

At this meeting they rightly tackled a fairly broad range of the problems caused by computers

This text was first published as a chapter in the author's *Il calculatore del capitale: Un'analisi marxista dell'informatica*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1976. Copyright Feltrinelli Editore 1976. It was translated from the Italian by Diana Hosker. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

and how they affect the productive and social spheres; theoretical, political, economic and social problems. But later this vast range of problems was cut down and the PCI dwelt almost exclusively on macroeconomic aspects and, in particular, on the problem of an autonomous Italian production in this sector. When Libertini, who has worked intensely in this field for several years presented his findings at successive meetings and seminars,<sup>3</sup> he broke away from the original main lines of his report at Frattocchie, which specifically and with great precision drew links between the process of automation and computerization, between working conditions in the factory and in the office, and the contractual power of the working-class. However, in reports given on other occasions, a more general stand was taken, and the problem of computers was framed in by the vaster problem of the "requalification" of the Italian industrial system, and the need for an autonomous production in the sector as part of the general process of the evolution of the productive system towards an advanced technology.

At the next meeting in Ivrea, at the beginning of 1976, macroeconomic aspects completely dominated the proceedings; moreover, an explicit purpose was declared in the title of the seminar: "Problems of the Electronic Industry in Italy: Proposals for a Development Programme In the Sector."

The fact that this particular aspect took precedence over other aspects more closely concerned with organizational-technical and ideological-theoretical analyses, can be explained by the very real need for a force such as the PCI to formulate a comprehensive policy in the face of the alarming prospects of liquidation and the shrinking of the productive sector which have arisen in the past two years in Italy.

1. The unions have produced numerous documents on the organization of work and related technical changes, particularly the metal workers unions, now the FLM. See also the Gramsci Institute's 1956 seminar on "Workers and Technical Progress", as well as the numerous analyses which have appeared in *Quaderni piacentini*, *Sapere*, and *Per la critica dell'organizzazione del lavoro*. Some articles dealing with these themes which appeared during 1968-72, have been collected into an anthology; *Proletariato industriale e organizzazione del lavoro*, Rome, Savelli, 1975. As for computers, apart from the works of M. Lelli and E. Mingione already cited, there is *Impiegati '72*, edited by FIM-FIOM-UILM, which gives several observations on the use of the computer based on the actual experiences of technicians working in the three big multinational computer companies operating in Italy. See also the articles by P. M. Manacorda, P. Vallignani, C. Pedroni, L. Lenelli, M. Marchi, F. Bottasso, Barone, Lariccia, and Pallottino in "Informatica come controllo" in *Sapere*, 744, 1974.

2. *Informatica, economia, democrazia*, Rome, Ruiniti, 1974.

3. L. Libertini "I contenuti economici e culturali di una scelta politica" in *Informatica, Industria, Università, Programmazione*, the proceedings of the PCI's 1974 Turin meeting, Turin, Gruppo Editoriale Pietmontese, 1974. See also the report given at the seminar organized by the Physics Faculty of Milan University in Spring 1975, as well as the report presented at the seminar on "Computers and Didactics" organized by the Mathematics Faculty of Milan University in June 1975.

The predominance of the multinationals and the unscrupulous games they have played on the market, culminating firstly in the agreement between Philips, CII and Siemens,<sup>4</sup> and subsequently in their break-up and also in the agreement between Honeywell and CII in France,<sup>5</sup> has made it absolutely essential for the workers' movement to formulate a "strategic" line of intervention in this sector. Their policy, as we have said, has developed in the course of two years, on the basis of an analysis of the existing conditions of production and the relative relations of force. At the seminar in Frattocchie they pointed out that their prime objective was:

To achieve an autonomous approach in the use of the computer, in keeping with national interests; and the first step in this direction is a real autonomy in the planning of software. However, it is not possible at present, with the current state of the market and the relations of force, to tell whether such a step could be taken unless it were in conjunction with an autonomy in the production of hardware.<sup>6</sup>

After having stated that such an objective would entail a long-term programme, with large investments and deferred productivity, it was concluded that this programme could only be a specific "computer plan" for Italy. Once again it was declared that:

an Italian computer plan should aim towards Italian participation in the production of heavy machinery. Any standpoint which deems this objective ambitious and unrealistic should be rejected.<sup>7</sup>

in as much as American supremacy in the sector of big computers was not singled out because of its technological superiority, but because of its commercial and financial superiority, its multinational character.

As a result of having specified precisely why the American monopolies are so predominant, attention was focused on the primary factor, the international division of labour which, in the final analysis takes precedence over the other factors. The failure of the French *Plan Calcul*<sup>8</sup> and the failure of the monopolistic European Unidata agreement has shown that this factor is not easily overcome. Nor is the "up against the wall" strategy of confrontation with the American firms particularly productive. For this reason the PCI has formulated, for Italy at any rate, a more realistic policy, based on two main points: (1) the maintenance, at the very least, of the present

4. In 1973 the Dutch firm Philips, the French CII, and the German Siemens decided to form a consortium, UNIDATA, for the commercialization of their products. The agreement (in which Olivetti and the English firm ICL did not participate) was to have represented the start of the long-anticipated European agreement between computer manufacturers, which was considered a necessary measure if Europe was to achieve production autonomy in the computer sector. The agreement between the three European firms was short-lived and did not produce the desired results, largely owing to the different internal relations of power, in which Siemens was predominant. The consortium was dissolved at the end of 1975.

5. The end of 1975 also saw the agreement in which the French Government, together with CGE (the Compagnie generale d'electricite), financed the transaction which led to the merger between CII and Honeywell-Bull (or ex-Bull), the French data-processing company which was acquired by Honeywell in 1965; in the same way that in Italy, the Olivetti Electronic Division was first ceded to General

productive structure; (2) the conditioning of the multinationals and their involvement in a plan of rationalization and expansion of the sector.

The first point refers in particular to the research and productive structures of Olivetti and Honeywell Information Systems Italia who, as they inherited an electronic research laboratory (Pregnana Milanese) and a production plant (Caluso) from Olivetti in 1963, can, and in fact, do boast of being the only multinational group to have a complete line of their products researched, developed and marketed in Italy. From the public's point of view this is their strong point in comparison with IBM, but the people who are employed there know that at Pregnana they work exclusively at developing hardware projects which come from the head-office in the USA and that they do a small amount of research into basic software; they also know that the future of the Pregnana Laboratory is now even more uncertain because of what happened to French Honeywell. Other firms are in even more critical situations; SGS for instance, producers of electronic components who, at the beginning of 1976 are facing drastic cuts in production plans, and threats of lay-offs. This sufficiently justifies the first point, the general policy of an intervention designed to defend the existing production potential.

The PCI has based the second point of its policy on negotiations with the multinationals; it is easy to see that the general attitude of the multinational companies is reflected in their unscrupulous policy of disengagement from our country as soon as the crisis is imminent. The whole of 1975 was characterized by this "flight" in which they obtained unsecured financing or loans to set up their new plants and then "cleared out" as soon as profits began to fall, leaving behind them a legacy of debts and lay-offs.

The most macroscopic cases are Leyland, Torrington and Harris Moda. The electronic sector does not emerge unscathed from this strategy of international capital; this sector is also hit by dismissals, cuts, and lay-offs, especially in the production of electronic consumer goods. Strictly speaking, the computer sector is not particularly affected by the phenomenon because of its high level of monopolistic concentration which allows it to weather the recession with a minimum of loss. But before this threat dawns, it might be advisable to reach a number of "under-

Electric and then to Honeywell). As a result of this transaction, the new company had a participation of 53% French capital and 47% from Honeywell, and the plans for a European consortium, which were already somewhat tenuous, fell through altogether, and links began to be forged between European companies and American multinationals.

6. *Informatica, economia, democrazia, op. cit.* p.201.

7. *Ibidem.*

8. The French "Plan Calcul", which was launched in 1966 at the height of Gaullist "grandeur" and "American defiance", foresaw the creation of a national computer hardware industry (CII), and software, service, and computer-training companies. One part of this plan has been realized, but the rigid international division of labour very quickly ruled out any hope of national autonomy outside of a European agreement, which is the only possible strategy, though still a difficult one, to counterbalance the predominance of the multinationals. As noted in footnote 5, CII has recently merged with Honeywell-Bull.

standings" with the multinational computer companies, which might be formulated along the following lines: (a) "the multinational companies should draw up, publish details of, and put into practice economic-financial plans which are consistent with the national plan"; and (b) in return for their co-operation, such companies could be allowed certain compensations in the form of concessions, tax benefits and a guaranteed share of the market.<sup>9</sup>

These general lines, which, in practical terms, seem consistent with the Communist Party's economic policy, is open to a certain degree of uncertainty inasmuch as no suitable plan exists for the electronic sector in which to incorporate the multinational's tendencies. All that exists is a draft prepared by ISPE which is limited to the hypothetical public funding of research and development by Italian hardware and software firms. According to this draft, this fund would receive, during the five-year period 1975-79, between 60 and 135 billion lire, but it does not otherwise indicate, apart from a general reference to "small-scale" computers, precisely which type of research should be undertaken.

These are the general lines of the PCI's production policy. However, their definition of a policy for the utilization and distribution of computer resources—the consumption of data-processing—is less clear cut. At the seminars which we have already mentioned, there were some reports which dealt with the range of computer uses in public administration. But, in fact, with only two exceptions (the reports presented by Giuliano Bianchi at Frattocchie and R. Rovaris at Ivrea) the analyses were limited to the worst aspects of the computer, the wastages, when not directly the corruption, the inefficiency, and the famous "under-utilization", and neglected to mention the good points of their application.

As a result of this rather one-sided view, it is difficult to reconcile the analyses on the two levels of supply and demand, because the real usefulness of the computer, as far as the working-class is concerned, and the way in which it might be used to their benefit has not been fully defined. What is needed is an analysis of the computer as a *product* and as a *means of production*; as product of a given industrial system with specific modes of production and as a means of production in the sectors in which it operates: industry, services and public administration. In the absence of such an analysis, any endeavour to promote computer production seems singularly rash, unless one has first attempted to define the product. It is quite illusory to try and alter the way in which the computer is utilized, unless one has accurately analysed this in the first place.

The PCI seemed aware of these arguments when they first began to examine this problem:

The re-invention of the product does not take place along circumscribed lines, nor does it necessarily proceed with the requisite amount of speed. Nor can it be left to the objective processes. The re-invention of the product is part of a more complex chain which has its

9. M. Grasso, "Relazione", presented at the Ivrea meeting in January 1976.

10. *Informatica, economia, democrazia, op.cit.*, p.92.

11. Federazione Milanese CGIL-CISL-UIL, *Riconversione produttiva e settore elettronico*, CLUP Milano, January 1976.

starting point in the organization of labour and ultimately extends to the economy and society.<sup>10</sup>

This is the right sort of approach, but more depth is needed, not so much in the sense of *re-invention* of the product, which is difficult, but at least in the *comprehension* of the product, which constitutes a necessary stage in the product's subsequent re-invention.

But, strange as it may seem, comprehension and analysis of this type did not even figure in the Gramsci Institute's rich and wide-ranging seminar on "Science and Organization of Work". At this seminar, the contribution from the PCI cell at IBM was limited to a general description of the multinationals, whilst representatives from the machine-tools sector presented at least two specific reports concerning technical aspects and the organization of the work-force.

Unless such an analysis is started soon—and the PCI certainly has both the intellectual resources and the political experience to conduct one—we risk finding ourselves, twenty years from now, in a situation with the computer parallel to our present position concerning the automobile. In other words, one in which we evaluate the role of the automobile as, on the one hand, a "drag" on the economy and, on the other hand, as a "fundamental support" in the transportation system. It is right to point out that the discussion on this subject by the workers' movement comes at the end of the automobile's "historic cycle" and concludes with an analysis elaborated by the workers' own experiences of the concrete specific mode of automobile production (see the innumerable analyses of assembly-line work and the organization of work at FIAT which have been carried out over the last few years) and from their actual experience of the upheavals which the indiscriminate use of the automobile, controlled by big capital, has wrought on life-styles, the urban structure, and the organization of leisure time. For this reason, the mental efforts of a small group of intellectuals should certainly not take precedence over the ideas of the workers who can work from their own concrete experience. But, a great political and ideological force like the PCI could, nevertheless, orient this analysis, taking the Frattocchie seminar as a starting point and closely examining its findings in light of a correct Marxist methodology; because computers are not just a productive sector, but also represent a specific mode of the organization of work.

### THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNION AND THE TECHNICIANS' STRUGGLES

The FLM, the union to which workers in the electronic sector belong, has only recently begun to pay specific attention to theoretical issues; essentially their involvement can be traced back to the Ariccia Congress in 1974 and to the preparatory seminars in the provinces.<sup>11</sup> However, the trade union has had to face concrete problems of intervention in this sector over the past few years at the level of factory struggles. The complete restructuring of the sector—the elimination of small production units, the concentration process and mergers, and international agreements—has had serious repercussions on the

productive base, in the form of a progressive shrinking of this sector and its production options which are increasingly geared to the logic of big international capital. Consequently, the trade union has given priority to the protection of employment and job skill levels. Furthermore, it is to the trade union's credit that it has outlined the very close connections between the different branches of the electronic sector, and in particular that of the components, computers and telecommunications. Instead of calling for a computer strategy, as the PCI did initially, the trade union correctly requested a plan for the whole electronic sector, which would give preference to the Italian electronic component industry as well as create a policy of control and protection of national interests in the telecommunications sector. Even if the "electronics question", which opened-up in mid-1975 during the trade union's confrontation with the government, was, in reality, fully discussed during the telephone question, and still more closely during the debate on telephone rates, it remains, however, the correct unified approach to a group of problems so interrelated that any one decision in any one sector has important repercussions on adjacent branches.

As for the question of application, that is to say the use of the computer, the trade union, like the PCI, mainly limits itself to the usual criticism of automation in the industrial and service sectors: misuse and waste (as well as "under-utilization" a complaint we have already mentioned, but with which we do not altogether agree). But a direct impulse for the trade union to undertake research into computers as a "condition of work" might well come from the still rather uncertain struggles which workers are engaged in individual factories. These range from the struggles of the workers at Olivetti who want to do away with the night shift, to the employee demands in the computer centres of banks; sometimes these struggles are still concerned with corporatist issues, but more often than not the objective is to eliminate environmental hazards (for example at Credito Italiano). There is also the Honeywell workers' platform which demanded guarantees of professional advancement for all production and research workers and a revision of working methods, as well as the factory council at the Alfa Romeo who wanted to discuss plans for the projected alteration of the information system introduced by Italsiel. This latter seems to us to be a good example of the democratic way in which the use of computers could be controlled. Until the workers, through their factory, department or production-line organizations, are able to evaluate the merits of each application of the computer and can effectively analyse its essence and logic, as well as its utilization, and until the same criteria can be applied to each proposed use of the computer as those used to analyse each innovation in the organization of work, it is illusory to say that its use is being controlled. The opacity of the means of production, the artificial complexity and obscurity which shrouds their realization, and the unscrupulous commercial logic of the

12. Jean-Claude Quiniou, *Marxismo e informatica*, Rome, Riuniti, 1972, p.35. Translated from the original French. (Eds)

manufacturers and consultants, will always hinder any attempt on the part of the workers' movement to acquire a real consciousness of an information system of a certain type, the adoption of one sort of technology rather than another, the choice of a certain technological support as the vehicle for a philosophy for the organization of exploitation.

Until this is achieved, and it can only be achieved by a theoretical analysis which starts out from the working class' own concrete experience of struggles and clashes, to speak of "reappropriation" and "new use" of the computer seems to us difficult, if not simply mystifying.

### THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

One of the arguments sometimes put forward by the left on the subject of computers is the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production. It is well-known that Marx, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* states the following:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

We have already pointed out in the first chapter that this famous passage from Marx has sometimes been interpreted in a reductive sense. In particular, the French left has taken a reductive position on the question of computers, attempting to prove that "cybernetics represents an unprecedented potential for new socialized productive forces and tolls the knell for capitalistic relations of production".<sup>12</sup>

This opinion is expressed by J.-C. Quiniou in his book *Marxismo e Informatica* which raised hopes when it first came out because it promised to be a truly Marxist analysis of the computer phenomenon. However, the book proved disappointing because Quiniou's efforts were largely concentrated upon distorting the Marxian assertion of the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production, in defence of an expansion of computers.

In Quiniou's view, because cybernetics (which, incidentally, carries very little weight as a productive force in the present phase of capitalism; but Quiniou unconcernedly mixes up cybernetics with automation and computers), is a powerful factor in the socialization of production, it will lead, sooner or later, to a crisis in the capitalist relations of production. In fact there is insufficient evidence to prove this great "socializing" power of cybernetics. The author denounces the irrational use that capitalism makes of the computer, in terms of under-utilization, wastage and inefficiency. According to Quiniou, the typical capitalist use of the computer is geared to a maximization of profit in the management of money in the banks, in insurance companies, and in the administration of businesses. The "socialist" use on the other hand would be characterized by the direct

employment of automation in the productive process, and in its social use (education, health), a subject which we will come back to.

The author's inability to understand what is meant by the "capitalist use of technology" can be seen from his choice of the particular areas in which he feels the computer could make a positive contribution. For example, a completely automated factory with a "keys in hand", that is, complete with hardware and software, in which the worker's only function is to respond to orders given by the computer, using a selector with twenty pre-programmed replies, and where the working conditions are also predetermined in the definition phase of programming of the numerically controlled machines. Or—the biggest myth of all—the medical/hospital computer in its most superficial and acritical sense, as an instrument used to "save human lives"; or, the aberrant use of the computer in schools in the USSR, when students' progress and development was evaluated automatically.

Quiniou's conclusion, even if it is not drawn very clearly, seems to us to be the following: computers in any form are instruments to increase productivity. In capitalist society, this means an increase in profit, given the private relations of property. In a socialist society, however, this increase in productivity would represent a social advantage, since the relations of property would also be socialized. Clearly this syllogism is effective provided one does not go into the details of *how* this increase in productivity is obtained. In other words, provided one cannot, or will not see that this specific way of increasing productivity is a capitalist *method*, and not merely a capitalist *utilization*. La Grassa rightly observes that:

The technique and organization of the process of production are not *neutral*; they are not dependent on the alleged *objective* necessities of the production of goods. On the contrary, we have to deal with technical-organizational developments which reinforce the power of the capitalist and emphasize the subordination of the working class, increasing its *real expropriation* and incapacity to understand the complex workings of the productive process.<sup>13</sup>

We have tried to analyse this non-neutral aspect of computers throughout this book, because we think it both naive and reductive to imagine that it will automatically become an instrument of progress if used in a socialist society. And the line of thought pursued by Quiniou, who believes that the development of productive forces will bring relations of production to a crisis point, is, to our mind, even less helpful. But the most disturbing thing about Quiniou's position is the fact that, as far as a correct interpretation of Marx is concerned, he reverses the relation between productive forces and relations of production. To state that "even if they pay no attention to the real freeing of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie . . . still has the opportunity of

13. G. La Grassa, *op. cit.*, p.78.

14. Jean-Claude Quiniou, *op. cit.*, p.71.

15. *Ibid.*, p.65.

16. G. La Grassa, *op. cit.*, p.93.

17. In the complex theme of the "neutrality" of science and technology, see, for instance, the debates which followed the publication of *L'ape e l'architetto*.

producing ball-point pens which sell, rather than computers which do not sell"<sup>14</sup>, means that he has failed to understand that for the bourgeoisie too, the "freeing of the productive forces" might mean the furthering of their own objectives; to maintain that "today, political and ideological struggle comes down to exposing the irrationality of the means and ends of capitalism", shows that he has not understood the meaning of capitalist rationality, which is expressed today through technology and the organization of work.

And to maintain that "in order to bring about a scientific and technical revolution, one must first effect an *overturning* of the *structures* of production, a loosening of society and a redistribution of power" seems to us to be extremely unhelpful.<sup>15</sup> This is the classic reversal in which the radical change in the relations of production and social structures would follow the complete freeing of the productive forces, which was specified as a primary necessity. One cannot, however hope that:

the quantitative development of productive forces, will, in itself [bring about] a reversal of the relations of production. We can certainly verify the fact that capitalistic ownership of the means of production makes it very difficult to assess with any accuracy the productive capacity of the economic system; or alternatively, how this capacity can be diverted towards destructive ends. . . . But, all this will never lead, in itself, to the overturning of this given social structure, in which the producers have no consciousness about the kind of development which marks this structure.<sup>16</sup>

We italicized the last phrase to show how important it is to be aware of what is incorporated into the alternative use of technology, and what might be scrapped, or used for ends consonant with the interests of the working-class, and how this might come about.

For want of such an analysis, any hope that scientific and technological development—as the inexorable mainspring of humanity, which invariably ends with the triumph over the obscurantist designs of capital—"will sound the knell" of capitalism itself, harks back to the most classic scientific vision, and eliminates, in spite of itself, the sense and value of class struggle as the fundamental mainspring of the evolution of human society (which is not as peaceful and linear as Quiniou would seem to think). A class struggle, moreover, which in the analysis of science and technology, and their precise active and passive determinations, has its own specific moment, which can only be avoided at the risk of continually reabsorbing the contradictions which exist in the area of capital itself.<sup>17</sup>

The example of computers shows, in fact, how easy it is for capital to reabsorb these contradictions, for want of — or lack of — a subjectivity expressing revolutionary demands. One part of this continuous "subsumption" has already been analysed here. Other interesting aspects can be found in the analyses of two young French scholars, whose work recalls Bettelheim's school, and who view the use of the computer as capital's latest reply to the problem of the tendential fall of the profit-rate.

According to their hypothesis, the computer intervenes on two levels, production and circulation, particularly in the tertiary sector.



On the production level it is essentially a question of combating the effects of the growing organic composition of capital, which is trying to maximize the rate of exploitation, another way of reducing the cost of production; . . . The fact that the fundamental factor in capitalist evolution is represented by the diminution of the variable capital in respect to the fixed capital, means in the end that planning is necessary; this takes place first in the individual firm, then is subsequently extended to the marketplace and, ultimately to society as a whole. At the level of circulation, computers can be considered a powerful means to accelerate the speed of the circulation of capital, which in turn is reflected in the circulation in the market and on monetary circulation.<sup>18</sup>

The whole of Janco's and Furjot's essay concentrates on the relations between computers, and in particular the circulation of data, and needs of capital, which is largely interpreted as international financial capital. This is clearly an aspect of the relationship between computers and capital which should not be overlooked, even if it does not exhaust the subject completely. However, an important fact emerges from this position; the deep interrelations which exist between the development and the production of computers in different countries. Based on this fact, any strategy drawn up by the workers' movement should thus attach importance to the consideration of the "multinational" character which this sector has in common with other sectors. In any case, the two authors suggest that the workers' movement strategy should also take on a "multinational" character, in order to avoid a situation in which each country replies to the manoeuvres of capital with answers which turn out to be inconsistent with the overall framework elaborated by capital.

### THE SOCIAL USE OF THE COMPUTER

Another subject which the left has taken up several times in their debate on the use of computers is that of the *computer for social uses*; on more than one occasion it has been predicted that computers will be used in medicine, in education, in transport and for territorial and economic planning. They say it is better to use computers in hospitals rather than banks, because the health service has a social aim whilst the same cannot be said of financial speculation. Better in schools than in FIAT workshops, because mass education has a progressive objective, which is not true for the maximization of profit.

This position, which is a persistent one due to its generality of approach, is based on a conceptual and political error which has been overcome in other sectors. Here it still rears its head as it is a question of fairly complex scientific or technological perspectives, whose true nature is obscured by virtue of their complexity. The error lies in the separation of the *means* from the *ends* and the belief that, provided the end is a correct and acceptable one, "any means" of achieving that end are permissible. In actual fact, those responsible for this naive way of thinking do not arrive at the conclusion that "any means" are good ones, but rather that the computer in particular constitutes "a means like any other" of attaining a

given objective. And so, the health service or mass education, objectives which are certainly acceptable, would automatically benefit from the use of the computer.

We think that we have sufficiently discussed in the course of our work, how the use of the computer, in the present state of the technology and our knowledge, entails a specific way of dealing with problems, which is very similar to the way in which the computer should solve them. We further have pointed out that in reducing each system to the information system, in the parcellization of information, its codification and quantification, in the reconstruction of hierarchic and centralized information systems, the computer today imposes its distinctive character on the areas in which it is used and how it is used.

To transfer these methods to areas like health and education, for instance, could, we think, be very dangerous. So far, the qualitatively different ways of utilizing the computer have not been specified, ie, ways of using the computer which would overturn the existing logic and replace it with a less centralized and less bureaucratic one. In the case of the health sector the introduction of the computer has meant, up to now, the strengthening of the commercial structure and ideology of the hospitals, through their search for efficiency, sometimes at the cost of efficacy. The different ways in which the computer could be used in the health sector, for instance, in the creation and operation of epidemiological laboratories, however, are still being studied. The use of biomedical technology has meant that the human body is increasingly regarded as a "mechanism", and the consequent emphasis on the separation of the physical and psychic aspects of disease, and of the objective aspect and the real-life subjective experience; it has meant the mystification of automatized mass *screening*, which is passed off as preventive medicine, when in fact its real effect is to provoke unverified doubts in peoples' minds. And finally, it has meant the creation of "health records", that is, collections of individual data, generally from a hospital source, or, even worse, from the statistics of those who are hospitalized. This is then passed off as a "health information system" when it is quite clear by now that these costly and complicated projects have nothing whatever to do with a real information system, which would be concerned with prevention, the verification of the treatment's efficacy and investigations into health needs.

In schools, the introduction of the computer has meant the creation of didactic systems based on individual learning, and on the concept of maximum didactic productivity. This is obtained by reducing syllabuses to a succession of "information slots" which are taught and gradually controlled by the computer, by means of preselected learning circuits. How much of this is in accord with the tendency towards didactic flexibility, student involvement in the preparation of teaching methods and subject matter, and the transition from learning as a linear and personal acquisition, to the concept of learning as a dialectic and collective formulation. Here too, how long will it be before the computer is used as a didactic aid in the same way as the luminous

blackboard and the microscope, that is, employed in a less generalized way than it is at present? And, most important of all, is this kind of utilization possible?

All these points should be considered very critically before stating that the health service, education, the transport system and agriculture should be the privileged areas for the use of the computer.

Nor must one lose sight of the fact that the so-called "social use of the computer" is very often a convenient alibi used by the manufacturers. As the possible margins for rationalization within the business firm gradually decreases, and as there appears to be a very real and concrete need to manage and control social life, the manufacturers regard this as the most promising and lucrative area in which to sow the need for information. Therefore, it is necessary to proceed with the utmost of caution when asking the government to speed up those reforms (transport, health, education) which might lead to a large demand for computers. In this respect we will not make the mistake of maintaining that, if the working-class' demands for reform and rationalization results in an increase in the use of computers, that this would constitute an "objective" convergence between the position of the trade union and that of large capital. We only want to say two banal but fundamental things: that the reforms should be sought for their own sake and not to support computers; that it is necessary to make it clear that in many cases proper social reforms can just as easily do without computers or can make a very limited use of them.

### THE "ALTERNATIVE USE" AND THE "CRITICAL USE" OF THE COMPUTER

It is very likely that at the end of an attempted analysis, one expects an answer to a question which so strongly affects the interests of the workers. The question is seen from two different standpoints: one of which is naive and short-sighted, the other more critical. The first is that computers are already here, what good use can we make of them, without benefiting capitalist interests? But the second is more sceptical: is an "alternative" use of the computer possible?

Let us say straightaway that in our opinion there is no point in posing questions in this way, for the reason that we put forward at the beginning of our work. The computer is not a Kantian category, it is a sophisticated and complex technological instrument, which is inserted within a determined project for the control of nature or social reality. Within these projects it operates in a way which chiefly derives from its technological specificity and partly from the economic, organizational and social context in which it is used.

The capitalist use of the computer is not easily separated from its capitalist origin, and here lies the naiveté—in our opinion—of the position which tends to consider the "non-capitalist" use of the computer for intrinsically progressive ends. Even when used for an intrinsically progressive end, for example, in the health service, the instrument may still be employed in a capitalist mode. To give an extremely commonplace example, no one would profess that the typical

organization of the capitalist factory, based on Taylorism, *changes its aim*, or becomes more progressive, just because it is used to produce social goods instead of consumer goods imprinted by capitalism.

However, if we are critically evaluating hypotheses regarding the "alternative" use of the computer, it is true that, nowadays, in many instances, the only instrument capable of collecting, formulating and conserving data on a large scale, is *this computer*. We have already pointed out that economic, territorial and health programming on a regional basis are all areas in which a data base, without mythologizing the data itself, can be a real necessity.

So what should our attitude be towards an instrument which is so massively bound up with capitalist ideology, but which, at the present moment, we are unable to replace with anything more valid?

It seems to us that today there can only be one attitude towards the computer, and indeed to all other capitalist-inspired technology. This attitude should be critical and evaluative, and should judge each individual application on its merits, specifically and not generically; in addition, the advantages and limitations of using a computer should be considered in light of the conditioning it imposes and the organization it introduces. Only by a clear analysis of these components will it be possible to prevent the conscious use of the computer from becoming the unconscious adoption of the capitalist rationality, in the parcellization of work and technocratic alienation.

To undertake this analysis, which in our opinion should be applied case by case, in the same way as innovations in the organization of work at FIAT are analysed on an individual basis, one must have certain general criteria which could be applied in a very wide range of situations. These criteria would prevent one from falling into the usual trap of applying the criteria of speed, economy and reliability to technology *per se*.

Therefore, in evaluating or planning any use of automation, one should consider at least three factors: (1) the objective of the use; (2) the specific way in which the computer is being utilized; and (3) the organizational, economic and social context in which the use is taking place.

If these are the parameters to be considered in appraising technological innovation, the terms of comparison for these parameters can only be determined by the working-class' prevalent interest in the sector in which the technology has invaded. We should emphasize this last point because we think it essential. Technology must be evaluated not in relation to *generic* objectives for "progress", but in relation to the *specific* objectives of a plan, one in which the working class has identified as its own.

The most significant example can, once again, be drawn from the use of computers in the health sector, where, apart from anything else, they are subject to the greatest mystification. If one says, "the computer to safeguard health", if one accepts any computer which has been "painted white", and stuck into any health context, one ends up by accepting all those uses which are not only useless but are also positively harmful, about which we spoke earlier.

18. Manuel Janco and Daniel Furjot, *Informatique et capitalisme*, Paris, Maspero, 1972, p.24. [Part published in English in Volume I of this anthology, pp.322-25 (Eds.).]

But if one were to say "a health information system, with or without computers, should be consistent with the health program planned by the workers' movement," then things become somewhat clearer. A health program must be of a preventive nature and not purely curative; consequently the collecting of data, where necessary should be geared towards spotting dangers rather than the verifying what has already occurred. A health program should give preference to collective participation in the management of public health, whether in the factory, school or neighbourhood. Similarly, health information should give preference to its overall collective character which would make it possible to single out problems coming from a broad social base rather than those arising from a single individual.

As far as is possible, a health system should attempt to limit the experts' power, so that people themselves can actively participate in the political and technical management of their own health. Thus an information system must be constructed which is capable of socializing information in its most clear and intelligible form, rather than masking it by the use of jargon peculiar to its technical treatment and its so-called exigencies. A health program should allow its subjects to express, whenever possible, their own subjective experience of physical well-being or illness. Thus, an information system should not uncritically accept these aspects in their technical and presumed objective form, but should, as far as is possible, find ways of preserving the subjective, personal and collective character in the transmission of data.

Assuming the criteria of the retaining of subjectivity, participation, a preventive approach, and a move away from technical obscurity and delegation, should one conclude that the computer is completely compatible or completely incompatible with these criteria for the management of health? Obviously neither; an absolute conclusion in either direction would be totally acritical, and would attribute everything to *technology per se*, rather than to technology in relation to class objectives. However, as far as these criteria are concerned, one could say that large, centralized health records which again propose the static, centralized, bureaucratic and individualistic models of health information are incompatible; whilst epidemiological research surveys of a preventive nature are compatible and useful, as are health statistics, provided they are done with correct methods, and, above all, utilized in the right way. And it is here that the role of the computer is revealed in its true light. A large computer is indispensable for the compilation of health records, since it is necessary to memorize a large mass of data (thus it is a passive type of use). But, when it is a question of epidemiological surveys which "aim" to specify with great precision the risks of a given situation, the calculation, memorization and elaboration potential is rather limited, and in any case is not particularly relevant to the methodological problems posed by such surveys.

So, if we say: computers are necessary because

19. Ira Lowry's model is a mathematical model for the simulation of urban area growth based on productive activities, housing and attendant services.

we need to memorise the health data of the whole population, we are guilty of reversing a problem which really ought to be posited in the following way: what sort of information system is required to keep track of and care for the population's health, and, if possible, to prevent its deterioration? Only when we have replied, with the necessary experiments and appraisals to this first question, can we turn our attention to the second one: what type of technology is needed to achieve our objective? And how does the particular technology we are planning to use, be it a computer or pencil and paper, assure that the health program's fundamental criteria will be respected?

One can say the same thing about the more general use of the computer in planning. What sort of relation do we want between planning as an expert activity and its political control by the base? To what extent are we prepared to delegate technical aspects, which always imply political choices, if we are not in a position to understand either the former or the latter? The statistics on the composition of a neighbourhood population by income groups, which shows how many pensioners, housewives and unemployed people there are, or which enables one to estimate the extent of slum conditions by means of an index of over-crowded living-quarters, might well be a useful instrument in exposing phenomena of which the local population already possesses an intuitive knowledge. But Ira Lowry's mathematical model of urban growth<sup>19</sup> is clearly not an instrument which favours local participation in the selection of sites, and even if it were—and it is not—the best urban mathematical model in the world, it would still be necessary to courageously do without it if intelligibility and the possibility of political control over technical choices are to be priorities.

Therefore, in order to appraise the *applications*, that is, the *end purpose* of the usage, there seems to be no alternative but to refer to the basic criteria governing each field of application (the health system, education, urban planning). But the problem of the *mode* of utilization is more complex. Even though the two aspects, the end purpose and the mode of use, are closely interrelated, for the time being we will examine them separately, because the degree of freedom we have in attempting to reappropriate these two aspects of technology is not the same.

We have said that an intrinsically progressive end purpose might still entail a capitalist mode of use; the reverse is less probable, since an intrinsically reactionary end purpose, for example, a repressive one is unlikely to make use of an advanced mode of utilization. But, how is it possible to judge whether a certain mode of using technology is—to continue using these unsuitable and schematic terms—"progressive" or "capitalist"? Here too, we can only go by the criteria which are gradually being elaborated, discussed and tried out by the workers' movement. Firstly, there is the criterion concerning the recomposition of parcellized work; in the case of the computer we have seen how this recomposition could at least be partially carried out both on a horizontal and vertical level, and how, on the contrary, its negation is based on the requirements of capitalist exploitation of men and machinery. Secondly, there is the criterion concerning the transfer of all the really

repetitive and unskilled tasks (for example, data input) to machines, rather than the more meaningful activities (for example, the organization of archives), which once incorporated in the machine, crystallize in the objectivity of the machine itself. Lastly, there is the criterion concerning the "transparency" of technology, in the individuation and creation of instruments which in the man/machine relationship are not alienating, and which allow man to be in control of the machine and not *vice-versa*.

Because of the profound links, which we have tried to show, that exists between the physical constitution of the machine (hardware) and the instruments of its utilization (software), it is misleading to try and plan software in a completely autonomous way, whose objectives are the real needs of the user. In reality, the physical conditioning by the machine cannot be disregarded; on the contrary, it is necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with this aspect to be able to face the question of a different type of software. From this point of view, the opinions voiced by the left several years ago, when they saw in the national production of software a way of avoiding conditioning by the multinationals were rather illusory.

Nevertheless, despite the heavy conditioning which derives from the hardware, perhaps there might be some space to plan instruments which correspond more to the users' real needs. However, to realize this, the planning criteria must be changed from those that have always been assumed up until now, i.e. the increase in the speed of its elaboration, and the savings in memory and manpower. It is also clear that it is futile to ask the manufacturers to undertake such a project, as they would only continue to be guided by the same old criteria. The impetus must come from the users themselves, above all those engaged in planning information systems, and interdisciplinary groups of social workers, programmers, analysts and statisticians. As we know more about the needs of information systems in social structures, it may be increasingly possible either to do without the computer's promises, as its use leads to the distortion and inflexibility of information, or else to use it only when really necessary, until we succeed—if it is possible—in planning a more flexible, less obscure and less hierarchical language or data archive.

All of this, which we might call the medium-term strategy, presupposes an intense, though gradual, effort on the part of the users to liberate themselves from their economic and cultural dependence on the manufacturers. It is correct to consider computer training an important element of this strategy; this has received considerable attention by the left over the last few years. But it is also necessary to appreciate that it is quite inadequate to shift the administration of this training from the private structures of the manufacturers to the university, if this means to again propose the same cultural frameworks in which their efforts will largely be concentrated on the elaboration of cultural analytical instruments.

But even if these instruments were formulated, one should not be deluded into thinking that the mythical "alternative use" of the computer had been

achieved, since at this point the machine's social and productive context comes into play. So far, none of the enumerated criteria which we said might serve as a guide in evaluating the use of the computer, could, today, form the basis of a real re-planning of technology in all its various aspects. The "re-invention of the product" in a non-alienating, non-parcellized and non-estranging direction is very improbable in present society which is founded upon these very elements as its mode of preservation and reproduction. At best these criteria, if continuously verified, might permit us to limit and orient the use of technology, and to reject its most aberrant uses. But, the "alternative use of the computer", and, even more, "the computer for socialism", still remain little more than a vain hope, as long as we are talking about *this computer*, born of capitalism and for capitalism; the most we can aim for, today, is a critical use of the computer.

In a society in which the relations of production were radically altered, the productive forces could also be adapted to satisfy man's real needs. We might then discover that we have been led to think that a large number of the present needs of "computers" are induced, and that, in fact, the real needs of "information" can be met by means of meetings, debates, newspapers and even occasionally, by a computer which is different in terms of structure and its mode of operation, one which has not yet been invented, but will certainly not be invented by IBM. Therefore, before "unfurling the computer flag" which the bourgeoisie has dropped, it is first necessary to clarify what is to be done and how.

Armand Mattelart

## CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN COMMUNICATIONS: POINTS FOR A POLEMIC

(Chile, 1972)

### I. WHERE CONTENT DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO FORM

On entering the communication market which is controlled by the enemy's norms, Popular Unity tried to adopt the methods of the bourgeoisie in order to subvert this market from within. This, at least, was the intention. Acceptance of the 'laws of the market', however, involves concessions — and the first of these, at the present point in the process through which Chilean society is passing, is the possibility of a dissociation between form and content. In some areas more than others this dissociation has been experienced very sharply.

#### Genres

The first obstacles to be confronted if the media, 'these jagged weapons bequeathed to us by the bourgeoisie', as Che Guevara called them, are to be used for ends opposed to those of the bourgeoisie, are the current genres and formats. As we have already argued on a number of occasions, all genres, and the programmes or magazines they give rise to, enclose the issues they deal with in restricted universes — the feminine, sport, politics, comedy, etc. The resulting subdivisions into women's magazines, cooking magazines, photoromances, humorous reviews, comic-strip magazines, pornographic magazines, etc., fragment the real world, and give rise to closed worlds which have no contact between them and which follow the lines used by one particular class in dividing up reality, making its own order indispensable to all. The rejection by each one of these closed worlds of themes which do not correspond to it is total. To the reader of a bourgeois sports magazine, political and even cultural items would seem an absurd intrusion into this reserved space. These one-dimensional genres are all examples of the general dichotomy which lies at the root of bourgeois mass culture, and which is expressed in the divorce between work and leisure, production and entertainment, the ordinary and the extraordinary. Each in-

This text was written in collaboration with Michèle Mattelart in Chile in January-February 1972, and was first published in *Cuadernos de la Realidad Nacional* (Santiago de Chile), 12, April 1972, and revised in January 1973. It was translated from the French edition by Malcolm Coad and published in English in the author's *Mass Media, Ideologies and the Revolutionary Movement*, Sussex, UK: Harvester Press, 1980. Reprinted by permission of the author.

dividual genre concretises one of the sub-divisions within this broad dichotomy: politics versus sport, politics versus the academic, the manual versus the intellectual, teacher versus pupil. These sub-divisions correspond in turn to a social division of labour and a hierarchical order of social status which they reaffirm, reinforce and legitimate. It is not the simple fact of these divisions, and of the consequent differentiation between varying publics, or the creation of specific clienteles, which is objectionable so much as the criteria which inspire and govern this differentiation. This grows from the dynamics of an order which is propagated and extended into every corner of individual and collective life: that of commerce and commercial success. A capitalist editor will stop broadcasting a programme which is only getting a very small audience or publishing a magazine which is bankrupt. He will not linger to consider the role of such products in ideological penetration. They will both be suppressed because they have failed to match up to the primordial principle which governs the capitalist order, namely the harmony between cultural penetration and monetary profit. For a capitalist enterprise of cultural production and distribution, there can be no incompatibility between the two. The second governs the first and both are part and parcel of the same order. (The concept of social cost only appears when the bourgeoisie is cornered by its class enemy, and tries to bring about, even at the cost of total ruin, a super-abundance of publications in the kiosks in order to sow confusion among the buyers.) This, however, is not so for the left. In a period of transition such as that unfolding in Chile, ideological penetration is not necessarily compatible with financial success.

Very probably it will be necessary for the left to maintain a certain degree of division by sectors in order to get messages across. However, to do so without questioning the bourgeois heritage of classification of audiences and their special interests, which are represented by the different genres is to risk paying a very high political cost.

The state publishing house has launched several new magazines in its various branches of production. For the time being at least, all of these accept the division into genres inherited from the bourgeois schema of the organisation of communications. (Popular Unity's television programming follows the same principle.) For example, a number of magazines for young people have been started since 1971, all of which are based on the fan magazine genre introduced by the dependent bourgeoisie. The intention is to use a format which young people are assumed to like in order to convey contents concerned with different kinds of social relations and with the realisation of a socialist project for society. This tactic is called by the PU the tactic of 'implicit content', and we shall have more to say about this later on. The same operation has been repeated for comics,<sup>1</sup> photoromances and, at the end of 1972, women's magazines.

1. For an analysis of the experience of transforming strip cartoons in Chile under the Popular Unity, cf. Nain Nomez, 'La Historieta en el Proceso de Cambio Social', *Comunicación y Cultura* (Buenos Aires), 1974, no. 2. On

The genre, then, represents the first example of conciliation with the laws of the market. But it is also — and we must not forget this — the only form known and recognised by both potential transmitters and potential receivers. Popular Unity has presented its decision to work in this way as a necessary tactic given the enormous cultural power of the ruling class. It is a tactic based on the principle of democratic pluralism — which, of course, inevitably prevents or restrains the emergence of an alternative cultural universe, one which would be antagonistic to the dominant, lived cultural universe. Looked at from the point of view of political alliances, this tactic can also be seen as a part of the overall PU cultural and political project, which is aimed at winning over undecided sectors of opinion, and which is being presented as 'the art of winning over the middle sectors of the population'. The genre, then, is a device with a mission to accomplish; it continues to stimulate the public with the same basic formats and themes, and therefore does not scare off an audience which is reckoned to be still reachable. The basic supposition of this policy, of course, is that this audience does still exist, to be won over to the cause of constructing a socialist society; this view in turn assumes that the forces engaged in the class struggle are not yet fixed, and that there is still a certain fluidity of allegiance among the different sectors of society.

The problem with this policy is that one has to start off with a division imposed in advance by the class enemy and his culture. It means selecting as a point of reference a thematic generated and sustained by an opposing system. Until now, the majority of the magazines which have been introduced or refashioned have ultimately been under the influence of the dynamic which is still produced by the dominant culture. In general it seems that it is still the notion of competing in the market which is imposing the form. Even when it is designed along the lines of a pre-existing genre, a new magazine may not in the first instance be intended to be competitive. But it is launched onto a market which assimilates it together with all the other examples of the same genre or model. The variations introduced into it are not enough to dilute the connotations imposed by the genre, which is strengthened in its grip on the market. At the level of ideological impact, when this is operating within a commercial system, it is the power of the dominant culture which proves to be most able to look after itself. By the same token, it cannot have escaped anybody that at the moment the bourgeoisie is selling its genres better and in greater quantities than are the revolutionaries. It should be added that the fragmentation brought about by the genres is

the work of demystifying North American and French strip cartoons, cf. A. Dorfman and A. Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck*, New York, International General, 1975. For analysis of other genres, cf. M. Mattelart, 'Apuntes sobre lo moderno: una manera de leer el magazine', *Casa de las Americas* (La Havana), 1973, no. 77; A. Dorfman, 'Salvacion y sabiduria del hombre comun: la teologia del Readers' Digest', *Casa de las Americas*, *ibid.*; M. Piccini, 'El cerco de las revistas se los idolos', *Cuadernos de la Realidad Nacional* (Santiago de Chile), 1970, No. 3; M. Mattelart, 'El nivel mitico de la prensa pseudoamorosa', *ibid.*

coherent and functional for the bourgeois order; thus, when revolutionaries take it over without further ado for their own use, they introduce incoherence and anarchy into the order of the class struggle.

All this being the case, a fundamental question arises which must be answered if we are to have any chance of overcoming the risks of ineffectiveness in this area of the ideological struggle. When, and under what conditions, will we be able truly to evaluate the class character of the established genres and begin to distance ourselves from them by progressively creating new and autonomous forms of mass communications? When, in other words, will it be possible to conceive of organs of communication which do not of necessity correspond to the cultural and informational thematics of the enemy? (Such new forms must, of course, be sought out from among the alternatives thrown up by the class struggle itself, with the purpose of laying the foundations of the new culture; any other procedure would be a sterile formal game.) Our answer to this question, then, depends essentially on how we respond to this supposed need to alter opinions among the 'middle sectors'. Inevitably, then, another question is also posed: given the present intensification of the class struggle, is it not inevitable that anything produced by the left will automatically be rejected by the majority of these sectors, just as if they had already clearly taken sides?

Furthermore, according to which criteria are we to distinguish between audiences? The multiple fragmentation characteristic of bourgeois communications is no more than a mask; it does not exist to protect the real interests of distinct and opposed classes. Behind it lies a universal and normative image of the receiver which serves to unify mass culture's plethora of messages and which refers to a model of aspirations and euphoric possibilities typical of petty-bourgeois life. This same implicit unifying image, corresponding to the parameters of the dominant culture, lies behind magazines destined for sports fans just as it does behind those circulated among the upper, middle or lower sectors of the female population. We can find here a criterion for the differentiation of audiences. Our questioning of bourgeois genres leads us to focus attention above all on class interests, and this means progressively turning away from criteria established by the ruling class according to apparently strictly ecological or biological criteria. One of the fundamental political tasks of the moment may well be to win over the middle sectors; but it still remains to define what this means in practice. Perhaps the alliances achieved by the Christian Democrats, which began in the thirties and were brought to fruition under the previous regime, have been too seductive for the left, who now want to bring together sectors which are so different from the point of view of class interest (workers, small businessmen, the liberal professions, higher company cadres, and even certain medium capitalists) that the only possible common ground is a petty-bourgeois political project. While the right seems to have learned that the 'middle sectors' they are in danger of losing are precisely those in the lower categories, and is therefore directing its attention there, the left appears to be disregarding this potential for the sake of a possible clientele among the higher levels, who

within the Chilean social structure border very closely on the hegemonic sectors of the bourgeoisie. Without a serious analysis of the social stratification of society, it is impossible to propose new forms of communications which will truly answer to revolutionary needs. Who are the receivers? How many are they? What are their psychological and social characteristics? If we cannot answer these questions, we will never be in a position to determine on the basis of which motivations we can begin to mobilise the receivers for the revolutionary struggle. It is therefore a matter of urgency to begin such an analysis, so that we can give clear definition to a policy of alliances which so far has been talked about a great deal, but never precisely set out. If this is done, we will not be saddled with the image of the average man, the reflection of an undefined middle class, consecrated as the single and exclusive source of our criteria.

Let us take an example of what the results of such an analysis would mean in practice. A revolutionary analysis of audience differentiation, based on a specific political project, would tend to break down the kind of closed rural universe currently depicted in publications intended for peasants. While still observing the basic norms which must be respected if an organ of communication is to be effective (factors such as semantic appropriateness, adequate graphics, prior study of norms of interpretation, and so on) the intention would be to treat the reality of the countryside and mediate through it the totality of the class concerns — the essential life and vitality of the class in its struggle to take power and construct socialism. Such a procedure would ensure that far from being closed to the news and problems of the urban proletariat, the publication in question, while being destined for peasants, would in fact cement their unity with workers. It is from this kind of perspective that we should estimate the degree of urgency for creating, or for postponing the creation of, *mass fronts* in the left's mass media. These fronts, founded on a shared political project and on common class interests, would allow the public access to ideas expressing the interests of the particular sectors of which they were made up, ideas which would be nourished by practice. For example, how do we overcome the lack of women's publications among the products of the left? Should we accept the biological division between the sexes and create a women's front? If the answer is yes, then how do we avoid, on the one hand, the extra-social stereotype of the 'Chilean woman' purveyed by the bourgeois magazines, which obliterates the class contradictions present within the female audience, and on the other the platitudes and the altogether sad spectacle of the publications put out by the state organisations concerned with women? On the basis of what social image of women should such a magazine be conceived? Would it not be better to revise the way in which women's questions are dealt with in the existing left publications? Questions like these can be raised about all the social sectors from which the mass fronts should be created. There can be no doubt of the need to call in question the usefulness for the class struggle, and given a specific balance of forces, of the socially amorphous and totally vague concept of 'mass' communications imposed by the bourgeoisie.

Another problem posed by genres is their lack of flexibility. Since they are founded on a narrowly and rigidly defined relationship between a particular kind of stimulant and a specific audience, it is extremely difficult for a tv programme or magazine, conceived in terms of the norms of a particular genre, to develop or to change in any significant way. To put this in different terms, there is a latent conflict between the rigidity of the laws of the market and the flexibility required by the class struggle. This affects both the choice of the themes to be dealt with and the definition of the social sectors to be reached. The class struggle makes it impossible for the audience of a particular message to be fixed once and for all, or for the message itself to be rigidly defined and imposed without reference to the dynamics of social developments. The transformation of the media also requires time and perseverance, while commercial criteria often cramp this process of maturation. This means, for example, that it will often be necessary to look for solutions which allow particular magazines to maintain publication and continue their diffusion of ideas even at the cost of financial loss. The state publication house may have to take on the printing of service material, such as text-books, directories, guide books, and so on, in order to finance the work of ideological struggle. It is too often forgotten that the same applies to ideological struggle as to armed confrontation; bullets are expensive, and are not always on target.

Despite everything we have said, however, it must be recognised that the state publishing house's use of the bourgeois genres (comics, photo-romances, magazines, fan magazines, news reviews), taking into account all its successes and failures, constitutes one of the most interesting experiments (and, indeed, the only one of its kind carried out by a regime defined as one of transition to socialism) in exploring the complex workings of bourgeois and imperialist mass culture. The policy of the subversion of bourgeois forms, so long as its limitations are understood, has proved to be the most compatible with the leninist thesis of cultural continuity. By maintaining elements of traditional forms of entertainment, and by paying a great deal of attention to the bourgeois stimulants to which the receiver is subjected, this policy has at the very least been able to give a glimpse of how, so long as criticism and self-criticism are applied, we may avoid marginalising leisure during the transition to socialism. Other socialist revolutions may have succeeded in suppressing comics, magazines and *Readers' Digest*; but they have still not been able to get rid of all the pseudopodia of so-called mass culture, despite the masses' revolutionary practice. The pressures of the desire for entertainment, repressed at first, may re-emerge years later, anarchically and with gathered force, forcing revolutionaries to undertake the study of forms of mass 'popular' culture they had previously suppressed by decree.

### Implicit Content

Having adopted the bourgeois genres, Popular Unity then set about the reorientation of their contents, while remaining with these traditional forms of leisure. What difficulties did this way of conducting the class struggle come up against?

The first problem is that the adoption of the genre, with the intention of subverting it from within, generally results in a simple inversion of the signs of the bourgeois message and in the adoption of the ruling class's unilateral notion of politics. In the place of the manicheism of the forces of reaction we are presented with the manicheism of the progressive forces. This tendency has been displayed by all the left's publications. In its comics, for example, all the unacceptable values which are conveyed by imperialist messages (the excessive individualism of the hero, the importance of destiny, magic and the supernatural, unbridled rivalry, material rewards, defence of private property and of religious values, the cult of action, etc.) are taken one at a time and replaced by their exact opposites. The individual hero disappears, to be replaced by the collective hero. Solidarity, unselfishness and realism are preached. In the photo-romances, the heroine refuses to allow herself to be seduced by the boss's son and declares herself in support of the liberation of women, while the pattern of her emotional motivations remains unaltered. In every case, there is a rearrangement of the ingredients, but no real alteration of meaning.

Even when this sectarian and sloganistic notion of politics is abandoned, however, and there is a genuine attempt to introduce 'implicit content' into the established genres, another kind of problem arises. The implicit content of bourgeois messages refers to a mode of life and an organisation of social relations which everyone lives every day. That of the left's messages, however, inevitably refers to a superstructural project which is not rooted in daily life.<sup>2</sup> Let us take the example of the fashion section in a young people's magazine. The intention here is to counter a mass of desires and aspirations which are instilled and sustained by a society which is still dominated by bourgeois images, and thereby to reduce the colonising nature of fashion—the way in which it reduces one's ability to make decisions, and to develop one's own tastes. We want to expose its camouflaged relation to the machinery of economic and cultural imperialism, and unmask its appeal as a form of alienation. To illustrate and reinforce our point we use a photograph of a model, with the intention of denouncing the clothes she is wearing as

2. We are not of course denying here the importance of the 'rudimentary elements of a democratic and socialist culture' (Lenin) present in the practice of the dominated classes, which try to break loose from the shackles of the dominant culture. It is a fundamental task of any left communications policy to try to discover these, to cultivate them and to treat them as the embryos of the new culture. But the dynamic enterprise of discovering these elements can on no account be the only line directing mass communications policy in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. If it is seen too much from one point of view this enterprise risks falling into workerism.

Furthermore, it should be emphasised that these 'rudimentary elements of a democratic and socialist culture' are not only found in the workplace where possibilities for a new practice have arisen. They are also present in the whole of daily life and in every aspect of the human personality. Such factors, which are less tied to a 'productionist' view of the revolution, are generally ignored by the left's communications media.

an expensive, 'universalised' and 'alienated' copy of a supposed ideal. The photograph, however, is cleverly designed to show the woman as attractive, beautiful, elegant and 'trendy'. The demystifying power, or intention, of the written text is cancelled out, because the bourgeoisie's power to mould and universalise tastes, desires, appreciation and dreams continues to be revitalised daily. It is easy to see why in such a context the fashion story will have an effect about as tiny as the plots of the Lilliputians against Gulliver.

There is a further comment which should be made about the tactic of implicit content as an effective weapon in the ideological struggle. There is a danger that in concentrating the work of ideological penetration on one particular sector of the population, the other sectors who voted for the left will be forgotten. They too need to be followed up and stimulated; they also need the motivation which indefatigably creates consciousness and nourishes and deepens the process of the class struggle. It is not enough simply to offer slogans to those who have already been won over. The consolidation of their commitment to, and participation in, a programme of changes should be understood as part of the process of forming the people of the future at every level, including that of their access to a new way of seeing.

It is for these reasons that the tactic of implicit content, if it is to be really effective as the cornerstone of a new practice of mass communications, must be applied differently. An example will make this clearer: let us take that of a young people's magazine which is trying to reach the social sectors referred to above. In a case like this 'implicit content' requires that even the smallest event in the present political situation must be clearly integrated into a logic which makes of that fact an element within a structure. The violent occupation of a university by a group of reactionaries, for example, would be incorporated within an analysis of the strategy of such groups, and this would go far beyond the merely conjunctural. Such an analysis would examine the concepts of science, justice, legality, equality and violence used by these groups to justify their subversion, and around which they attempt to articulate the ruling class's 'mass line' for young people. In such a case, the explicit would consist in not going any deeper than the first level of reality, being limited to a mere recital of facts and an evaluation which could not in the end avoid being partisan. This example shows how the explicit level of discussion must always be backed up with the implicit if we are to develop people's awareness and escape the game of bourgeois politics. Defined in this way, 'implicit content' allows us not only to reach sectors who are not so far won over, but also to consolidate and advance the ideological development of young sympathisers and, if necessary, of left militants themselves. This point brings us back again to the need to decide whether it is appropriate to continue making use of the established genres in order to develop themes which can produce this different reading of reality. 'Implicit content', for revolutionary pedagogy and communications, is that which, on the basis of even the most banal facts, dismantles the social relations and ideological mechanisms which underpin the class enemy's dominance and creates a new and coherent way of

interpreting reality, orienting attitudes and exposing the many-sidedness of facts, objects and events. It begins to give roots to and universalise a new order.

### The Law Of Sensationalism

The problem of the explicit and the implicit in a revolutionary policy towards the mass media is intimately bound up with the survival of another criterion of selection and principle of action passed down to us by the bourgeoisie: sensationalism. This is an essential element in the commercialism within which the circuit and practice of bourgeois communications is inscribed—it is the iron law of 'modern society's' mass culture. It is present not only in the vulgarities and banalities of the openly sensationalist press, but insinuates itself subtly into all the products brought out every day by the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Through sensationalism the facts and events which make news and sell the products are made to appear isolated, cut off from the multitude of other facts and events which have brought them about, and separated from the mass of people involved in them.

The news item = unusual = against the nature of things = on the margins of normality = outside time and space. Separated from the future and the past, the information is reduced to being no more than the expression of an ephemeral and anecdotal present. It takes on the transitory character of every commodity. The weekly magazine is a world closed within itself, a collection of items of information, stories and incidents which will be out of date by the following week. In the next issue there will be new events, other items of news, other novelties, all intended to grab the reader's momentary attention. And so it goes on throughout the year. Once consumed, the magazine can be thrown away. The new issue has no need of the old one for it to be understood; it has no place in any organised process of the accumulation of knowledge and consciousness. Reality is nothing more than a great redundant mass of weekly tittle-tattle. Various elements play their part in this sensationalist universe of fragmented everyday reality: commerce in sex, crime and magic, competitive sport, and so on.

The law of sensationalism is concerned strictly with the immediate, with the event which is interesting because it creates a sensation for a moment. To observe this law means to select important facts completely anarchically; and we know that it is the bourgeoisie which profits from anarchy of information, because it enables it to root its information products in its own order. An 'objective' piece of news, as released by the bourgeoisie, is always located within an organising framework which, for the receiver, remains implicit. It is decoded by reference to meanings and interpretations of social reality which are controlled and universalised by the bourgeoisie. This way of transmitting reality has been 'naturalised' by the bourgeoisie in order to prevent its class enemy from presenting its audience with a global and coherent vision of the ruling system. These newspapers and magazines only make available the consumption of false novelties, false change and false revolution.

It is their continuing submission to this law of

sensationalism which gives the mass communications controlled by the left their superstructural quality. It cuts them off from daily reality, makes them lose their grip and efficacy in the ideological battle and, furthermore, tends to produce a certain disorientation in that left audience which has already been won over to Popular Unity.

Adherence to the law of sensationalism can be seen clearly and in its crudest forms in the populist left press. But its effects are apparent throughout the media. The absence of pedagogical guidelines for use in planning magazines and television programmes is one example of this. There is a preference for simply increasing the number of programmes meant for mere 'consumption' and for filling free time (by their nature, these programmes simply do the bourgeois media's job for them) rather than making new programmes aimed at nourishing a didactic and demystifying reading of the manipulated 'reality' conveyed by the media opposed to the revolutionary process. There is virtually no interest in broadcasting material which would be of direct use in the practice of particular social groups; features on photosynthesis, or on the use of fertilisers, for example. There is no initiative to include items like this in so-called popular information magazines. It is significant that those magazines which do contain relatively more pedagogic material and which make most effort to break away from the exclusive culture of pure leisure now have the highest circulations of all the publications produced by the state publishing house. But despite this, there has been no increase in the number of magazines and programmes conceived in this way and aimed at specific social sectors. Neither is there any interest in preparing the population for the actions of the government or the difficulties it will face. Beatified optimism rules. The contradictions and difficulties of transition are not used as a way of raising people's awareness. This is yet another manifestation of the policy of 'pacifying' the middle sectors rather than actively winning them over and deepening the awareness of progressive sectors. This failure brings us back again to the need for an overall investigation into the forms which should be adopted by the mass media during this period. As a first step, it is a matter of urgency to identify the audiences which must be reached. This identification will bring with it the need for the modification and even complete replacement of some genres. It would also point up the necessity for eliminating the monopoly exercised by professional journalists over the elaboration of information. For example, a sports magazine, conceived from a revolutionary point of view, should not be content with dishing up sports events for mere consumption, but should take an interest in physical education, health, popular sports and games, and so on. Such a magazine must not remain confined within the orbit of a publishing house and its specialist sports journalists. The state sports organisations are by far the most appropriate places for sports magazines to be prepared and distributed (at least until we can bring journalists and the sports organisations together, by persuading the former to support the popular government's new plans for sport and physical education). This would place the publishing

house at the centre of a broader infrastructure and would remove its monopoly control over the production of messages. Of course such changes, as they begin to be carried through in various spheres, will be faced with numerous difficulties from within traditional journalism, created by journalists who refuse to abandon their monopoly.

To return to a point made earlier, the need to introduce educational material, and generally to provide information in greater depth, so as not to fall into sensationalist superficiality, is directly related to the further need to stimulate participation in the preparation and mass transmission of practical and theoretical knowledge by both mass organisations and state institutions, as well as university research centres. The universities must therefore face up to the urgent need to redefine their research programmes by reference to the interests of the masses and to reformulate their conclusions in accessible language. As we can see, it is not only the 'ideology of journalism' which needs to be broken down through the reformation of the mass media. The academicism of the sciences must also be questioned, and possibilities for collaboration between the two agencies elaborating and distributing knowledge—the universities and the mass media—should be explored, to encourage the development of a new journalistic practice. Obviously, however, this in no way reduces the need to reconnect journalists and scientists with reality as lived and created by the masses.

In these ways the perpetuation of the mass media's characteristic role as alienator and vulgariser of otherwise elitist products, will be avoided, and they will no longer be confined to the narrow sphere of leisure.

### The Democratisation Of Reception

One of the principal obstacles to the democratisation of mass communications and its transformation into an instrument of cultural and political agitation, is without doubt the kind of relationship with the audience which is imposed by the traditional distribution system. The basis of this system is the image of the individualist receiver, which in turn derives from the media's fundamental goal of atomising the mass of receivers in order to demobilise them. As in most spheres, the professional bodies which represent those who, because of the commercial organisation of the media, hold the monopoly of distribution, oppose any change. To take a specific example of such opposition in action, the distribution agents and owners of newspaper kiosks have the power to boycott new products; those who refuse to

3. After a survey carried out during 1971, one of the main capitalist publishing houses tried to buy off the magazine retailers by offering to pay one hundred pesos for each unsold magazine returned to the publisher (at a time when the average retail price of a magazine was about five escudos, there being 1000 pesos to the escudo). The state publishing house offered no such subsidy. Moreover, the forces of the left did not possess enough influence in the retailers' unions to establish a parallel distribution system. The reactionary publishers, by offering the retailer a greater number of products, could force him to refuse the products of a second distribution network.

do this are exposed to the organised pressure of their right-wing competitors. Campaigns have been mounted by the right to prevent the display in kiosks of publications produced by state organisations. The tactics used in this attempt to torpedo the left's production of newspapers and magazines reach down to the last link in the chain of domination and manipulation, the kiosk owner. The size of his sales outlet, the ease with which it can be obstructed and the small amount of his capital provide quite enough obstacles to put distribution of the left's publications at a disadvantage. As well as sabotage, there is overproduction of magazines. Bourgeois magazines which have been circulating for years have been joined on the market by the various state publications; but the right has also substantially increased its output. Between August and December 1971 the number of magazines available in the kiosks increased from forty-nine to eighty-one. There is a great deal of evidence that the right is carrying out a conscious policy of overproduction. One private company has recently started six new magazines for young people, four of which are run at a loss, so far as we have been able to discover. So, where does the finance come from? The magazines pile up inside the tiny kiosks and on their counters. They cancel each other out. This intense competition becomes the deciding factor governing the choice of what should go on a magazine's front cover. It must be something decisively able to attract attention, lost as it is within the avalanche of formats and colours which bury the kiosk. In this situation the kiosk owner will prefer to buy and sell a reduced number of the more expensive magazines which take up less space while giving him the same, or even greater, profit.<sup>3</sup> This tends to result in high prices for publications which were meant for the popular market. Since it began to be sold in the kiosks, *La Firme*, the magazine of popular political education, has had to raise its price and print its cover and several pages in colour. This has produced a contradiction between its content and intended readership and those actually buying it—the petty-bourgeoisie, for only they can afford it. Fortunately, this situation has recently at least partly been altered thanks to the setting up of a direct relationship between those who produce the magazine and the rank-and-file organisations who use it as a source of information, knowledge and consciousness. Mass forms of communication will clearly only lose their character as products for mass consumption, acquired in the market, if the present means by which they reach their audience are replaced by mechanisms which ensure conscious reception. Magazines should be considered as elements of support for the discussion and ideological formation taking place within rank-and-file groups—an idea which brings us back again to the overall notion of the creation of popular cultural power. Gramsci took a very similar point of view in discussing the problem of journalistic activity and, in particular, of 'cultural' magazines:

If the editors have no direct relationship with a disciplined movement at the base, they will tend to become coteries of 'prophets disarmed', or to split up following the disintegrating and chaotic divisions produced among

the various groups and strata of the readership. This is why it is necessary to recognise openly that the magazines are in themselves sterile until they express the creative strength of the mass cultural organisations.<sup>4</sup>

This quotation brings out very clearly the need to understand reception—and, in the medium to long term, the design of a magazine by its readers themselves—in the political context of the general participation by a wide range of social sectors in the gestation of their own culture. A young people's magazine, for instance, should be produced by young people and understood as part of the global process of mobilising young people. Under capitalism every product of mass communications appears as atomised and epiphenomenal. But the left, even if it goes along with the rules of the market, cannot allow its publications to remain passive objects. A new culture cannot be imposed. A new culture is created by the various revolutionary sectors; they create it by participating organically in its creation. Our young people's magazines must eliminate the atomised and dis-organised receiver which is imposed by bourgeois organs of mass culture. They must express the collective participation of young people as an organised force. Only then will competition on the market prevent the enemy from controlling the rules governing commercial success. This is obviously not a question of organising fan clubs, mere consumers' societies. Rather, the magazine must become one way among others (including, for example, the battle for production, discussions about the copper indemnities,<sup>5</sup> and so on) by which young people can participate in the process of transition to socialism. It would be wrong to mobilise young people solely on the basis of partisan tasks, engaging only with their 'political' interest. The daily reality of a new culture, and the fight against mass culture among young people, cannot be built on the themes traditionally dealt with in party catechisms and handbooks; such mobilisation is, in the end, repressive and voluntaristic. The formation of a new culture involves also a new sensibility, a new way of feeling. It is this authentic concept of popular culture and power which is being expressed by the first popular workshops set up in schools and youth recreational

4. A. Gramsci, *Los Intelectuales y la Organización de la Cultura*, Buenos Aires, Lautaro, p. 147 [The quotation comes from *Prison Notebook I*, which has not been translated into English so far as I am aware—translator's note.]

5. One of the principal reasons for friction between US economic interests in Chile and the Popular Unity was the nationalisation without compensation in July 1971 of the copper mines—or, to be more precise, the deduction from compensation of an amount corresponding to what the PU government calculated to be excess profits extracted by the copper companies during the previous fifteen years, plus the value of all badly maintained installations. This left the copper companies in debt to the Chilean government to the tune of some 400 million dollars, even with the government taking responsibility for debts accrued by the companies during 'expansion programmes' carried out in the late 1960s. After an appeal by the international copper companies, the PU's measures were confirmed by a tribunal whose verdict both sides had agreed beforehand to abide by. The whole affair was the subject of much discussion in Chile. [Translator's note].

centres in the shanty-towns in order to discuss and produce magazines. These workshops exist not to imprison people within the world of the magazine, nor as simple sources of information from which the raw material of the magazine will be drawn, but as centres of discussion and participation by young people in creating a new culture out of the process they are living. It is easy to see that a communications policy like this would go beyond the narrow confines of a publishing house; it would incorporate mass organisations, state institutions and would even be integrated into a general youth policy. The first task in finishing with bourgeois dichotomies within mass culture is to break away from the notion that every magazine or other product of mass communications is an autonomous domain, at the margins of politics. This is the great challenge of the present moment. If we are content with reformulating the contents of mass culture behind the masses' backs, all we will do is to revalidate the patterns of bourgeois culture. Respect for the laws of the market is no excuse for fear of rooting this process in the organised masses and giving over to them the right to make their own culture. Messages which derive from the super-structure alone, however dressed up they may be in the best of intentions, will always be won over by the dominant culture when they compete on the market.

The same ambiguities exist in the advertising methods used by the left. How often these reproduce all too faithfully the stock-in-trade stimulants of the capitalist market. Is there even a minimum mobilising value in the posters now appearing every day as part of sales campaigns for books and magazines? They present the faces of Lenin and Che. But are they in fact anything more than mere devices aimed at increasing circulation and selling more objects for consumption? In the advertising slogans for books aimed at the popular market, the authoritarian formulae of bourgeois communications reappear, often in their purest forms. 'Only those with knowledge progress', says the *rvad*, backed up by the image of the miraculous transformation of a poor employee into a young and brilliant cadre, little popular book in hand. It can never be said often enough that for the left, advertising cannot be limited to the aim of selling products. It must itself become a carrier of socialist meaning.

## II. PETTY-BOURGEOIS PREJUDICES ABOUT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL POWER

A good point of departure for this discussion is once again, the concept of 'the Chilean Road'. It is instructive to study how this concept itself engenders a series of class prejudices about culture and the role it should now be playing.

### Who Will Test The Masses?

Revolutionary practice does not follow a horoscope. It has nothing to do with any futurology with the power to predict stages, to prescribe its advance directions in which to go, and to fix the exact moment when the subordinated class will participate in cultural creation. 'If only this were so, we would a

least be able to order the disorder', is the dream of the petty-bourgeois intellectual or artist who participates in the process but remains unwilling to give up his privileged position as interpreter of history. This dream in fact expresses fear of the unknown, fear of cultural change and of the new forms of creation which appear with the eruption of the masses into the creation of a new life. It is just this 'fear of disorder' which accounts for our fear of, and refusal to stimulate, mass mobilisation, as was pointed out by Mao. In the last analysis, it is around this fear that our prejudices and class attitudes towards the formation of popular power cluster. Such attitudes make their appearance in the field of mass communications. 'Allow the masses to participate in and to judge the press and you will see that what they want is sensationalism'. This is a standard objection, which reflects a basic misunderstanding. It debases the idea of participation in two ways: 'firstly, it trades on an amorphous concept of the masses (which seems to take in everybody from the most lumpen to the working-class vanguard); secondly, it takes this eruption to be instantaneous. Put briefly, this idea of participation in cultural creation goes no further than mere spontaneism. A revolutionary conception of participation will take into account the different levels of consciousness among the masses, and the fact that the creation of cultural power is progressive, conscious and organised.

Another misunderstanding and source of ambiguity is the idea that 'the proletariat suffers from an economic deviation; it has been burdened for generations with the habit of seeking only material gains'. It should be recalled that this attitude does not come from nowhere. 'If we are economic', replied the head of a union to the manager of the state publishing house, who belonged to the same party, 'it is because the traditional parties, our vanguards, have taken no interest in opening up new horizons for us.' In the face of such prejudices, which generally mark the division between supporters of popular cultural power and its enemies, two questions arise: who is to test the proletariat to see if it is ready to participate actively in cultural creation? And when will the petty-bourgeoisie consent to give up its monopoly control of cultural values?

Such objections make it clear that the petty-bourgeoisie, in order to preserve its status as representative, forgets that the revolution is a dual process, and that before we can achieve a classless,

6. Through the metabolism of its domination, every ruling class tries to reinforce its normative hegemony by secreting a series of prejudices and social stereotypes which prevent the other classes acceding to the determination of social life. For the bourgeoisie and imperialism, the proletariat, or the colonised, are dirty, idle and childish. The petty-bourgeoisie, in order to legitimate its taking over the position left vacant by the bourgeoisie, actualises these stereotypes and gives them a more sophisticated tint. The proletariat becomes ignorant, anti-aesthetic, economic, etc. It is merely a question of a higher rung on the ladder of class values.

7. It is useful to recall certain basic concepts, found in numerous marxist writers, which are necessary if we are to locate petty-bourgeois intellectuals correctly in capitalist society. In his study of the now classic text by Mao, *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature*, A. Badiou discerns

fully human culture, we must both develop the proletariat's awareness and proletarianise the petty-bourgeoisie itself. The fact is that, from the point of view of the revolutionary process, the petty-bourgeoisie is in many ways just as ignorant as the proletariat. It merely has the advantage of bookish culture, erudition and the privilege of understanding the forms and rituals of initiation established by the previous society. A writer, for example, might decree that an event narrated or written by an anonymous working class author lacks dramatic strength. He would seek to justify *a priori* the involvement of a professional writer as the *sine qua non* enabling the proletarian account to achieve the status of an acceptable text, so allowing it to be consumed according to the norms of taste. The status and intangible character of the consumer reinforces this need for sacrifice on the altar of formal criteria; the audience's perceptions are formed according to petty-bourgeois tastes. However, an important question is raised here. Are these forms, which are designed, required and glorified by bourgeois culture, by any chance objective? This hypothesis, which is obviously valid as a matter for investigation, serves too often as a dogma. It is used to legitimate the behaviour of certain social groups (veritable corporations of journalists, scientists, artists, and so on, all of them equipped with batteries of *a priori* assumptions to maintain them in their privileged niches) who jealously guard their exclusive control of the norms governing the elaboration, diffusion and consumption of cultural products. The refusal of these groups to question the validity of these forms, their failure to suspect in the slightest their character as class instruments, reveals a class position which is the opposite of that of the proletariat and which continues to subscribe to a conception of knowledge and understanding and of their roles in society which is in open contradiction with that advanced by proletarian ideology. Thus, if understanding is itself understood in the marxist sense of the term as both a critical and a practical activity, the petty-bourgeoisie emerges equally as poor as, or poorer than, the proletariat.

From the point of view of this petty-bourgeois class position, to be a revolutionary is to be a masochist. Why should we give up 'objective' tools which have at least been able to help the proletariat at a certain moment in bourgeois society to advance down the road towards its liberation? In Che Guevara's words, revolution is the suicide or death of the petty-bourgeois position.<sup>7</sup> It certainly involves

four concepts:

*class-being*—the class to which the writer belongs by birth; *class position*—the problematical general terrain on the basis of which all theoretical practice defines itself. The progressive writer must maintain himself 'in the positions' of the working class; *class-attitude*—the application of this class position to a particular practical problem; *class-study*—theoretical structure and instruments, in that it is their responsibility to produce the legitimation of the class-position. ('L'autonomie du processus esthétique', *Cahiers marxistes-leninistes* (Paris), no. 12-13, July-October 1966, pp.78-9.)

For an application of these concepts to Gramsci's ideas regarding the organic intellectual, cf. J.-M. Pottot, *La Pensée Politique de Gramsci*, Paris, Editions Anthropos, 1970, pp. 34-7.

masochism from the point of view of a group or a way of thinking which wishes to preserve the interpretation and transmission of reality as its exclusive privilege; for the revolution challenges this privilege and will eventually destroy it. Revolution is the death of the petty-bourgeois class position, at every social level and within every one of its agents. It is therefore unacceptable to preserve the uncontested leadership of culture's privileged cadres in the process which aims at liberating the participation and creativity of other sectors. The first moment of the revolution must be inspired by the last. The ultimate goal, which foresees an unprejudiced view of the creative capacities of the proletariat, must inspire the first step.

It is utopian to imagine that even an enlightened petty-bourgeoisie which has not called into question the foundations of its own power will be able to clear the way for the emergence of a culturally brilliant proletariat. This class illusion must be immediately and constantly questioned. Without this the cultural revolution will remain prey to the subjective judgment of the petty-bourgeoisie, which has the power to decide for the proletariat at what moment it has become sufficiently capable, which is to say well enough formed in the petty-bourgeois mould, to assume cultural power. The fact is that for the petty-bourgeoisie such a moment will be continually postponed, as its own prejudices are increasingly reinforced. There is no question that the petty-bourgeoisie have a decisive role to play in the transition to popular cultural power. But part and parcel of its integration into the revolution is the questioning and eventual destruction of the foundations of its legitimacy as sole proprietor of this power.

### Dialectics Take a Vacation

The petty-bourgeois project is allergic to criticism. Undoubtedly this is because criticism explodes the contradictions of a position whose whole *raison d'être* is to monopolise the power to criticise. The petty-bourgeoisie is afraid of criticism, because it means intervention by another class, and doubts being cast upon the exclusiveness of its values and the right to represent others which it has arrogated to itself.

One of this class's most characteristic attitudes is an 'officialism' which consists in never going beyond the limits imposed by the notion of order which is in operation at any one time. Criticisms are made 'within limits' without it ever being realised that these limits are themselves the product of external forces and contradictions. The petty-bourgeoisie reduces all processes of criticism and self-criticism to something akin to the proceedings inside a confessional; it proves itself incapable of going beyond its own class subjectivity. It therefore criticises bureaucracy as a brake on the process, for example, without understanding that bureaucracy—or sectarianism, if this is the matter at hand—is the result of a whole series of obstacles arising from the conditions within which the process is unfolding. Similarly, it invokes the 'success' of a particular publishing policy as a criterion for assessing its value without ever querying

the notion of success which it is employing. Success in relation to what? So, self-criticism becomes merely the balance-sheet of an activity whose foundations are never examined. Accounts are drawn up, but no consideration is given to the criteria on which the accounts are based. Thus, so long as a magazine reaches a relatively high sales figure, it is never submitted to any ideological examination.

Our intention, clearly, is not merely to replace one criterion by another of the same general kind—political profitability, for example, in place of the commercial variety. We merely wish to underline that a commercial or administrative rendering of accounts must also be given a political character. To illustrate the kind of problem which the petty-bourgeois project (or bureaucratic project, as we would prefer to call it) creates for itself, we will quote the example of a contradiction which has built up within the structure of workers' participation in one of the mass communications enterprises as a result of attention being given to issues of form but not of content. The framework of participation is well established there. But mechanisms allowing the workers to develop their level of awareness, and hence their ability to assess and give opinions about published products and thereby to avoid the risk of manipulation by those with longer experience, have been completely left out of consideration. When questions arise in that enterprise about whether or not a given product should be abandoned because of low audience or sales figures, it rapidly becomes obvious that its ideological purpose has not been discussed with the manual workers employed in its production, however clear it may be to the intellectuals who have prepared its content. The worker blames the commercially unsuccessful product for the generally bad state of the company's affairs, and this is affecting his wages. Therefore, given the present lack of participation and discussion of ideological objectives, the programme or magazine creates consciousness among the workers of the enterprise only at the purely material level. This can only reinforce economic tendencies among them and delay the development of their practical and critical capacities. Their interest in the 'practice' of mass communications remains purely economic. This example shows us that administrative and financial considerations must be linked with ideological considerations in discussions with and among the workers. In fact, these two aspects of communications practice, the administrative-financial on the one hand and the ideological-political on the other, can only be dissociated in the minds and the practice of the petty-bourgeoisie, who are not affected by the economic confusion which can result from ideological initiatives. The average wage among these cadres is, after all, some 16,000 escudos, while the average wage of a worker is 3,000 escudos.

The bureaucrat rejects critical discussion; he artificially exaggerates the conflicting tendencies which arise during the stage of cultural transition; he attempts to reduce the dilemma to a choice between two incompatible, diametrically opposed poles. This becomes apparent when the need arises to define a 'cultural policy'. The poles of the supposed dilemma are as follows: should this cultural policy be con-

ceived in terms of the adoption and promotion of the existing culture (the policy of continuity), or in terms of a break with bourgeois culture and the creation of proletarian cultural power (and this rapidly becomes characterised as a 'leap into the unknown'). In our view, this statement of the options is artificial. There is no such clearly defined before and after on the road to cultural power for the masses. The project to be crystallised in the future must already exist in the present. No policy of cultural dissemination, nor any other policy which seeks to put the great works, the values and the heritage of the past at the disposition of the people, can be defined and put into practice which does not relate to the second of these objectives: the achievement of critical and creative reception by the working class. The fact that the achievement of this second objective is slow and gradual does not justify its being put into parentheses during a particular period. Such a course would only make of the proletariat's accession to power an incoherent series of *sui generis* historical processes. A publishing policy devoted to the mass distribution of books which are recognised as a universal patrimony must not, therefore, be limited to this distribution of knowledge and art alone, but must also take on the task of preparing the terrain for their reception. The planning of themes and titles to be published must be related to the creation of growing critical power among the receivers. This assimilation of a culture—the sorting out of second-hand clothes, as Trotsky called it—cannot be an anarchic process, left to the 'cultured' liberalism of a particular group. It must be closely linked with the needs of the class struggle as it is expressed in the cultural field.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to transform the leninist thesis of the need to assimilate the bourgeois cultural heritage into a licence for initiatives which, in our opinion, are far from being *critical* assimilations of this heritage. The demand for cultural continuity is very often used to legitimate continuity pure and simple, i.e., a continuity which does not bear the seeds of a new culture but which, on the contrary, is a hindrance to it. When *Simplemente Maria* (a television series which, in the best traditions of Latin American melodramas, traces the rise of a young peasant who, thanks to her tenacity, unlimited courage and sewing machine, makes it to the top by becoming the owner of the most famous fashion house in the capital) appeared on Channel 9, it provoked loud protests. The left-wing director of the Channel explained that the leap into the unknown, a break with the culture of the past, the culture of the bourgeoisie, the cultural heritage of capitalism, is really nothing more than utopian (*Ahora* magazine, No. 37). It is rationalisations like this, based as they are on a badly thought-out thesis, which hold back the research which is so necessary if we are to overcome the contradictions and to fill the obvious gaps in mass communications as they are at the present time. From this position to that of declaring the neutrality of the cultural industry of imperialism and its servants is but a single step. And the more that the historical experience of many western socialist countries gives credibility to this way of seeing things, the easier it is to take this step. In several popular

democracies the lack of any children's literature to counterbalance that produced by imperialism has resulted in the acceptance, on grounds that they are 'nonpolitical' or 'universal', of Disney comics, or of the new educational tv series produced by the Ford Foundation, in response to 'unalienated' public demand for something to fill its free time. This does not happen by chance. We must look beyond the domain of mass culture to find the reasons why such needs are formed in these societies; we need to look at the ideas of childhood, of the child's imagination, of the family and sex which these societies have instituted in daily life.

In Chile, rationalisations like this have become even more pernicious. Here, they are used to block the way forward. They imprison the future in the present, while leaving the past untouched and unquestioned. In Cuba, the famous Argentinian and Mexican 'millionaire series' (so-called because they have been shown thousands of times) are still shown. But, contrary to what certain of our dogmatists preach, programmes like this are subjected to discussion, in some circles at least, and guidelines are emerging in the search for alternatives. The celebration of the thesis of continuity as the primary determinant of cultural policy results in the permanent postponement of such enquiry. The bureaucratic petty-bourgeoisie, in setting themselves up as the arbiters of the situation, use this first dilemma—continuity or break—to distort, disqualify and denounce as 'ultra-leftist' the attitude of those who seek to reconcile the two poles in relation to a single objective: the creation of popular cultural power and the end of the culture of manipulation.

A second straitjacket and artificial polarisation is that created by the dogmatic separation of theory and practice. It is again the petty-bourgeoisie which has the greatest interest in pushing this conflict to extremes, and which therefore resists most fiercely the introduction among intellectuals and the masses of the idea of practical understanding. Describing them as mere theoreticians, the petty-bourgeoisie isolates those intellectuals who seek to redefine the concept of mass participation and to assert the interests of the proletariat. By putting theory into quarantine, it legitimates its own prejudices concerning the possibility of the proletariat participating in a conscious and organised way in cultural power and also reinforces its own pragmatism as the sole form of acceptable action. The result is that its own status as controller of the process is confirmed. The only vanguard, the only ideological hegemony, which can be established by the petty-bourgeoisie is a bureaucratic one, and this in fact negates the very idea of a vanguard.

### IN SEARCH OF A PLAGIARISED IDIOSYNCRASY

When the petty-bourgeoisie, in the pursuit of its class interests, rejects the bureaucratic line, it generally adopts another tendency, namely idealism. To be sure, this tendency is less widespread than that of bureaucratism. It lacks any genuine political viability, apart from offering to the bureaucracy the occasional touch of bohemia, and never spreads

beyond small coteries, though the access enjoyed by its proponents to public platforms may give it an inflated appearance of importance. Its aspiration is to take over the monopoly of criticism and to make itself the guarantor of a quasi-active mass participation. Its line is based on a conception of the organisation of culture which amounts to signing a peace treaty with the bourgeois system. It rejects the socialisation of culture by appealing to the mythology of anti-totalitarianism. Creative liberty becomes simply the freedom to reformulate the norms of mass mental consumption, while access to cultural power is relegated to some future epoch. Freedom of creation is made the exclusive preserve of a few glorified exponents at the expense of that of the masses. As soon as the necessity arises, in the creation of a new culture, to take into account the state of the class struggle, these 'generals without troops' rail against what they see as intolerable censorship, and attempt to put in its place the liberal panacea of 'the broadest intellectual and aesthetic liberty'. Incapable of transcending their class position, this fraction of the intellectual and artistic petty-bourgeoisie takes strength from a false interpretation of 'the Chilean Road' which confuses the tactic of winning over the petty-bourgeoisie with a strategy for turning the revolution into a petty-bourgeois affair. It was to this social group that Marx addressed himself in the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

However one must not form the narrow-minded notion that the petty-bourgeoisie, on principle, wishes to enforce an egotistic class interest. Rather, it believes that the *special* conditions of its emancipation are the *general* conditions within the frame of which alone modern society can be saved and class struggle avoided. Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty-bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the *political* and *literary representatives* of a class and the class they represent.<sup>8</sup>

Idealist prejudices against the proletariat, even though they may be expressed with rather more subtlety and sophistication, are essentially the same as those of the bureaucrats. Instead of reconciling the two poles of the bourgeois dichotomy between politics and culture, they defend the second by divorcing it from history and under-estimating the importance of the first. Popular access to power becomes a scenario with which they flirt in imagination but which they cannot stomach in reality. The proletariat are acceptable in their place—but only so long as the cultural upsurge they represent does not upset the reigning aesthetic code. The barriers which these idealists erect in order to protect their domain of literary practice from any incursions from outside

8. Karl Marx "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon", in *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1970, pp. 119—20.

are so high that they are in the end incapable of tolerating any language except that of 'literature' in dealing with cultural problems of the moment. Their aim is to elevate their way of 'writing the world' into a general principle for everybody else. They wish to make it a norm of communication. This emphasis on a language which derives from a particular form of practice to the detriment of any others (whether they derive from sociology, semiology or any other science) demonstrates once again the extent of their intolerance and their utopian desire to control all future forms of social relations. Once again they block the revolution and celebrate their own class reading of reality as a final solution—a reading which was born of a society in which the masses still have no right to speech.

It is undeniable that the existence of this cultural project among a fraction of the literary petty-bourgeoisie is an indication of the internal disintegration which the petty-bourgeoisie suffers in the course of the revolutionary process. It may be that this fraction has best understood the concrete significance of a genuine eruption of the masses into power, and for this very reason is panicking and presenting such fierce resistance. No proprietor of knowledge enjoys having his privileged position torn away from him in a workers' assembly, nor being subjected to their criticism, and having to question constantly his own practice and to permit a class which does not necessarily share his perceptions to determine social taste—a class which, exactly like the bourgeoisie during its rise to power, will very probably only gropingly achieve the creation of new ways of living.

## Salvador Allende

### SPEECH TO THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF LEFT JOURNALISTS

(Chile, 1971)

Very warm and cordial greetings to the *compañeros* who have come from the provinces of Chile, and to the organizers of this first conference, which is so extraordinarily important. I emphasize its significance which only makes it proper that our friends and *compañeros* be present representing the parties and popular movements which form the basis of the government. Greetings to *compañero* Minister Carlos Cortés and to the Popular Unity legislators whose presence here indicates the importance that they attach to this extraordinary assembly of you all.

Surely the workers could not be absent, hence the presence of the CUT<sup>1</sup> representatives, and I must point out especially, the representatives of the *asentamientos*<sup>2</sup>. The peasants understand that they can no longer be absent from any meeting where the people, in this case, the people in journalism, meet to discuss our problems and the future of our country.

First of all, I wish to express my appreciation for the courage, the spirit of sacrifice, and the determination shown by so many of you, by the overwhelming majority of you, in the different battles we have waged in the struggle of the Chilean people which culminated in the victory of September fourth<sup>3</sup>.

I wish to say that this courage is all the more praiseworthy considering the difficulty that you experienced because of the domination and intransigence of the news media owners. Your contribution led not to the victory of one man, but to the victory of the people. I believe that this conference has an extraordinary importance. In my judgement, it is the beginning of what we have called Operation Truth, which will bring writers, journalists, artists and intellectuals to Chile from all over the world, and which must count on your fundamental support. We do not want this to be the initiative of the Government. We want those who come here to be able to dialogue and to know that it is the writers, the artists and the journalists who will guide them in the direction they should follow to understand exactly the process that our nation is living. For this reason I ask you, as one of your primary tasks, to become the pillar of Operation Truth, which will correct the confused image of us which has been presented abroad and, as well, show how Chile in its struggle, is, and will continue to be, a formal democracy which we intend to transform

This text was presented as the inaugural address to the First Conference of Left Journalists held in Santiago de Chile on 13 April 1971. Translated from the Spanish transcript by Mary C. Axtmann and Arturo I. Torrecilla. English translation Copyright International General, 1981. This is its first publication.

into an authentic social and economic democracy. [APPLAUSE] Don't applaud me, because behind a microphone, with applause, I am a lost man.

It seems to me that there is little that I can add to the words already spoken by my friends and *compañeros* Manuel Cabieses and Felidor Contreras, who with deep insight offered a correct interpretation of the reality of the process that Chile is living, and of your work in bourgeois society. In any case, it is right to emphasize, as we all know perfectly well, that the mass media constitute a material advantage for those who have been rightly called the news industrialists.

We know how very hard it is for the journalist who thinks as a revolutionary, who has a revolutionary ideology, to be restricted in the expression of his ideas by businesses whose attitude is directed toward defending the privileges of the few and denying the rights of the many. And often, lamentably, denying the urgent need for Chile to become an economically independent and politically sovereign country. This is why it seems justified for me to point out that objectivity, as such, cannot exist if we believe that in this bourgeois society there is and must be a confrontation between groups and sectors, between social classes. Those holding power, defending their interests and privileges, have been the minority classes, among which are the owners of the press and news media. That is why we must insist that the left journalist be all the more committed to the workers' struggle, to the peoples' struggle, to the great Chilean battle. Many times I have expressed this, and I believe that you, given your high cultural and intellectual level, will well understand this even more than others.

This battle of ours is neither the struggle of one man, nor that of a group of political parties. It is the great fight of a people that wants to break out of the economic dependency which implies political dependency. It is the great historical battle to transform a society, and to make the structural changes which will prevent man from exploiting man. It is the great battle for a new society. I have said that only the people, a people who are organized, disciplined and aware can bring about the results implicit in a revolutionary process. And you are part of the people. You are the people. A sector of the people who, despite the social conditions and the system, has gained access to a better education, and higher intellectual and cultural levels. You therefore must be the vanguard of revolutionary thought, a thought sustained and augmented by the daily struggles that we are living. The left journalist must be conscious of the commitment he owes to this unending battle that we are waging to make the Chileans a free people in control of their own destiny.

It is therefore right to point out that at this moment, the left journalist must learn that his struggle, and our struggle, is all the more difficult. I say,

1. The *Central Unica de Trabajadores*; the Unified Central Trade Union. (This and following footnotes are by the translators.)

2. Agricultural units established by the agrarian reform program under Christian-Democrat President Frei.

3. 4 September 1970 was the date of the electoral victory of the Popular Unity government.





Cover of the third issue (1971) of *La Firme*, the "popular information magazine" published by the Popular Unity

Government. This issue is about "Who's Behind the News".

our struggle, because I believe and maintain that it is true. You are, as the people, a part of the government. The people have become the government and the government is the people's. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the road which we rightly call Chilean breaks the traditional models; we are given the battles within the framework of bourgeois democracy, and the laws that this bourgeois democracy has dictated. And it is within this framework that we are seeking the ways to realize the great and deep transformations which Chile demands and needs in the economic, social and political domains. We must note, therefore, that we have committed ourselves to the freedom of information. By this we mean that we are not looking for a news monopoly. Thus the struggle of the people's government within this framework is much more difficult than that of other nations, who, by means of insurgency or weapons, have taken power and control of the government. We are voluntarily limited, because of previous commitments and, therefore, *compañeros* left journalists, as you know perfectly well, the other side will continue to capitalize on their control over the information media, continuing their distortion of government positions. Because of this, your struggle and ours is much more difficult. A great political consciousness is needed to raise the level of the masses and to make of every left journalist someone not only committed in his professional practice to the revolutionary tasks of the Popular Government and the people of Chile, but also someone linked with the popular masses who will take upon himself, in addition to his working hours, the voluntary work of raising the political level of the immense majority of Chileans, so that they understand our determination to take these historical steps.

In this assembly there is no point in defining the term *gremialismo*<sup>4</sup>, and that behind this attitude, many will try to avoid, either confusedly, cunningly or openly, a clear pronouncement on what should be the function of a genuine professional association. As *compañero* Felidor Contreras stated here:

The left journalists are not the overwhelming majority, nor do they control the organs of the professional associations. They must therefore accentuate the dialogue with those who still do not understand the revolutionary steps which Chile has taken and will continue to take.

Thus, along with my greetings to you at the beginning of my talk, I want to extend greetings to those journalists of the Christian Democratic Party who had the courage to express their solidarity here with the left journalists. This shows that they, too, understand the obligation they owe to the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle which lies

4. An allusion to the problem of corporatism, and the right-wing control of the journalist professional association.

5. This radio station was owned by the Christian Democrats and actively fought the Popular Unity Government, and, in fact, was closed, but by the fascist junta on 21 January 1976 for "anti-patriotic" propaganda.

6. The journalist professional association, which brings together all the local, regional, and national chapters of the organization.

7. A right-wing magazine linked to the fascist movement *Patria y Libertad*.

ahead of the people and government of Chile.

Next, I want to point out that it is in the unity of the journalists of the authentic left, already proven in many battles, as well as in the ideas concerning the problem of the professional association — authentically defined — that we have the possibility of attracting hundreds of journalists to swell our ranks, as they become conscious of their situation. There must be much frustration on the part of many journalists who are limited, as we said earlier, by the interests of the news industrialists. Therefore, the battle in which you are engaged must be brought to your professional association, so that after discussion based on a respect for other ideas, but with the strength of our convictions, we may convince more and more journalists who still hesitate to take a position today, but who, tomorrow, understanding your exemplary struggle and the ideas of your program, and with the conviction that we are fighting for the greater good, will come to join your great action.

At the same time, I want to point out that if we bring up the problem of the professional association, it is because the government, as such, has shown an absolute respect and excessive tolerance for the journalists and certainly for the businesses that fight against us. When I say excessive tolerance, I know that tomorrow someone will declare that this was a threat. No! I want to emphasize this to show how a people and a government are not afraid when they know that the people understand what the government is doing.

For instance, there is a radio station whose president is a foreigner. Its name is Radio Balmaceda<sup>5</sup>. This station's broadcasting license expired two years ago. As President of Chile I could deport the foreigner who pays people to defame the Chilean people and their government. And I could choose that station because its license has expired. I did not choose to do it because I know that the Chilean people are not going to be taken in by what is said on that station.

I have had only one position and I will explain it here today as I did yesterday to the national and regional leaders of the *Colegio de Periodistas*<sup>6</sup>. It was I who instructed the *compañero* Press Secretary of the Moneda to say that he would not allow the representative of the magazine *SEPA*<sup>7</sup> to be present at an interview and press conference with foreign and Chilean journalists who cover the Moneda, and I want it to be clear why I did this. *SEPA* is not a news magazine. It is a group of seditious magazines which, from first to last line, not only deform, slander and lie, but have also been creating a climate destined to break the institutional bases of the country. They have spared nothing and no one has escaped insult and slander. In my home, I cannot accept this. I say my home because it is the home the Chilean people have entrusted to me, for six years at least — and I want you all to know that I am going to fulfill the six years very well. I am not prepared to maintain a weak unmanly, or worse, undignified attitude. In the house which I occupy, the house of the Presidents of Chile, I cannot allow delinquents to walk through the corridors as naturally as you do, for they are not journalists. My position is neither domineering nor impetuous. In the Moneda, you will find the rest of the

journalists of the opposition newspapers and they have a legitimate right to be there. And I have not forbidden them to enter, even in the areas where the Press Staff of the Moneda have their meetings. What I have said, and I hope you will pardon the expression, is that I will not tolerate<sup>8</sup> these people—who are not true journalists representing news magazines—in the same house, halls, rooms and offices where I have to do my daily work.

A seditious process is taking place. And because of this I have called upon the people and denounced it. The fundamental base of this seditious process is the distortion of facts on both a national and an international level. Left journalists must be aware of this. We will not accept that the professional association be used as an excuse to provide impunity for those who attack the people, Chile and the government which the people elected.

I want to point out that the left journalist, because this is the first time we are in government, today has more opportunities to function, work and produce. I also want to mention that the left journalist has more access to technical means, although they must be refined and improved. We are eager for the left journalists to be the best qualified and the best trained. Our desire and aspiration is that you, in addition to your place on the left, will also be recognized for your professional merit, for the action that you carry out, not just for the strength of your convictions, but also, I repeat, for your training. The left journalist thus is obligated to study more, be better prepared, to be solid enough to give force to his commentaries, to the content of his articles, to every one of the columns he writes daily. I also think that it is the obligation of the journalist to convey information to the masses and to find the most ample forms possible to do this. And I think, as I already pointed out here, that left journalists are obliged to do voluntary work, along with their tasks in the news media. Who could raise the political consciousness of the popular sectors better than you? Who but you could teach the people in the marginal villages or the slums the *why* of a news story or commentary? Who is better qualified than you to make them understand the relations between the businesses and the broadcasting networks, and the business that is done with the news? Who is better suited than you to take the trouble to express through the spoken word what you have already expressed through the written word? The workers in the coal mines, and in the nationalized industries, in the saltpetre and copper mines, have responded to this challenge and are now producing more. And I know that the peasants today are aware that they must work the land more because Chile needs more food for its people and the peasants are an essential factor in this process. They must also understand that the process of cultivating and exploiting the land is part of the great process of national economic development, the same way that the copperworker must understand that the surplus provided by the Chilean economy must be used to serve Chile and the Chileans. Thus, because of your education

8. "Tener las aguantaderas"; in popular language "to hold it in."

and because of the nature of the media, you are best suited to undertake another type of voluntary work; and if the peasants and workers can do it, professionals like yourselves should not lag behind in the important task of raising the consciousness of the popular masses. I want to see you united with the people in the slums, carrying the revolutionary message of the people and the Popular Government.

Now it seems to me that there is another means of persuasion, in spite of the indifference of some and the stubbornness of others, to put the businessmen in a difficult situation. Why not coordinate a large-scale campaign in the national interest? We are, for instance, faced with a certain matter, the most important event in the history of Chile: recovering for ourselves the essential wealth of the country, copper. But it is not just by passing a law or a constitutional reform that we will be able to nationalize this wealth. There will be a whole process involved, and during this process, until we are finally the owners of this wealth, which—I repeat—is essential, we will have extraordinary difficulties and will have to confront dangers and threats to the normal development of our economy. We are going to offend vested interests, although we do not want to, for our purpose is not to appropriate what belongs to someone else. Yet it will still be said that the indemnities which, after careful study, we find we can afford to pay, are too small, and that we have destroyed the international confidence of the investors. Therefore, it *must* be understood that this battle is for Chile and the people. And that it is a battle to which we must all be committed, because it is impossible to break Chile's economic dependency, and begin our economic development, if Chile is not master of its essential wealth. We *must* make it clear that without a change in our whole system it will be impossible for Chile to reduce the enormous distance between the development attained by the industrialized capitalist countries and the socialist countries, and the backwardness of the developing countries, with their moral and physical misery against which they struggle helplessly; in which Latin America, for instance, struggles hopelessly. It is up to you to contribute the strength of your convictions by explaining that the struggle for copper implies more than just conquering and defeating hostility; it also implies projecting to the rest of the world the true picture that this struggle is not a retaliation but a fundamental need for Chile and its destiny. You must clarify our situation, so that the people understand the responsibility we assumed when the technicians who had worked in these companies began leaving Chile because they are part of companies that have their roots and investments in other latitudes and because these companies can, unquestionably, offer these technicians better material conditions elsewhere. You must make them understand that because of our lenience, foolishness, incompetence or cowardice, it has been taken for granted that in Chile, Chilean technicians could only rise to a certain level of management in these companies, and as a result we now are faced with technical difficulties which we will overcome, but which are extraordinarily difficult to overcome. You yourselves must understand the responsibility of the copper workers. It is upsetting

and a cause of great worry for me, *compañeros* of the press, to see the lack of comprehension concerning the nature of the problem which Chile is living, and the revolutionary steps we have taken. When the readjustments<sup>9</sup> were proposed, for example, and the CUT acted responsibly in arriving at an agreement with the government, we were faced with the readjustment of the public sector and all that a readjustment law represents—a law which was bound to begin the rise in the cost of living. However, the CUT must plan its action not only in function of the justice of the readjustments but also in function of the structural changes that Chile needs. On the other hand, there are *compañeros* who do not understand that if we have proposed, for instance, a maximum readjustment of 35% in the public sector, it is because this sector, in function of what it represents for the national interest, could make demands which would destroy any possibility of controlling inflation and stabilizing prices. How can we make them understand that the present stage in Chilean history is one in which there is exceptional purchasing power in the hands of the popular masses, because the readjustments have come at the same time as price controls? We must make them see that the stocks are being exhausted and that we have to increase our productivity so that in two or three months we don't find ourselves in the position of being unable to meet the legitimate demands and needs of the people.

Right now, for instance, there are already signs of dishonest attempts by certain industrialists who are asking higher prices for delivering materials. To whom? To the shopkeepers who put them at the disposal of the public. You must understand that here you can make an essential contribution. Isn't it obvious that we can no longer tolerate the absenteeism which in some of Chile's basic industries has reached the point of workers and employees being absent once or twice a week? And which in some companies has reached incredible levels. It must be emphasized, for instance, that the copperworkers must work an extra half hour, hour or two hours, voluntarily, every week, because by producing more copper, Chile can save itself from the economic crisis to which we are being led. It must be explained that the copperworkers are not themselves the owners of the copper mines, but are owners only to the extent that they are part of the people, and that these essential riches belong to all the Chilean people. We cannot allow certain sectors to pressure for privileges while thousands of Chileans are without jobs and even without a piece of bread.

It is therefore necessary to push—I deliberately use the word—to mentally and not physically push a lot of people and even drive the companies crazy. For example, what arguments, and what means could they use to prevent all of the newspapers from launching a big campaign on behalf of children, a campaign against infantile diarrhea, or a campaign, for instance, for the winter? It would be a way of placing them on the chopping block and forcing them to see that there are problems that go beyond their bastard interests, and that these problems are not for *our*

9. Pay scale increases.

benefit except in function of the greater national interest. Therefore, I suggest to you, *compañeros*, that you find a way to make these companies understand, even if it hurts them, that they cannot ignore facts that are as important for *our* future as those concerning the children of Chile and the aged of the nation. How to protect people from inclement weather, when they have always been splashed by the mud, when the wind and rain has always whipped through their feeble house, what they can call a house, where they have been living. Similarly, and I will end on this note, I want to tell you, and you have already expressed it here, that unity, your unity, strengthens the output of each of you by 30 percent—and today we have it and more—in the news media. If perhaps there is uniform thought, a vigilant attitude, and understanding of the great historical task, and if every left journalist understands that his destiny is a battle front and struggle, we will be able to exert an even stronger influence, growing deeper in the national consciousness. But this must be supported first in the united will, in the strong united will of the left journalists. Let there be no division, let there be no distrust, let there be no fratricide among us.

Popular Unity made possible the victory of the people. Popular Unity is the defense of the Popular Government. Unity will be the granite wall against which the seditious attempts, from the outside or the inside, will be smashed to pieces. Popular Unity will permit the denunciation of economic oppression and the illegal attempts at subversion. Popular Unity is and will be the definitive weapon with which we can have the certitude of ideologically crushing our enemies. Thus, I have pointed out, both before and after the municipal electoral battle, that if the votes are important, they are much more important in giving every voter a revolutionary consciousness. When we won a million votes, 50-60 thousand of them were a job. Now that we have won a million four-hundred thousand votes, it is a much harder job, a much more profound and more necessary one. We cannot allow only a transitory enthusiasm, a desire to go to vote to show that we are the majority, to be kept like that. We need those one million four-hundred thousand votes to be converted into one million four-hundred thousand revolutionary consciousnesses who understand perfectly the meaning of the struggle of the people and Chile. Here, too, you have a big job to do, and I insist on it, *compañeros*, because it is essential. History teaches us that populist movements, groups, parties or currents of opinion have grown like weeds, only to disappear with time. What interests me is the consciousness, the backbone, the granite base of workers who have not only a class consciousness but also the strength of conviction which grows out of dialogue and above all, ideological discussion. What lies ahead of us is thus to make of those one million four-hundred thousand votes, which for the defeated parties are simply votes, one million four-hundred thousand granite consciousnesses which will defend the present and future of our nation.

Although it is not up to me personally to propose this, it seems useful and necessary for me to say that you should fight to change the by-laws of the *Colegio de Periodistas*. Furthermore—and why not say it—

you should examine the ways in which your presence could be more effective in the news companies during this period of transition. You can fight for the right of journalists to write a page or part of a page expressing what they really think, weekly or better yet, daily. I believe too that it should not be forgotten that in journalism also, there is the possibility of cooperatives which would make the owners of the broadcast media not the businessmen, but rather all of the workers of these firms.

I think it is essential to modify the by-laws of the *Colegio de Periodistas* to also give it more authority so that you can better defend your material interests. It is right that these demands be made, but more than that, you have the right to expect that the dignity and future of the profession be respected. I also believe that a *Colegio de Periodistas*, upon which your thought has been impressed, will have a new meaning and a new concept of journalist ethics, and will have the authority to separate the news merchants and those who are well-paid for writing insults on a per-line basis from those others who defend ideas and principles. This is why I stated recently in Valparaiso, that I have respect, not for objective journalism which does not exist, but for a journalism that has ideas and principles — as long as they are real ideas and principles — and the conviction to defend them within the framework of an honest professional ethic.

Therefore, by way of conclusion, it would be worthwhile for left journalists to remember the past and look back at the beginnings of our country, when the "friar of good death" [Camillo Henriquez] began to create a consciousness which would strengthen the spirit of national independence. It would be worthwhile to remember Luis Emilio Recabarren<sup>10</sup>, who implanted the great and fertile seed of rebellion and of class dignity in the small working-class newspapers and in the consciousness of the workers. It would be worthwhile to remember a journalist who was shot down because he denounced crimes: Meza Bell. It would be worthwhile to remember someone else who also fought for his country, who often was not able to practice journalism but who worked as a bookseller, and had other activities. A man who understood that there are no limits in the people's struggle and who irrigated another country with his generous blood, showing to what point a man's life can be consistent with his ideas: Elmo Catalàn<sup>11</sup>.

10. Luis Emilio Recabarren was a typography worker, who later founded the Chilean Communist Party.

11. Elmo Catalàn, author of *La propaganda política: instrumento de presión política*, 1967, participated in the Bolivian guerrilla struggle and was killed there in 1970.

**David Kunzle**

## ART IN CHILE'S REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS: GUERRILLA MURALIST BRIGADES

(USA, 1973)

The Chileans speak at present not of their "Revolution" but rather of the "Revolutionary Process." Chile is unique among Latin American countries in the manner in which socialism has made a successful bid for political power through "democratic" electoral and legal mechanisms not dissimilar to those which have been the chief prop of capitalist government in the advanced West. Chile sees herself as standing at the beginning of a gradual process of transformation from capitalism to socialism. The continuation and the ultimate success of this process are sensed to depend upon cultural as well as economic transformation.

The Unidad Popular (UP), the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende, governs, but it does not control Chile. In effecting its program of popular reform, it has to contend with a majority opposition in the legislature, with a judiciary inherited intact from the previous bourgeois regime, and an economy in which major sectors remain in capitalist hands, which also control much of the educational system, and the best-selling newspapers and magazines. Lacking the support of the majority in the press, Allende's government has gained the support of various alternative channels of communications, which are in part new and in part transformations of old ones. As far as the pictorial media are concerned, they are of three principal kinds: mural, poster and comic strip. This article is about the first of these, the street mural in today's Chile.

There is a certain, limited parallel to be drawn between the Chilean renaissance in popular art and the situation in the US, where the underground press has emerged to counter the saturating bourgeois propaganda of the established media in press, film and television. The pictorial counterpart of the underground press, and the major permanent visual manifestation of the antiwar movement, is to be sought in the Poster of Protest, which has achieved a stunning variety of effects;<sup>1</sup> we may also observe the first stirrings of a popular murals movement (Chicago Wall of Shame, etc.), and the increasingly apparent attempts to subvert the chilling conformity of the

1. Cf. David Kunzle, *Posters of Protest*, Exhibition Catalog published by the Art Galleries of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and (in a smaller edition) by the New School Art Center in New York.

This text was first published in the *New World Review* (New York), XLI, 3, 1973. Reprinted by permission of the author.

newspaper strip by means of the underground comic, which is however, hardly a popular medium in the proper sense of the term. But we must be wary of drawing parallels between developments in Chile and the North American movements, the political philosophy of which tends to be anarchist and the main-spring of which, in all cases, is opposition to the existing government, and its values.

The Popular Unity Government was voted in, with its slender majority, against the massive opposition of the press, against a propaganda campaign which has been described as "immense, absolutely overwhelming."<sup>2</sup> Publicity for Jorge Alessandri, Allende's opponent on the Right, employed the grossest scarce tactics. "Marxism" or "Communism" was presented in posters and radio advertisements as the system which would bring Russian tanks into the main square of Santiago, exchange the schoolboy's text for a gun, and send him off, according to the whim of international Communism, to Cuba or Moscow. A radio spot featured the rat-tat-tat of a machine gun, followed by a woman's scream. "They've got him, they've got my son!" "Who?" "The Russians!" The "campaign of terror" was, as a Chilean Congressional investigation verified, financed by the US-owned Anaconda Copper Company, and was the brain-child of a US advertising agency.

The Chileans are avid readers of newspapers; literacy is about the highest in Latin America (85 per cent). Eleven major national dailies have a combined circulation of 853,000; amongst an adult population of five million, counting several readers per newspaper, one may conclude that most Chileans read at least one paper. Two years after the UP victory the majority of the press is still against the government. Circulation figures published in July 1972 by the Office of Information and Radio showed that pro-government dailies sold 312,000 copies per issue, anti-government dailies 541,000. In the Sunday papers, the proportion is similar. Revenues from capitalist advertising continue to underpin the opposition press. The major chain of opposition newspapers, the "Mercurio chain," is controlled by Augustin Edwards, scion of an old patrician family, living (since the UP took power) in Miami. The distortions and lies of the most outwardly "respectable" of the conservative papers, the *Mercurio*, have been exposed time and again, and continue unabated. Indeed, as the UP government has strengthened its hold upon popular opinion, the hysteria of the opposition press has increased.

Idealists on the Left have tended to assume that the Truth Will Out, that actions speak louder than words. The fallacies of this attitude are stressed in a

2. *The Triumph of Allende: Chile's Legal Revolution*, by Richard Feinberg, a Mentor book from the New American Library, 1972, p. 91, with circulation figures and political allegiance of all the major newspapers and magazines on p. 93. Feinberg's is the best introduction to contemporary Chile.

3. For information on the history and procedure of the RPB, I am indebted to "Mono" Gonzalez, who lent me his unpublished ms. on the subject, gave me posters and slides and provided me with an opportunity to observe and participate in the work of the Brigades. A very particular debt is owed to Deena Metzger, the compañera with whom I had many provocative and fertile discussions on this topic.

pamphlet on the problems of publicity, published in February 1972 by Volodia Teitelboim, Senator and Member of the Political Commission of the Chilean Communist Party. It is not enough, warns Teitelboim, to do things well for everything to be well. "Absolutely false. If the people do not know, if public opinion does not know, it is as if they (the Left, the Government) had not done it, or done it badly..." The opposition press fabricates an atmosphere of total government failure, indeed, of imminent catastrophe, and the emotional premise for civil war. "The right-wing press tries to throw the country into neurosis, push people into panic terror, into the dark forest of collective fears. They unleash prejudice and frustration, they exploit all the emotional fissures of popular insecurity."

Let us take just one example of the Chilean right-wing press in action. With the approach of the Fiesta Patria, the national holidays of September 18, 1972, and against a mounting political tension, the opposition fomented rumors of an intended army coup. The tabloid *La Tribuna* carried a front page featuring photographs of serried rows of military heads and hats, and the enormous headline, which occupied fully two-thirds of the page, and which appeared to say: THERE'S RATTLING OF SABRES. Closer inspection however revealed the words "but no" sandwiched very small in between, so that technically the headline read "THERE'S RATTLING but not OF SABRES."

To counter such mendacious sensationalism, Teitelboim calls for all the communications media to join in the primordial "battle for truth," to defend it and diffuse it at the base, with "simple, compact, limpid images," and "legitimate, convincing, categorical messages."

Who is to create such images and messages, and how are they to be disseminated? To enable the people to take over their own ideological self-defense, an extensive network of Centers for Popular Culture has been proposed by the National Cultural Commission of the Communist Party. These will combat illiteracy by means of "brigadas de alfabetizadores," form libraries, conduct educational programs on social problems, promote folklore, workers' theater, chorales, musical groups, and art workshops. People's theatre under the aegis of the CUT (Amalgamated Labour Union) is already in action in the factories and countryside, but on the whole it is as yet premature to speculate upon the potential of such Centers in Chile. Meanwhile, existing cultural vehicles are being converted to the dissemination of a new imagery.

### MURALS: THE RAMONA PARRA BRIGADES

But the true cultural medium—and newspaper—of the people is in the street. In every city, once-empty walls have been seized by political parties. For two years now the slogans of the Communists, always the most propaganda-conscious of Chilean parties, have dominated, through the work of the Ramona Parra Brigades.<sup>3</sup>

The origin of these well-known "guerilla" muralists, as they call themselves, dates back to a march held in September 1969, from Valparaiso to Santiago,

denouncing capitalism and imperialism. Youths from the JJCC (Juventudes Comunistas, Communist Youth) prepared the way by painting messages of support on walls along the route, and on banners. Later, as the election campaign got under way, they formed groups working in support of Allende's candidature. They called themselves the Ramona Parra Brigades after a militant young working girl martyred in 1949. (There are other muralist brigades attached to other parties — MAPU and the Socialists — but they are far less numerous and tend to confine themselves to verbal slogans.) The Ramona Parra Brigades during the electoral period restricted themselves to utilitarian political messages. They worked in a clandestine fashion, usually by night and as fast as possible in order to get the job done before the arrival of the police or slogan painters from rival political parties. There were frequent cases of arrests and rough handling from both the law (on the pretext that they were defacing public and private property) and the right-wing groups, who painted out the Left slogans just as the Left painted out theirs (Alessandri could be converted into Allende preserving the first two letters). It was thus thought useful to adopt *noms-de-guerre* and the hard hats worn by construction workers; both are still retained, although since the establishment of the Popular Government the activities of the RPB are officially encouraged. (The *compañeros* of the Santiago central brigade include Chupete (lollipop), Estorbo (nuisance), Callampa (mushroom), Puñal Loco (Crazy Dagger), Viveron (hotbed), Mono (ape), Chin-chin (racket), Candi (candy), Volando (flying).)

At this time, in the heat of the electoral struggle, color schemes were appropriated by, identified with and became by common consent the "copyright" of the three contending political parties: the Right used blue letters on a white ground, the Democratic-Christian (Center) party used blue and red letters on a white ground, and the Unidad Popular black outlines on red letters on a white ground. Today, with the addition of yellow (often used for the ground), and green, the RPB are able to vary more than before, but even now that their possession of the walls is largely uncontested, they eschew color-schemes once associated with the Right. The work of the Left parties can now be distinguished by the character of the lettering; for instance, Socialist party slogans (which are far less numerous, but still important) use letters which become very fat at the base. At present, the opposition maintains its presence in strictly symbolic form: the disguised swastika used as the symbol of the neo-fascist Patria y Libertad Party, and daubed anywhere and everywhere. Ugly in itself, and uglier still when scrawled by a hasty unskilled hand, the PL "spider" (as the Left terms it) stands as the ever-present reminder of a social disease which is more than skin (or wall) deep.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE BRIGADES

A brigade is composed of a maximum of twelve persons — workers, high school and college students. A dozen is about as many as their transportation, battered old pick-up trucks, can hold, including their equipment (huge 50-gallon vats of paint), and about

as many as can conveniently work on a single wall simultaneously. The brigadistas tend to be very young, of both sexes, average age around 17, with many in their very early teens. They elect a leader who is charged with political and cultural education, and liaison with the Party for instruction on the current political tasks. All the Brigades are under the aegis of the Comisión Nacional de Propaganda. Each expedition or "rallado" is carefully planned beforehand, especially as regards place (due consideration being taken of visibility and public access), and content (choice of theme, wording of slogan, type of visual design from existing repertory). Group self-criticism follows when the job is complete.

Chile abounds in walls suited to slogan-painting, in the city center, suburb, village and countryside, along the roads. The RPB have seized walls originally built to establish the rights of private property, and restored them, as it were, to the people who built them. They do not however paint schools, hospitals or churches. Nor do they choose to deface the arrogant, garish US-style commercial billboards which are the ubiquitous reminder of bourgeois power. According to one brigade leader this is not necessary; "their message has already been killed by ours." The city walls are used freely, but in the villages and suburbs, the brigades find it indispensable to explain to the locals what they are about, and to reassure them that they are not going to "dirty their walls," as the opposition press claims they do. (A comic-book style pamphlet published by the right wing Partido Nacional shows the decent girl, thinking of joining the Party, and horrified by the filthy behaviour of the RPB, who splash "Death to all the..." on walls, and scream "hurry up comrades, we have to scrawl all over the houses of those wretched 'momios' (mummies, reactionaries).")

The wall is an assembly line, with the workers working along it to fix the letters and parts of letters in place, their bodies overlapping each other when necessary; they are the moving parts, their creation remains fixed. Modern industrial production normally reverses the situation: the worker is immobilized, the object he "creates" (i.e., in the creation of which he plays some minute incomprehensible part) is the mobile element, which soon disappears from his sight and from his experience. The mural painters work according to a division of labor akin to that of the medieval craft, with an altogether modern emphasis on speed. The Trazador traces the outlines of the letters (or image) with a sure and practiced hand, never faltering even on the huge scale of eight to ten feet high. His is the most difficult role, the one to which each brigadista aspires. Then comes the Relenador, the man who fills in the letters; then the Fondeador, who adds the background. To these three principal roles are joined, as the design requires, that of the Filetador, who adds thin outlines or contours, and the Retocador, who touches up. The paint used is cheap house paint with a caseine base, which does not weather as well as the more expensive oil paints; much time is necessary spent in repairing old murals.

The work is fast, dirty, and rough. The wall surface itself is usually rough, with relief variations in the cement and stone of up to two and three inches,

necessitating jabbing, thrusting and screwing, as well as stroking with the brush. The Brigade cannot afford the expense of a spray-gun and spray paint, which would be ideal for this kind of surface. To reach the top of the design one has to stand on tiptoe; to deal with the bottom, one crouches, splashing grass and ground as well. Getting dirty seems to be sensed as part of the game; in this context, it makes the school-kids feel like manual workers, identifying, in their begrimed faces and helmets, with the "truest" Chilean worker, the miner. As they work shoulder to shoulder, weaving in and out, meshing their gestures, the joy and energy of their team-work expresses the very spirit of the message they paint. Participating in the great march, 800,000 strong, in celebration of the second anniversary of the electoral triumph, I observed the RPB truck suddenly pull up apparently out of nowhere, and disgorge its dozen guerrillas, who launched themselves, amidst a cheering crowd, against an enemy position: the wall opposite the neo-fascist Patria y Libertad offices. In a moment, the insectoid crypto-swastika PL symbol was covered over with a pro-government slogan.

### WORDS AND IMAGES

The verbal slogans of the RPB are always basic but they are of differing kinds. Commonest of all is the phrase which has become the RPB motto: LUCHAR, TRABAJAR, ESTUDIAR PARA LA PATRIA Y LA REVOLUCION (struggle, work, study for the fatherland and the revolution). The straight newspaper headline: Y SE NACIONALISARON LAS MINAS (and the mines were nationalized); or the promise for the future: Y HABRA TRABAJOS PARA TODOS (and there will be work for all) appear in lapidary monumentality, as does the verse from Pablo Neruda, who has been absorbed into the national consciousness: ME HAS DADO LA PATRIA COMO UN NACIMIENTO (you have given me the fatherland like a birth). The phrase LOS NIÑOS NACEN PARA SER FELICES (children are born to be happy) was the invention, it seems, of an eleven-year-old working with the Brigades. Anti-US slogans are in a minority (LIBERTAD PARA ANGELA DAVIS, NIXON<sup>4</sup> ASESINO). The RPB believe they have turned the streets into "las pizarras del pueblo," the chalkboards of the people. Amongst other things, those immense slogans may be considered a new incentive to literacy, for an illiterate peasant with any consciousness of his cultural deprivation can hardly pass daily by those huge letters without eventually learning to decipher their meaning.

Immediately after the election of Allende the RPB added images to their slogans. They painted their first pictorial mural two days after the day of victory. Whereas previously the task was to proclaim a name or a party, they now aim to express the programs, ideas, and spirit of the Popular Government — the revolutionary process itself. Illustrating the slogans and using pictorial designs on their own, the RPB can convey a richer message in an immediately

4. Usually in the international Left spelling of a swastika replacing the "x".

5. It should be noted however that there is in Chile, unlike Mexico, virtually no indigenous artistic tradition upon which to draw.

appealing form. The Brigades would not have grown so phenomenally over the last two years (150 spread over the whole of Chile), and come to command the respect of Chileans of all kinds, had they not found a form of imagery which could be understood and accepted by all classes, and relatively easily duplicated by fledgling brigades.

At first, they worked with designs which they subsequently decided were too abstract. To reach the artistically uneducated, they draw upon an archetypal symbology, a language of the simplest and most universal images, suggestive of peace, work, and collective strength: doves, flowers, hands, fists, faces, flags, stars, an ear of corn, a factory chimney — a hammer, a sickle (and of course a hammer-and-sickle which seems, in this context, so much more than a mere political symbol). In their use of symbolism, rather than "social-realist illustration," the Brigades have confirmed what the Cuban poster-artists were asserting in the late '60s: untutored people can and will respond to symbolic art.

We may illustrate the style with one of the great creations so far, the Rio Mapocho mural, done in 1971. The work of 30 workers over 15 days, this mural is said to represent the history of Chile from the days of Recabarren onwards. It is a wave of colors and forms ten feet high and four hundred feet long, rolling from bridge to bridge, along the Mapocho, a river whose cement bed and otherwise monotonous stone walls cut Santiago down the middle. Digital flags point, people gesticulate expectantly, star-studded, green-fingered hands reach outwards to grasp a stanza from Neruda. Factory workers behind chimney-smoke banners, an urgent head generates a huge fist grasping a flag, which generates an even huger gesture enclosing a head, all reaching for verses of the Nobel poet. Wrench-headed, wrench-handed miners surge from behind a hammer and sickle, point to a figure with bowed head and vast yellow grasp. Possession? Then a distant street, heads, clustered like an ear of corn. Yellow paragraph, pink (pop-art?) mouth, defenseless white hands, shaded eyes, the Chilean flag, gun broken with a NO. Miner fighting nature, offering the fruit of his struggle, copper. More fists of revolt, copper, hammer and sickle. Sea-shore, earth, machinery cogs, factory, village, forest, wheels, waves, fists, stars, biomorphs, 50 (years of the Communists Party), creation, peace, Tree of Life, RPB.

The imagery seems to be of hybrid origin: besides the obvious debt to Picasso and the European poster tradition, there are evident references to Rivera and especially Siqueiros, and via them, perhaps, back to pre-Columbian art.<sup>5</sup> (One of Siquieros' best murals may be seen in the library of the Escuela Mexicana in Chillan, Chile.) The RPB work has something of the heroic scale of the great Mexican murals, if not their sophistication, something of their symbolic strength if not their emotional range. (They also realize an ambition of Siqueiros, never realized by that artist, that is, the creation of a work of art "legible" by a spectator passing at a speed of 60 m.p.h.)

But there is a difference: the Mexicans created works of art intended to last, whereas the art of the RPB is essentially expendable in the sense that it is intended to be immediately functional. The brigad-

istas and their sympathizers call this work "contingent art," meaning that it lives and dies with the particular social circumstances which called it into being. It may be painted over, as those circumstances change, or it may be left to deteriorate in the wind and rain. The murals of the RPB are not ephemeral in the consumerist sense, luxuries discarded because obsolete or used up, but ephemeral like essential foodstuff: not seeking to create Art, the RPB provide a political food in artistic form which is drawn into the social body, so that it may grow.

The RPB mural may not last forever, but is able while it lasts to reach out almost infinitely into space. The interior walls painted by the Mexicans fill only the space those walls enclose. It is an architecturally conditioned space. The exterior walls painted by the RPB fill a space limited by the physiology of the eye, not the whim of an architect. The 400-foot Rio Mapocho mural can be seen from almost a mile off. Closer to it, one can recognize another dimension of its essential "murality": the forms echo and exploit the shape and even the texture of the rough stone with which the wall was built.

The Mexican muralists claimed in their manifestos and tried in their practice to work as a collective, in relative anonymity. Yet their murals are without exception essentially individual conceptions, executed (and signed) by a small group, usually working directly under the command of a single exceptional artist. The only signature on the Chilean murals is the initials RPB, sometimes followed by the letters JJCC (Communist Youth), the family name. Even the really outstanding designs — those of the Rio Mapocho, near the State Technical University, and in Quilloto — are presented as the result of a collective artistic effort.

Dare one ask whether these works are in fact the conception of an individual mind and eye? If not, how

6. Adapted from the transcription in Ernesto Saul, *Pintura Social en Chile*, Colección Nosotros Los Chileños, Empresa Editora Nacional Quimantú, Santiago 1972, p. 89. This useful work is chiefly concerned with the realistic murals of the postwar era.



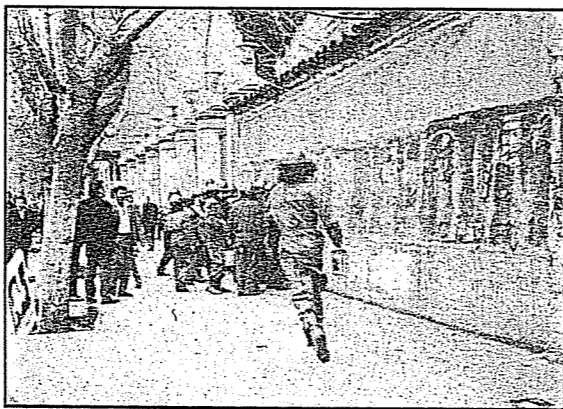
Mural by the Ramona Parra Brigades, "And There Shall Be Work For All". Under the Popular Unity Government, unemployment fell sharply and real wages for the working class rose. On 3 September 1972, the second anniversary of Allende's electoral triumph, while a million supporters

are they conceived? As individual critics, and as purveyors of an individualist form of criticism, it is hard for us to imagine what "collective design" really means. We may not believe it to be truly possible. We can, it is true, understand that the "master" may wish to conceal his name behind that of his group, but we cannot conceive of there being no master, especially if the design is strong and *original*, i.e., individual.

Could there be "masters" behind every Brigade? To insist upon an answer to this question would be to misunderstand the kind of art we are confronted with. In the course of my many conversations with the administrative chief of the Santiago central Brigade, I never received any hint whatsoever that he was a leader except in an administrative sense. And while I never put the questions out loud to any member of the brigade, one of the younger ones, noting my particular admiration for a huge canvas depicting the monstrous machine of US imperialism, which had formed the *clou* of an exhibit of patriotic art held in the Museum of Contemporary Art, confided, almost in a whisper, but with audible pride, "*Es la obra de Mono*" (it is the work of Mono).

There is an internationally famous artist who is Chilean by birth: Roberto Matta, born in Santiago in 1912, living in Paris and Italy since 1933, an important surrealist painter. Detached from the mother-country which could not support this kind of art, he nevertheless followed political events closely, and returned to Chile in order to affirm his solidarity with Allende's new government. In November 1971 he addressed the students of the Fine Arts School: "Now I have tried to ennoble the materials which seemed vulgar, like mud, for instance...let us paint in brigades using primary colors, big brushes, on the houses of peasants, on factories. This is what the Brigades have done, with their almost adolescent art."<sup>6</sup>

The veteran artist joined the adolescent workers of the Brigades. Together, they painted a swimming-pool in La Granja, a working class suburb of Santiago. The mural is signed RPB, but the design is unmistakably Matta's: absurd little figurines, all arms and legs knotted into and growing out of each other;



marched through Santiago, a brigade of Ramona Parra militants launched themselves onto a wall, where in a few minutes they painted over the swastikoid symbol of the Fatherland and Liberty group (a semi-fascist, CIA-sponsored terrorist group), and replaced it with Popular Unity symbolism.

comic, and somewhat obscene, and very self-conscious gnomes left stranded by the receding waters of the unconscious.

Matta and the Brigades do appear to represent incompatible elements: the great individualist; dealing with intensely personal imagery,<sup>7</sup> and the collective of worker-painters, dealing with strictly social imagery. United in the substance of their political beliefs, they share no common ground in the form of their expression. "A vencer," cry one couple in the La Granja mural, in a bizarre embrace celebrating a victory which might be either sexual or political or both. "Corre que te pillo" (run so that I can catch you) cry another pair of anthropomorphic worms, playfully, creatively. Dare one say this sentiment epitomizes 20th-century art, in which Matta has stood "in the mainstream," and which has been running frantically in all directions, hoping that maybe the public would catch up with it. It has not stopped to catch its breath, or to decide where to run; it has not looked behind to see whether anyone has been following.

The Ramona Parra Brigades lead only where they can be followed.

## Armed Forces Movement

### GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION CAMPAIGN

(Portugal, 1975)

At the risk of shirking the responsibilities which are demanded by the historic moment, it must be recognized that the Armed Forces cannot avoid encountering the Portuguese people. It must do so to clarify the reasons which led to the 25 April; denounce the inaptitude of the former government; and by means of a cultural campaign, awaken the Portuguese people to the advantages of an associative life.

To do so, the Cultural Dynamization and Civic Enlightenment campaign has emerged. In extending itself throughout the country, it has taken advantage of the existence of military bases which have mobilized their units for the campaign.

#### 2000 ENLIGHTENMENT MEETINGS

Two thousand meetings have been held during this campaign. Parallel to this continuous effort made by units attached to the military bases, other more specific operations were carried out to reinforce the campaign. In the Guarda and Castelo Branco regions there were military teams composed of the three branches of the Armed Forces; in the Northeast, the Eleventh Command Battalion took charge of operations; and in Minho, there was the Parachutist Regiment and the Third Air Base Regiment, along with the Fusiliers. At the Crystal Palace in Porto, an important cultural weekend was organized by the Regional Commission, and another similar campaign is planned for the Azores Islands. Still another series is planned in Ribeirinhas, so that the Navy can be in contact with its population.

For the emigrant communities, so long neglected, meetings will be taking place in France, and others are planned in England, Switzerland and West Germany in the near future. Visits are likely in other countries where Portuguese are working.

#### THE CAMPAIGN AND THE PARTIES

One of the primary objectives of this campaign was the coordination and support of all cultural associations that in any way were able to survive the fascist aggressions against the intelligence, and to attempt to revitalize a popular culture free from a Lisbon or folkloric orientation.

This text was first published in the *Boletim Informativo das Forças Armadas* (Lisbon), 12, 11 March 1975. It was translated from the Portuguese by Nelson Traquina and Seth Siegelau. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

7. Much of Matta's painting in recent years has, however, carried plainspoken political connotation, which may be discerned in such a series-title as "Desastres del Imperialismo Americano."

Did the methods of cultural animation used in this campaign correspond to the desired objectives? This question is difficult to answer. Being given the economically fragile character of many regions of the country, the methods used could not produce immediate results, as such exhibitions mean little. However, there are many concrete cases which show that something was accomplished, as in the revival of cinema clubs, music bands, theatre groups, cultural centres, etc.

Of course, there was no pretense that culture was being brought in. What was sought was the creation of a will to do something, to open new paths, to recall the creative potential of the Portuguese people.

Another important objective was to open the way for the political parties. We know that political discussions were not a permitted practice during the fascist regime. Subtle propaganda had gradually turned the Portuguese people away from the political parties that fought clandestinely and phantoms were created; they exist today, making a healthy exchange of opinions practically impossible.

We came upon certain regions where the political parties lack cadres, and being more concerned with electoral struggles, as a result are incapable of providing the kind of objective enlightenment needed to counteract the political disinformation of our people.

It is necessary that we examine why certain parties have attacked the Cultural Dynamization and Civic Enlightenment campaign.

Some parties use local personalities to look after the diffusion of their ideology. At some meetings, the importance or actions of these individuals was diminished or unmasked. Undoubtedly, some feel uneasy and see their privileges in danger when the population, encouraged by the Armed Forces' presence, feels it is capable of speaking out. It is clear that in this situation, often-founded distortion and criticism arise due to our errors. But, we do not follow any model for the simple reason that we have no model. In fact, the intentions and actions of this campaign reflect our own mentality, a Portuguese

humanism, which doesn't lack a certain idealism. We believe it is a national contribution to the cause of Peace and Democracy.

**THE INFORMATION THAT DIDN'T ARRIVE**

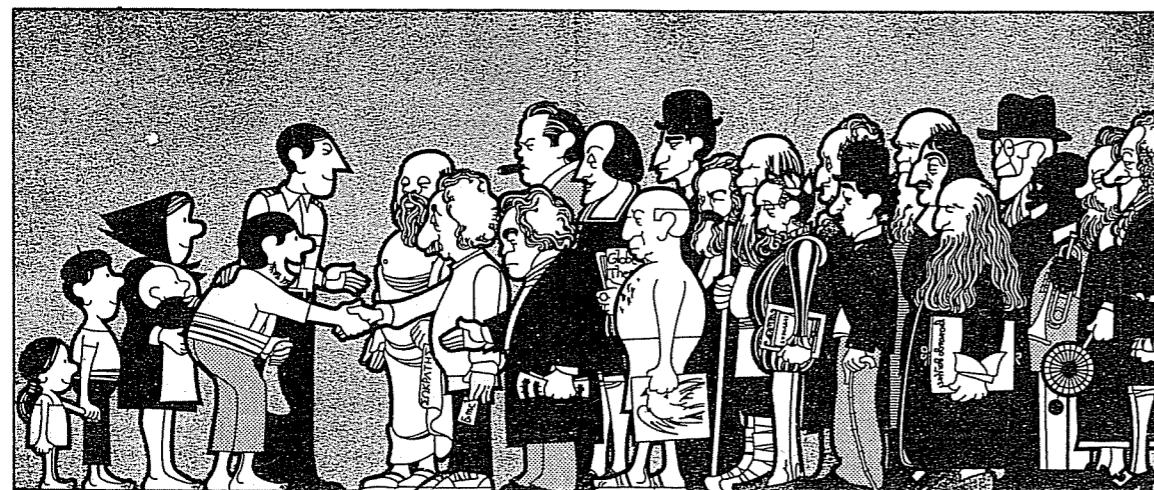
The inclusion of civilian members in the Dynamization Commissions was motivated by the desire to increase the prestige of State agencies, political parties and civilian associations. However, their presence did not live up to expectations. In some cases, there was the infiltration of opportunists, in others, the quality of their collaboration did not justify their inclusion. In any case, we cannot invent a people, and the faults observed reflect our society's contradictions. What cannot be denied is the general value of their collaboration, not only on technical matters but also on political and cultural ones. Thus, the intended objectives were in this area satisfactorily realized.

In analyzing the results of this campaign, one thing stands out immediately: fascism has left profound scars that are deeper than we imagined.

The political distortion of the population can be explained by the enormous lack of information; some small towns can only be reached by the National Radio Station, and even then, only a few people have access to it. For this reason, a large number of Portuguese still live in a situation of economic, political and religious dependency on those who have always hidden away the means of political consciousness. The transformation of structures, the confidence which was transmitted, was something that will remain in the spirit of those Portuguese who came into contact with the Armed Forces.

**THE URGENCY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS UNCOVERED**

We came upon areas where there exists a clear state of under-development. There are basic shortages of housing, streets, electricity, water, sewers, schools and health facilities. The immediate consequences of this lack was that gradually the information meetings were transformed into sessions where the local population presented their grievances, giving



Cartoon about the Cultural Dynamization Campaign, 1975 (by Joao Abel Manta, from Joao Abel Manta:

Cartoons 69/75, Lisbon, Edicoes O Jornal, 1975).

the Armed Forces the impression that it was urgent to answer their questions. Thus the Armed Forces engaged to undertake yet another step that we will speak of today: the Armed Forces' civic action campaign.

The communication media has tried to give this campaign ample coverage. On the international level, interest is widespread, though there is a certain perplexity and anticipation. On the national level, some individuals do not seem to have understood the basic objectives of the campaign. The correct use of certain media, like television and part of the press, has also not been up to their potential; elsewhere, some radio stations have tried to give objective coverage; and some coverage has stressed the strong action of the SIPFA [the Armed Forces Information and Propaganda Section].

**THE BALANCE SHEET: POSITIVE ASPECTS . . .**

If we were to give an overall evaluation of the work achieved, we would underline these very position aspects: the contact between the Armed Forces and the people; the effort made to advance towards a political overture; and the collective "consciousness raising" of the authentic country. All that was learnt. Other positive aspects were the experience gained by the military; the conviction that it is possible to democratize via dialogue; the information gathered in our study throughout the country which we will pass on to the Stage agencies; and finally, the impulse given to accomplish future actions.

**. . . AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

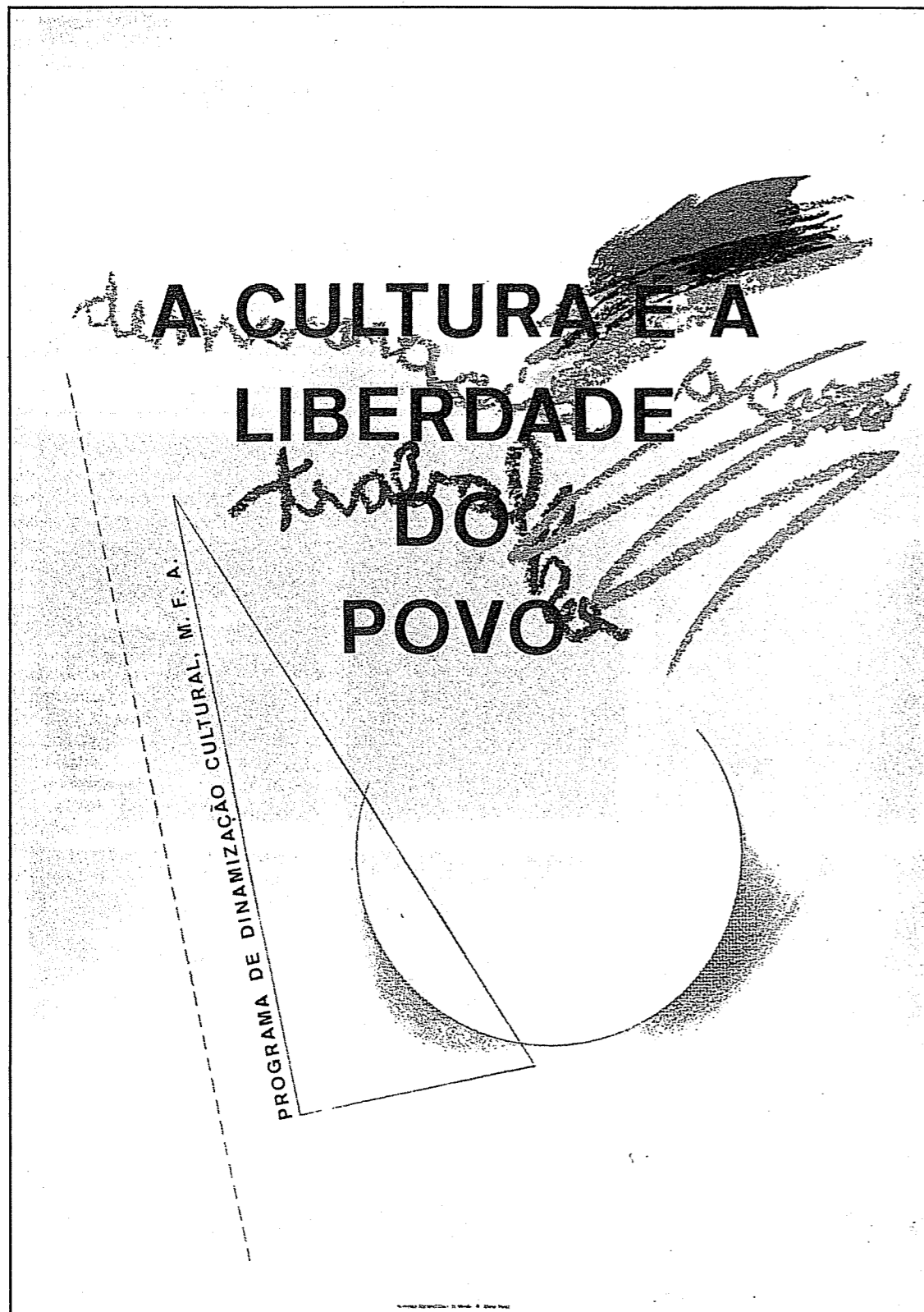
However, certain negative aspects must be pointed out. Certain errors were committed. We used a language that indicates our lack of preparation, political immaturity and insufficient under-



DINAMIZAÇÃO CULTURAL • ACÇÃO CÍVICA

Armed Forces Movement, Cultural Dynamization-Civic Action poster warning against the spreading of

rumours by reactionary forces, 1975.



Armed Forces Movement, Cultural Dynamization poster "Culture Is the Freedom of the People", 1975.

standing of local problems. This helped create a state of unrest which was exploited by reactionary elements who used parts of our speeches that seemed most convenient for their purposes, emphasizing statements that upset or attacked the population. However, it is necessary to use clear language to overcome people's lack of understanding or reservations. It should be noted here too that our non-partisan stand is not meant to be inoffensive, nor does it reflect a political *naiveté* since, the language used needed to be revolutionary to correspond to the historic moment.

Other aspects that can be considered negative are that the normally massive audiences made communication difficult for animated media such as the theatre; the holding of meetings could not be continued, thus permitting a rapid recuperation of them by those interested in maintaining the *status quo*; the unfulfilled expectations created by some verbal promises made at the meetings which could not be satisfied in the near future; and finally, the errors committed due to a poor evaluation of local conditions.

However, one should not overestimate the objectives of this campaign. By dynamization we mean to help to follow a road; to support that which was watered down; to assist that which was dispersed and had a common interest; to aid materially whenever that could resolve small dilemmas; and above all, to awaken the people to the spirit of national reconstruction.

It is too early to evaluate the results obtained. However, it is clear that they will not be spectacular.

Despite the great deal of improvisation that accompanied the impulse and development of the campaign, which could only advance after the 28 September, the net result can be considered positive.

Of course, we recognize that due to the scale and responsibility of this campaign, improvisation should now give way to an organized structure where answers can be given to the urgent problems posed. Our revolutionary coherence demands this of us.



Armed Forces Movement poster, "MFA, the People; the People, MFA", 1974.

## Portuguese Communist Party Cell of the Portuguese State Radio-Television [RTP]

### FOR A TELEVISION IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE

(Portugal, March 1975)

The defence of democracy demands the complete carrying through of the clean-up operation which is indispensable if all nests of fascist and reactionary resistance, whether active or passive, are to be removed from the state apparatus; services re-organised and an energetic and adequate administration created which will be dedicated to the cause of democracy.

*Communique,*  
Central Committee of the  
Portuguese Communist Party [PCP],  
26 January 1975

With the events of 25 April, Portugal set out on a road which will lead to a future of progress and social justice.

In a short space of time the victories of the Portuguese People were reinforced, while through their mass organisations, the indestructible unity of the popular masses and the Armed Forces, the guarantors of the irreversible advance of the revolutionary process, is increasingly being consolidated.

With censorship abolished, and freedom of information guaranteed, the mass media can now bring before the People the whole of the political, social and cultural activity of the country, and of the world.

Combined with its enormous power of penetration among the masses, this opportunity places enormous responsibilities on the television system with regard to its formative-informative mission.

Through the programmes it transmitted, the RTP [Radiotevisão Portuguesa] was, from its creation, a powerful support for the obscurantist and repressive policies of fascism. We may even affirm that the television service served fascism better than it has so far served democracy.

At the same time, many of the workers in RTP saw their energies used in the service of a television system which had become simply a machine for brutalisation, denying them any degree of participation, enthusiasm or professional dignity, and provoking in them a sense of frustration which even today prevails in their working relations and regarding the quality of the service they are called upon to provide.

This text was first published as a pamphlet as *Por uma televisão ao serviço do povo*, Lisbon: Portuguese Communist Party, March 1975. It was translated from the Portuguese by Phil Gunson. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

The workers were (and are) deliberately and artificially dispersed between many different unions and geographical locations. In Lisbon alone there are fourteen different places of work, and it is thus understandable that RTP workers neither know each other, mix socially nor exchange experiences. Working in precarious conditions, and lacking modern and efficient facilities, they always knew that the RTP operated from the very top downwards on the basis of corruption and the peddling of favours. In recruitment and promotion, more attention was paid to political affiliations and personal influence than to the technical competence or professional qualifications of the many who saw themselves pushed aside by the old-boy network.

The record of the television service in the period since 25 April can hardly be said to be positive. With rare, and recent, exceptions, RTP has not pursued the most significant developments in the overall evolution of the Portuguese political situation, nor has it followed the revolutionary process as it should have. It often trails behind current events, failing to anticipate the speculation which may arise among the public concerning some of these events, or to provide a scientific perspective in its treatment of them. Particular factors giving rise to anxiety are overemphasised, while important stabilising factors and political advances are ignored or overlooked. On other occasions, either through negligence, incompetence, or, what is worse, because it acts as mouth-piece for sectarianism and unjustified alarmism, RTP does not communicate to the viewing public the clear confidence in the future which is justified by the trajectory of the Portuguese revolution until now.

Moreover, there is instability at the highest decision-making levels in the company (in the four distinct sections of the Administration): in the successive arrival of consultants, advisers and other administration specialists charged with the long-term structuring of what should already be functioning properly (and creating in some cases an artificial extension of the administrative bodies themselves), and in the successive removals and replacements of those in charge of programmes. This not only causes insecurity, but also shows that the qualitative transformations brought about by the revolutionary process have not been reflected in the RTP. On the contrary, it is the setbacks in this process, rather than its advances, which have been most deeply felt in the restructuring and day-to-day running of the company.

As regards *programming*, after an initial phase in which subjects considered "untouchable" under fascism were dealt with, and in which frank conviviality and creative enthusiasm allowed the Nation to be shown a genuine image of itself which urged the carrying through to fruition of newly-won liberties—a phase which corresponded to the period of the Military Administrative Commission—the RTP progressively lost its revolutionary inclinations, little by little, falling captive to bureaucratised and rigid schemas, and to the resurgence of themes which by now belonged to the past (violence, the cult of the hero and of individualism, pompous erudition both in language and in subject matter; idiotic "entertainment", etc.).

As has happened in many other parts of the State apparatus, also because of the lack of appropriate legislation, the "clean-up operation" ("saneamento") is proceeding slowly and has yet to be completed. Even today, those personnel removed immediately after 25 April are receiving salaries (some of them very high salaries), and even their allowances and bonuses for "special" duties.

The reorganisation of the departments and the renewal of technical and human resources, has not been planned nor given priority as they should have been.

The workers have a sketchy knowledge of the details of the company's economic situation, which in financial terms is far from brilliant and, it is to be feared, is likely to worsen still more.

Instead of taking decisive steps towards the construction of a modest but more efficient television service, in which full and integrated use would be made of the available resources, those responsible are resorting, almost systematically, to external programming (both national and foreign), with little regard to cost or to the appropriateness of such programmes to the realities of our country. Noteworthy also is their intention of imitating "what they do over there"—namely the procedures of the television services of bourgeois Europe, when we lack the technical means to do such things, and the country we want to build is so different.

As the Communiqué of the Central Committee of the PCP of 26 January 1975 rightly points out, "the democratic course taken since 25 April has already demonstrated the originality of the Portuguese revolution. In original situations, original solutions will be required." Portuguese television cannot limit itself to copying mechanically the organisational and programming models deployed by foreign television stations. What it must do is to find solutions appropriate to the specific conditions prevailing here, and to the special characteristics of the Portuguese revolution.

The communist workers of RTP, conscious of this fact, wish to propose to their colleagues certain suggestions as to the way forward, aims and objectives of the transformations which must be carried out.

The proposals which are set out here in general terms are not recipes, nor rigid principles, but a project for dialogue among all of us, the first step towards a period of collective reflection which will only be truly fruitful if everyone makes a contribution. This is the way to find the most appropriate solutions, which in turn will determine the shape of a new kind of television—the television which the Portuguese revolution demands.

The communist workers of RTP know that it is in the common work and action of all workers that unity will be forged, along with the ability to construct a television network which serves the interests of the Portuguese Nation and People—a television service in which, finally, everyone will find professional satisfaction.

#### FOR A TELEVISION NETWORK AT THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE

The violence and arbitrary rule which character-

ised the dictatorship, were reflected in the two fundamental aspects of fascist television; corruption and anarchy. Fascist violence had its counterpart in a corrupt television service: arbitrary fascist rule had its counterpart in an anarchic television service.

The elimination of the residues of fascism in the RTP, and the construction of a democratic television service, must, therefore, be achieved through the complete elimination of corruption and anarchy.

The most important tasks within the RTP at present are to complete the clean-up operation and the reorganisation of the departments, and to introduce energetic and positive programming, aimed genuinely at the continuing enlightenment of the Portuguese people.

#### I. The Clean-up Operation

1. The struggle that anti-fascist workers of the RTP had to wage before the present Clean-up and Reclassification Commission was set up was a clear indication of the difficulties involved in this task. The clean-up process, which began late, must be completed as soon as possible.

2. A fair and correct, though determined and revolutionary, purge of personnel will have to deal, as a priority, with those who held most direct responsibility and had the most obvious links with the fascist regime: namely, those who were suspended by the Military Administrative Commission immediately after 25 April.

3. The degree of political commitment to the previous regime must be considered, and realistic thought given to the possibility of reclassifying certain staff who have given clear proof of adaptation to the new democratic regime brought about by the Armed Forces Movement. On the other hand, there can be no concessions in the case of those who have engaged, either openly or secretly, in acts of sabotage against the revolutionary process.

4. Reclassification should be extended to those RTP staff who, because of evident incompetence, would be more usefully employed in other tasks.

5. The purging and reclassification of RTP staff is a top priority in the necessary and urgent reorganisation of the company.

#### II. Reorganisation

1. The partial "restructuring" by department which we have seen since 25 April must be resisted, since these operations are more or less spontaneous, preferential, or uncoordinated, and thus do not meet the requirements for an overall reorganisation of the RTP.

2. The RTP performs two different functions: on the one hand, broadcasting programmes, and on the other, producing programmes. These two functions must complement one another without becoming confused or hindering one another.

3. In the present situation, the activities of our television service must be extremely economical, even austere. The reorganisation process will, therefore, have to be as simple and as functional as possible. To this end, it is essential to do away completely with certain tendencies towards "autonomisation" of different departments, which would only lead to the splitting-up (and even the disman-

ting) of the RTP, a characteristic legacy of bodies set up under fascism.

4. Also to be resisted, particularly in the production department, is the excessive proliferation of sub-departments, which has only led to the duplication of efforts, to certain forms of internal "concurrence", which have nothing to do with genuine emulation, and, more often than not, to the repetition of identical themes in different programmes, producing saturation and dispersal of the audience.

5. The (occasionally) public procedures for filling posts, as well as certain rules contained in internal regulations concerning the employment of new workers, tend to give expression to concepts open to arbitrary interpretation, such as "impartiality" and "pluralism", and to preventing allegations against, and supposed "attacks" on, the decision-making bodies of the RTP. Furthermore, these procedures also reveal a conservative, technocratic and paralysing viewpoint which does nothing to contribute to the building of a television service committed to the revolutionary process. In practice, they have proved themselves ineffectual, since despite having been put into practice months ago, their results have yet to be announced.

In fact, any such attacks, may be said to have been objectively made possible, or at least left unopposed, by key programming departments with important repercussions on the political and general enlightenment of the public. By coincidence, these very departments have still not felt themselves to be ready for opening up to new applicants.

6. Thus, the overall reorganisation of the RTP and the filling of jobs, the promotions process and the filling of posts in different departments of the company, at all levels, must be carried out exclusively on the basis of competence and of recognised anti-fascist commitment—regardless of political views—in the professional and political activities of RTP workers, as well as of those to be appointed from outside and external freelance collaborators.

7. The individualism typical of the bourgeois mentality, and the arbitrary authoritarianism characteristic of fascism, generated everywhere, including within the RTP, an absence of *method*. The structural reorganisation of the RTP will be of no value without a complete transformation of working methods. It is also essential that workers be able to up-grade skills to the limit of his/her individual capacity, through adequate systems of permanent professional training and retraining.

8. One of the most important aspects of the reorganisation of the RTP is the need for the company to be technically re-equipped. At a time when, following the victorious 25 April Revolution, Portugal is establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with all countries, regardless of their socio-political regime, the communist workers of the RTP believe it would be advantageous to establish contacts with socialist countries with a view to acquiring specialised, modern and efficient technical equipment at what are, without doubt, very favourable prices.

9. Finally, the stance already adopted publicly by some groups, including the RTP Administration



itself, in favour of the introduction of an "Autonomous Statute" for the company, should be viewed with the greatest reservations.

To defend the RTP's independence from the Government at this stage of Portuguese political life is to seek to divert the television service from its unique role in the revolutionary process. Objectively, such an aim would signify the desire to set the RTP against this process, opposing the revolutionary television service with a "neutral", "impartial" television, which in the final analysis would be bourgeois and conservative, which was certainly not the objective of the team which took it over.

This is not to say that the RTP should not be the vehicle for progressive public opinion which, guided by a correct perspective on events, would raise its voice in order to point out clearly, without demagoguery or irresponsible infantilism, the errors, hesitations and open or secret boycotts carried out by those state sectors engaged in blocking the advance of the revolutionary process.

The communist workers of the RTP have defended what was a thought-out and consistent intervention in the company by the Armed Forces Movement [AFM] and the Provisional Government, believing it to be inherently necessary to the revolutionary process in which the country is involved.

Close and loyal collaboration with the AFM and the Provisional Government, together with a complete reorganisation of the RTP along the lines we have proposed for collective discussion, will contribute greatly to the urgently-required establishment of a system of programming which is at the service of the Portuguese people, and of the supreme objectives of our young democracy.

### III. Programming

1. The RTP is an outpost of key importance in the fight for the objectives of the revolutionary alliance between the Armed Forces Movement and the popular masses. The specific characteristics of this communications medium, which reaches the most varied social groups in equal measure, bring with them serious responsibilities, particularly in the present historical period.

2. At a time when reaction, strongly supported from outside the country, is raising its head once again against the Armed Forces Movement and the progressive political forces, becoming ever more vicious in its desperation to demobilise and confuse the public, it cannot be a matter of indifference what reaches each television viewer.

3. Enlightenment and mobilisation are urgent priority tasks for RTP programming as a whole. A television service which sought to distance itself from these tasks, and remain "neutral" in the face of the fight to the death which is today taking place between progress and reaction, would objectively be placing itself at the service of the latter. It would not be a television at the service of the people.

4. TV current affairs thus has an especially important mission in defending the aims of the Provisional Government. To accompany and to defend the Government day-by-day in its progressive

actions—the exemplary fulfilment of the broad guidelines laid down in the Armed Forces Movement's Programme and the qualitative transformation of Portuguese society—must constitute a prime concern in this essential department of RTP's programming.

On the other hand, to make of the television service merely a "wailing wall" for the legacy of fascism, without stressing the important victories won by the Portuguese revolution, nor showing how 25 April has already destroyed the most sinister aspects of the previous regime, would do no service to the revolutionary period in which we live.

On the contrary, it is necessary to encourage the production of formative and informative programmes on the great victories achieved since 25 April: the overthrow of fascism and its terrorist organisations; the introduction of democratic freedoms; the end of the colonial war and the process of decolonisation: the abolition of censorship; freedom of expression and of association; the winning of the right to strike; the diplomatic achievements in the field of relations with all countries; vigilance, combativity and the victories over attempts at counter-revolution.

5. The RTP must present a balanced account of what is central and what is contingent to the reality of Portugal today. This reality is expressed most fundamentally in the exuberant political activity which is currently taking place; in the mass initiatives for unity; in the economic and political struggles of the workers in the city, in the countryside and in service industries, for better living conditions, against unemployment, and against the monopolies and big landed estates; in the growing activity of the truly-representative class organisations; and in the introduction and strengthening of the progressive political parties, and of their programmes and guiding principles. To ignore this reality is to ignore the fact that freedom is being constructed and consolidated day by day, and that it is the creative capacity of the masses, in close coordination with the Armed Forces Movement, which is pushing the revolutionary process ever onward.

6. RTP news coverage should pay attention to the objectivity with which it broadcasts the image of the country to three million viewers. Although non-partisan, it must be politically committed, that is, on the side of the Armed Forces Movement in the intransigent defence of its programme. Imbalance in the treatment of the positive and negative aspects of the political situation will contribute nothing to the informed and confident mobilisation of the Portuguese people, since it may constitute (as has unhappily, been shown on some occasions) a concession to reaction and to the latter's favourite, and most slanderous, topics of debate: anarchy, insecurity, the climate of "civil war", the danger of "military dictatorship", the threat of a "one-party State", etc. RTP news coverage must therefore be an implacable enemy of rumour and hearsay.

7. If we want the country to be provided with correct information about Portugal's situation as we have outlined, then we cannot permit foreign viewers to be treated any differently.

It is known that through "news exchanges" with Eurovision the RTP has the opportunity, and the

obligation, to transmit to the whole world a true image of the national political situation. This opportunity must be exploited, not only with regard to those items which are requested by Eurovision, but above all to those which, because they better reflect our reality, the RTP wishes to offer on its own initiative.

In this respect too we must be vigilant, putting aside all political sectarianism and mobilising all means at our disposal so as to be able to reply promptly and conclusively to all the slanders, doubts and distortions which international reaction uses against our country, in its attempts to denigrate the high reputation which the new Portugal enjoys in progressive circles throughout the world. The images of Portuguese life seen by millions of foreign viewers will determine the evaluation made by international public opinion of our democratic process. We believe it is a matter of urgency that the Armed Forces Movement and the Provisional Government should attend to the importance of this matter.

8. While it is important to present to the world a true image of our country, there are other tasks also which compete for priority in RTP's news and current affairs coverage, always with the intention of enlightening the people on what unites them, rather than on what divides them. Such tasks include: shortening the distances between the urban and rural communities; bringing the various regions of the country closer together; coming to terms with their problems; listening to the aspirations and concerns of the different social groups; teaching them to understand their differences and points of agreement.

Recent initiatives implemented responsibly by certain current affairs programmes are to be encouraged and applauded for having demonstrated the correct approach to dealing with problems of concern to the broadest possible cross-section of the population, the least-favoured classes. But these must not remain isolated examples.

Only by fulfilling these tasks will the RTP contribute to the neutralisation of attempts by former political bosses to undermine the regime, especially in those parts of the country where social, economic, political and administrative structures remain unchanged, and where fascism, obscurantism and reaction, in various guises, remain at liberty.

9. Correct and clear information on the struggles of the workers, on their successes, and on trade union activities and organisation, is of prime importance for the unity of all Portuguese workers. But this sort of information must be treated didactically, and commented on by experienced and knowledgeable trade union specialists who must of course, be appointed by the *Intersindical Nacional*.

10. The practice of bringing in specialists, which has been followed in the coverage of economic and political issues, is in itself praiseworthy, although the recruitment of such specialists has invariably reflected clear political sectarianism, particularly towards communists.

11. As for socio-political education programmes, practically everything remains to be done in the RTP. Dealing with politics on television is a task requiring careful political preparation, together with the necessary understanding of the potential of audio-visual media. Programmes should be accessi-

ble to the broad masses, and it is therefore necessary to abandon the wordy and academic style which has characterised this section of programming.

12. It is a matter of urgency to create new forms of presentation for programmes of this type, abandoning the easy (because incompetent) recourse to interviews and round tables, and establishing from the outset an attractive, mobilising and enlightening treatment of the issues through pictures and sound in which the people recognise themselves. Political programmes must serve the revolutionary objectives of the moment, never forgetting that revolutionary content cannot possess a bourgeois, reactionary form.

13. The RTP is the means of communication *par excellence* for critically dissecting, through specially produced programmes, the Salazar/Caetano regime which oppressed us for 48 years. The need for programmes which reconstruct episodes of this recent past, and evoke figures from the anti-fascist resistance, should be borne in mind.

14. The sad legacy of cultural underdevelopment left by fascism, exemplified by the high rate of illiteracy and the even higher rate of ignorance about the arts and sciences has separated vast segments of the rural, and even urban, population from their rich cultural heritage. A television service which serves the people must overcome such alienation with programmes whose subject matter and treatment are aimed at supporting the great revolutionary effort to democratise culture—an effort which involves not only the schools, but all means of expression and social communication. We need the courage to produce intentionally simple programmes, and to extend our collaboration with the Cultural Promotion Commission of the Armed Forces Movement.

15. The reactionary division between "cultural" and "entertainment" programmes can only be overcome by mobilising producers and authors to create programmes of a new type which awaken the masses to the possibility of training and perfecting their own tastes. The RTP has a particular responsibility to fill the serious gaps which exist, especially in rural areas, in the fields of theatre, cinema, music, sport and intelligent entertainment.

16. As far as programmes from abroad are concerned, particularly those carrying a bourgeois, individualist, cosmopolitan and decadent ideology which is clearly opposed to the revolutionary process we are currently experiencing, but which continue to be shown because of contracts signed before 25 April, we believe they should only be shown if accompanied by a commentary whose critical perspective is adequate to clarify their real content.

Moreover, and in spite of the urgent need to give priority to home production, it is desirable to increase the number of programmes acquired from, or exchanged with, socialist countries and the nations of the Third World. This would bring to the Portuguese people, after so many years of denigration and slander, a vision of different cultural, social and living conditions from those which they have known.

17. Finally, with the prospect before us of new advances in the revolutionary process, which emphasise the vital importance of the choices we must

make for the future of our country, the RTP cannot afford to waste precious airtime on banal and anodyne programmes. With the Constituent Assembly election scheduled for 12 April, the RTP cannot confine itself to the insertion between programmes of short announcements urging the people to vote. On the contrary, this practice should long ago have given way to a permanent campaign of cultural and civic education, and political enlightenment.

**FOR THE INDESTRUCTIBLE UNITY OF ALL THE WORKERS OF THE RTP**

Thanks to the democratic victories won since 25 April by the alliance of the working people and the Armed Forces, our youth spent in the service of the television network has not been wasted, and our efforts and sacrifices over so many years have not been in vain.

Professional dedication, the knowledge and experience acquired in exchange for our energies during those hard years of fascism, no longer serve a foreign and hostile power. They now have their best possible reward: the knowledge that we are serving the very people of whom we are a part. Such efforts and sacrifices will only have been in vain for those who either do not want, or do not know how, to contribute to the great Democratic and National Revolution whose tasks we must now confront.

It is our participation or otherwise in these tasks which defines the meaning given by each of us to his or her life as citizen and worker. But such participation cannot be confined to a vague and passive acquiescence: the contribution of each to the great task of democratisation of the country must form part of the struggle by all of us to finally crush the reaction, which still opposes us in the performance of those tasks, and which has still not been irrevocably prevented from seizing power again and taking charge once more of our lives and our work.

The issue of unity, therefore, faces all of us RTP workers. As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the PCP, Comrade Alvaro Cunhal, said at a meeting held on 21 December 1974 in Amadora:

It is only possible for unity to be maintained and consolidated on the basis of the most profound beliefs of the working classes and of the popular masses; on the basis of an acceptance not only of that which is termed the free play of democracy, but also of the acceptance of the Portuguese revolutionary process, with its own particular dynamic... Despite those who cling to unrealistic and illusory hopes of social evolution and close their eyes to reality, the truth is that this is the Portuguese revolution and nothing else.

The television service, which was one of the two main instruments of reactionary domination, continues to be one of its main targets. Monopoly capitalism and conservatism have succeeded in planting their agents in the RTP, splitting up the company, dividing us against one another, poisoning the company's programming, and corrupting our mission of information and enlightenment.

Against these manoeuvres, against all reactionary attempts to steal the television service from the people once again, let us unite our efforts with those of the Armed Forces Movement and the Provisional

Government, setting against the interests of reaction the best of our professional skills and our vigilance. And—communists and non-communists alike—let us determinedly set against them our indestructible UNITY!

**Strike Committee of the École Nationale Supérieure Des Beaux Arts**  
**PROGRAMME OF STRUGGLE**  
**(France, 15 May 1968)**

Why are we prolonging the struggle? What are we fighting against?

We are fighting against a class university, we want to organize the struggle in all the following aspects:

1. We criticize the social selection which operates at every stage of education from primary to university level, to the detriment of working class children and those of poor peasants. We want to fight the system of competitive examinations which is central to that selection.

2. We oppose the emptiness of the educational content and the pedagogical manner in which it is put over, because everything is organized so as to ensure that the system produces human beings without a critical awareness both with regard to knowledge and to social and economic reality.

3. We oppose the role which society expects intellectuals to play, along with the technocrats, as the watch-dogs in a system of bourgeois economic production, seeing to it that each man feels happy with his lot, especially if his lot is one where he is exploited.

What relevance does this opposition have for a college of painting and sculpture? It is of course for the student commissions to define this in detail, but we can say what it means so far as the architectural college is concerned:

We want to fight against the domination of education by the profession by means of the Order of Architects or other corporate bodies. We are against the system of Dons controlling the teaching program and are against the conformist ideology that results from this. The teaching of architecture should not consist of mere repetition of what the Don does until finally the pupil becomes a carbon copy of him.

We want to fight against the conditions in which

architecture is subordinated, in effect, to the interests of public or private promoters. How many architects have agreed to carry out projects such as Sarcelles, big or small? How many architects include in their specifications the conditions of the workmen on the building sites as regards their hygiene, protection and safety, and if they did so would any contractor carry out their proposals? We all know that in France there are three deaths every day in the building industry.

We want to fight the particularly conservative content of the teaching itself which contains little that is rational or scientific and in which habitual patterns of thought and personal opinions continue to take precedence over objective knowledge.

The ideology of the Prix de Rome is still very much alive!

In short, we want to be alive to the true relations between the College and society; we want to fight its class character.

We must recognize that we cannot carry out this fight alone.

We must not deceive ourselves that members of the universities will be able to set up in their faculties really autonomous bodies which are independent of the educational system of bourgeois society. It is alongside the workers, the principal victims of the process of social selection which operates throughout the educational system, that members of the university should fight. The struggle against the class university should be organically linked to the struggle of all the workers against the system of capitalist exploitation. We must therefore commit ourselves to:

— challenge the relationship which at present exists between the profession and its teaching;

— challenge the present separation of the ENSBA (École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts) from other higher education;

— refuse to operate any form of pre-selection for entry to the college;

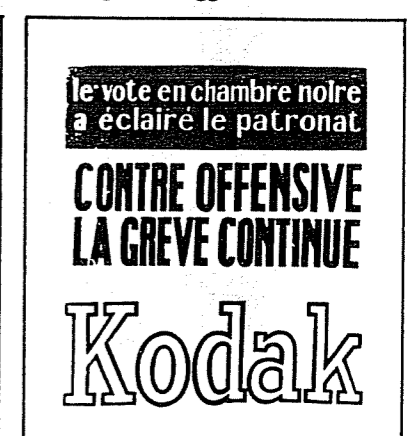
— struggle against the present system of competitive examinations;

— establish effective relationships with the workers in a common struggle.

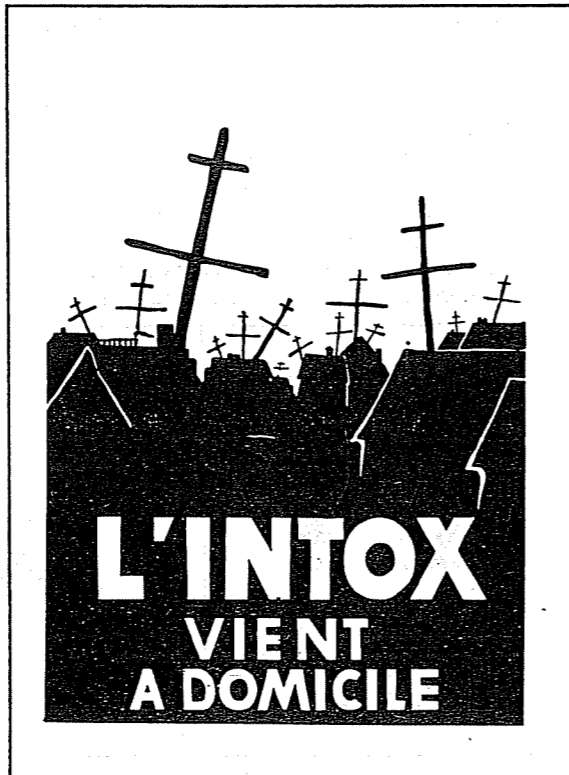
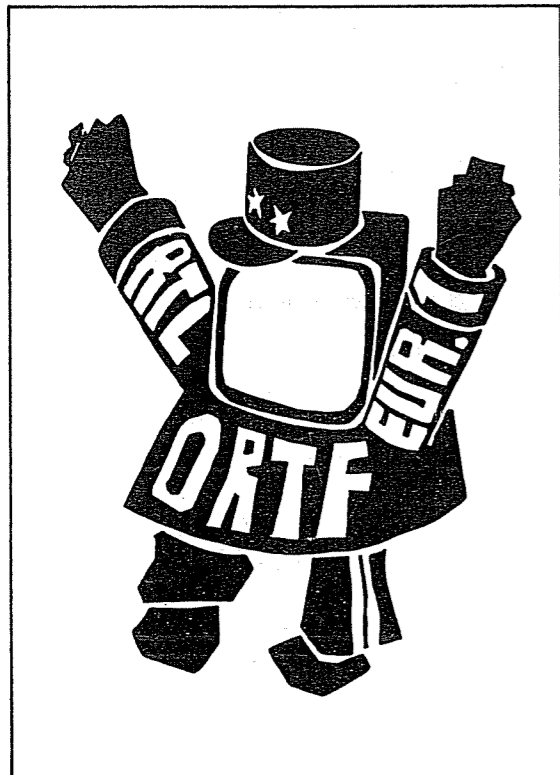
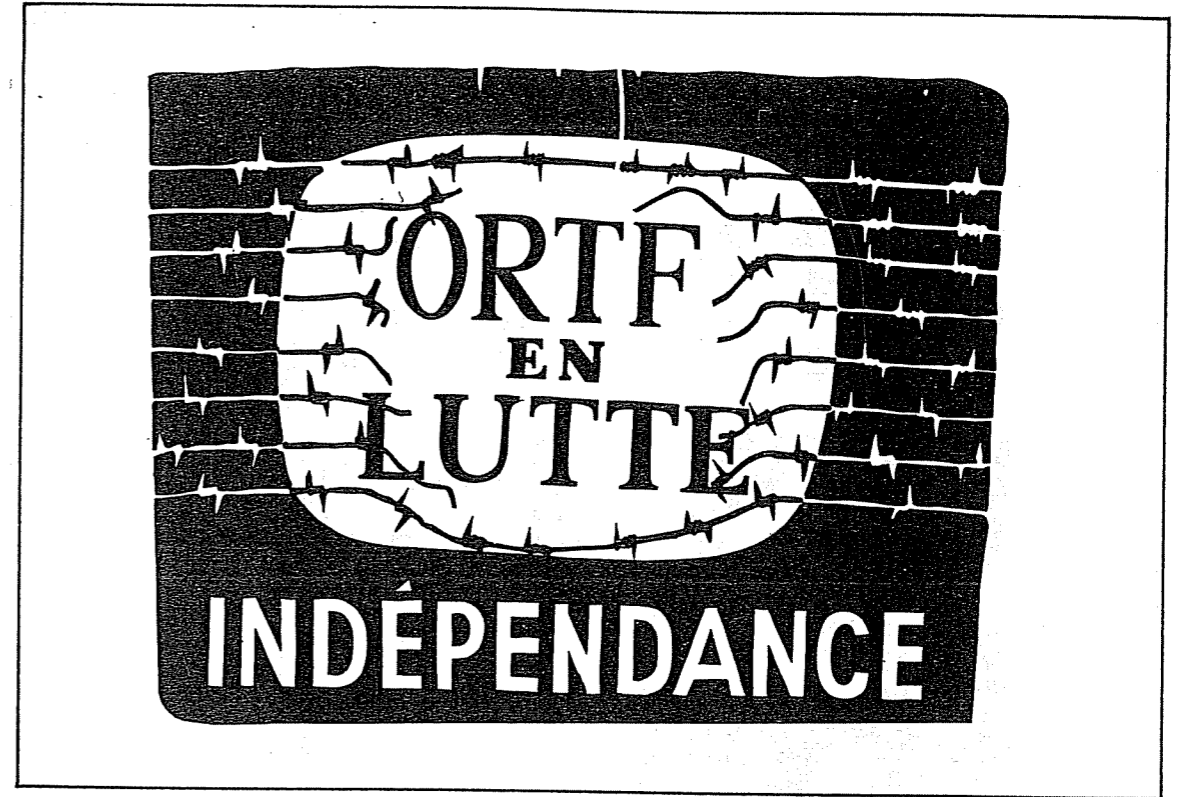
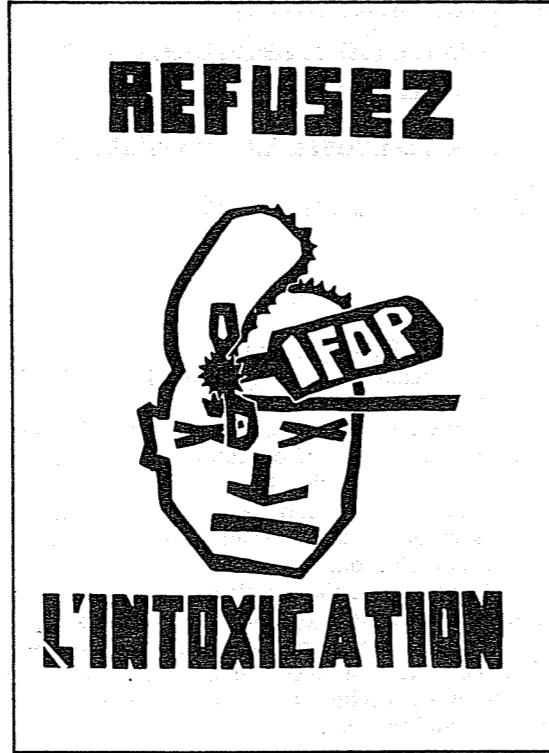
On all these questions we must have the most open debate.

All members of the teaching body must declare their position.

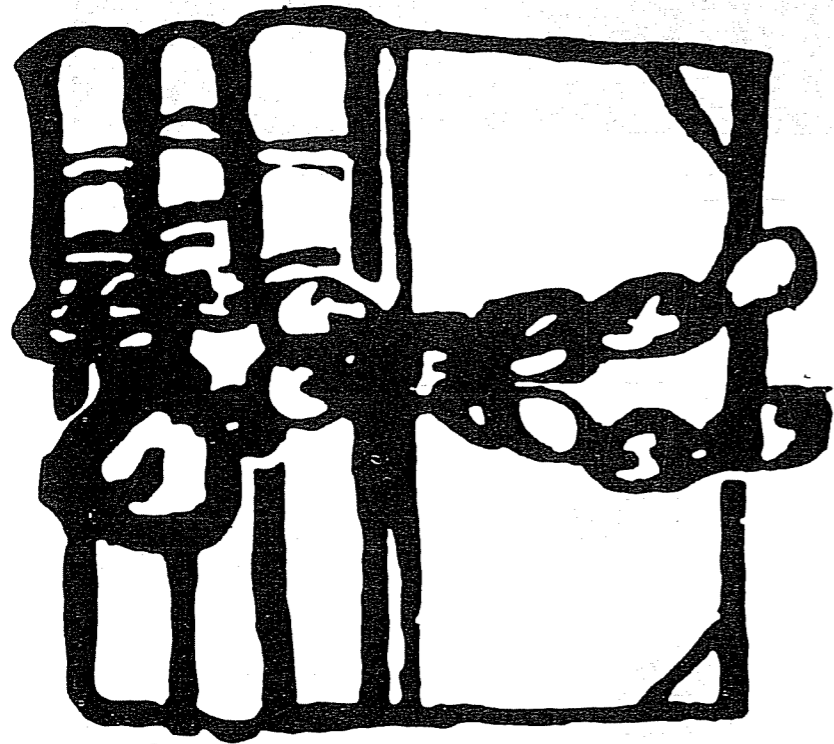
Ways of organizing the struggle must be found.



A series of wall posters from May 1968.



**DELIVREZ  
LES LIVRES**



**BIBLIOTHEQUE  
NATIONALE**

**Directors  
of Popular Theatres  
and Cultural Centres**

**DECLARATION**

**(France, 28 May 1968)**

*The directors of popular theatres and cultural centres gathered together in permanent committee at Villeurbanne, 25 May 1968 declare:*

Up until recently, culture in France has only barely been challenged by the non-cultivated in the form of indifference, for which the cultivated, in turn, have cared little about. Here and there, at times, certain anxieties have come to light, certain efforts have been undertaken which have sought to break away from the rut of the reassuring concern for a more equal distribution of the cultural patrimony. For the simple "dissemination" of art works, even when it is embellished with a little animation, has already appeared incapable of stimulating an effective meeting between these works and the enormous number of men and women who desparately fighting to survive in the heart of our society, in many respects have felt excluded from it. Forced to participate in the production of material goods, they are deprived of the means of contributing to its very orientation. In fact, the division between people, between the excluded and all of us who, whether we like it or not, each day become more and more accomplice to their exclusion, has only worsened.

In a single blow, the students' revolt and the workers' strike has come to throw a particularly brutal light on this familiar and more-or-less admitted situation. That which some of us caught a glimpse of, without wanting to waste too much time on, has now become obvious to everyone; the transgression of events has put an end to the uncertainties of our fragile reflections. We now know, and it can no longer be ignored that the cultural division [*coupure*] is profound and covers simultaneously, a socio-economic division and a generation gap. In both cases, as far as we are concerned, it is our very attitude in respect to culture which is being radically called into question. Whatever the purity of our intentions, this attitude has appeared to a considerable number of our fellow citizens as an option chosen by the privileged in favour of a particularist, hereditary culture, i.e. bourgeois.

On the one hand, there is the *public*, our public, and it matters little whether it is actual or potential (i.e. possible to realize by means of supplementary efforts on ticket prices or the size of the advertising

This text was first presented at Villeurbanne, France in May 1968. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1981. This is its first English publication.

budget). On the other hand, there is a *non-public*, a vast humanity composed of all those with no access or chance of future access to cultural phenomenon in the form it continues to take in the vast majority of cases.

Alongside this, official education is more and more ossified and no longer offers a cultural perspective in any sense of the word; an increasing number of young people refuse to be integrated into a society which is totally incapable of giving them the least chance of becoming real adults within it.

The very function assigned to us, forces us on two levels to consider ourselves as officials in respect to an unwanted situation which we have often denounced. Nevertheless, it is one in which it is our responsibility to transform as soon as possible by using all the means at our disposition.

The first of these means, which controls the use of all the others, depends on us alone. Confronted with the radical impasse in which culture is found today, it can only be opposed with a radical attitude, if there is to be any hope of success. To the traditional concept of which we have been more-or-less victim up until now, we should substitute, without reservation or nuance, at least at first, an entirely different conception. This conception should not refer *a priori* to a pre-existing content, but should expect that it is only through coming together that a progressive definition of content can be defined in which men *recognize* themselves. For it is now very clear that any definition of culture will only be valuable or meaningful if it appears useful to those interested themselves, i.e. to the precise extent that the "non-public" can find in it the instrument it needs. What we can already take for granted is that it must, consequently, supply this non-public, among other things, with a means of breaking away from its current isolation. To leave the ghetto they must situate themselves more and more consciously in the social and historical context by continuing to liberate themselves from all sorts of mystifications which tend to make them an accessory to the real situations inflicted upon them.

This is why all efforts of a cultural nature will merely appear vain as long as they are not expressly proposed as an undertaking aimed at *politisation*. This means to continually invent for the non-public occasions for politising themselves so they can choose freely over and above the feelings of impotence or absurdity which are created by a social system in which men are practically never in a position to invent *together* their own humanity.

This is why we resolutely refuse all conceptions of culture which reduce it to a simple transmission. Not that we consider this heritage useless or questionable in itself — although without it we would perhaps not be in a position to make this radical statement today — but because we can no longer ignore that for the vast majority of our contemporaries access to this heritage passes through a recuperation which must above all put them in a position to confront and practice more and more efficiently in a world which, in any case, has not the slightest chance of being humanised without them.

It is with these people, over and beyond the public we have already reached, that our various undertakings must enable us to establish relations, and it is this urgency which must decisively reorient

our entire activity. If the word "culture" can once again be taken seriously, it is to the extent that it implies the need to effectively intervene to try to transform the present relations between men, and consequently, an active inquiry undertaken gradually and destined for everyone, i.e. an authentic *cultural action*.

We are neither students nor workers and exercise no pressure by virtue of our numbers. The only conceivable justification for our public existence and our demands rests in the very specificity of this function of establishing relationships, and in the present, clarifying the social context wherein we work. However, such a function would immediately be condemned to remain impractical if it had no means of asserting its *creativity* in all its spheres of activity. To speak of *active culture* is to speak of *permanent creation*; it invokes the very resources of an art unceasingly in the process of creating itself. In this respect it quickly becomes apparent that the theatre is a privileged form of expression among all the possible forms of expression as it is a collective human work proposed to the collectivity of men.

This is why we affirm, as the very principle of our various ventures, the necessity for a direct correlation between theatrical creation and cultural action. For the first undoubtedly needs the second to address itself more and more genuinely to the human collectivity at which it is aimed. However, the second also needs the first, to the extent that a non-mystifying dramatisation or theatricalisation of the contradictions haunting mankind can considerably encourage the raising of consciousness in a given society.

We therefore are engaged to maintain, in all cases, this dialectical link between theatrical action (or more generally, artistic action) and cultural action, so that their respective demands do not cease being enriched right up to the very contradictions which will not fail to arise between them.

Such is the only basis on which we can now envisage the continuation of our efforts. However, it still remains that the methods of application of this fundamental orientation will have to be defined in close relation with those interested themselves. This means, on the one hand, with the personnel of our respective ventures, and on the other, with different sectors of the population, the non-public (through a variety of channels which will gradually enable us to reach them), students and the already existing public.

At the degree of lucidity to which we are forced under the pressure of the most dynamic sectors of the community, is it not scandalous that at the very level of our so-called "cultural" activities the power of positive confrontation which has always been the sign of culture, is not to be found?

It is the means of this power that we must now demand in the name of everyone, if we do not want to be forced to betray or abandon the cause which has been officially confided to us.

*Consequently and practically, the directors of popular theatres and cultural centres:*

*Question* the present concept of cultural centres, judge their status impracticable, and demand that all new construction be suspended until a clear and coherent definition of these establishments can be elaborated.

*Assert* that a real cultural policy cannot be undertaken with a budget corresponding to .43% of the national budget, and the minimum ought to be on the order of 3%; with no local or regional community escaping from this rule.

*Protest* against the unjustifiable disparity between, on the one hand, the subsidising of various national establishments in Paris, and on the other, those of similar establishments in the Parisian suburbs or the regions; such a disparity calling into question the very idea of decentralisation.

*Judge* necessary the establishment of minimal financial guidelines adapted to the different categories of cultural activities subsidised by the State.

*Are concerned* about the current breaking-up of administrative responsibilities and financial means in the cultural policy of the State and local communities.

*Demand* to be represented at all deliberations concerning teaching reform, regional planning, and demand the reorganisation of the Social and Economic Council and an enlargement of its jurisdiction to include the cultural domain.

*Consider* that for the complete development of their activities, it is indispensable that the interest given to cultural problems be considerably increased in the various information media: national and regional press, State radio and television, peripheral radio stations, etc. Generally, we would like to establish with a renewed ORTF [State Radio-Television] closer and more regular links.

*Advocate* a radical reform of the different areas of art education, and are overjoyed at the spontaneous questioning currently taking place in this domain and the denunciation of the irresponsibility of private art courses.

*Stress* the urgency of including the study of children's theatre in any reflections on culture, and expect it to be financed within the framework of the Cultural Affairs budget.

*Would like to prompt* as soon as possible a general assembly of the ATAC [Technical Association for Cultural Action] in order to reconsider the function of this association, its statutes, its future and the way it is represented in dealing with the public authorities.

*Agree* to maintain between us a permanent link, and beyond the problems sketched out above, agree to study immediately the following subjects: the co-management of our enterprises; the development of permanent theatrical companies, their status and that of the drama centres; the national theatres and non-commercial tours; the concept of entertainment sites; financing; author's aid; the creation of an experimental sector; the monopoly of the Authors' Association; among other subjects.

[Signed:] Pierre Barrat, Director, Maison de la culture d'Angers; Didier Béraud, Director, Maison de la culture de Grenoble; Philippe Bonzon, Director, Maison de la culture de Nevers; Antoine Bourseiller, Director, Centre dramatique national du Sud-Est; Patrice Chéreau, Director, Théâtre de Sartrouville; Dean Dasté, Director, Comédie de Saint-Etienne; Philippe Dauchez, Artistic Director, Maison de la culture de Firminy; Pierre Debauche, Director, Théâtre des Amandiers; Henri Degoutin, Director, Jeune Théâtre populaire de Nancy;

Colette Dorsay, Director, "Productions d'aujourd'hui"; Jacques Fornier and Francis Jeanson, Directors, Théâtre de Bourgogne; Gabriel Garran, Director, Théâtre de la Commune d'Aubervilliers; Hubert Gignoux, Director, Théâtre national de Strasbourg; Robert Gilbert and Roger Planchon, Directors, Théâtre de la Cité de Villeurbanne; Georges Goubert and Guy Parigot, Directors, Maison de la culture de Rennes and the Comédie de l'Ouest; Jean Guichard, Director, Théâtre des pays de Loire; René Jauneau, Director, Maison de la culture de Thonon-les-Bains; Jacques Kraemer, Director, Théâtre populaire de Lorraine; René Lesage and Bernard Floriet, Directors, Comédie des Alpes; André Mairal, Director, Maison de la culture de Reims and the Théâtre de Champagne; Marcel-Noël Maréchal and Jean Sourbier, Director, Théâtre du Cothurne; Gabriel Monnet, Director, Maison de la culture de Bourges and the Centre dramatique national de Bourges; Bernard Mounier, Director, Maison de la culture du Havre; Marc Renaudin, Director, Maison de la culture de Longwy; Guy Rétoré, Director, Théâtre de l'Est parisien; André Reybaz, Director, Centre dramatique du Nord; Maurice Sarrazin, Director, Grenier de Toulouse; Jo Tréhard, Director, Maison de la culture de Caen and the Campagne du Théâtre de Caen; Georges Wilson, Director, Théâtre national populaire.

## Council For The Development of Community Media

### COMMUNITY MEDIA AND THE IDEOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

(Quebec, 1977)

This text has a specific origin and fulfills certain functions that we would like to clarify at the start.

The cessation of the activities of the Council for the Development of Community Media (CDCM) on 1 January 1977 could not have taken place without developing a parallel reflection clarifying this dissolution. As the organism representing, regrouping and defending the interests of Quebecan groups working in the community media sector (television and community radio, video groups and community newspapers), the CDCM was called into question by the very groups which made up its base. However, an explanation on the dissolution of the CDCM can only be consequential to the extent that it first analyses the economic, political and ideological functions that the community media fulfill today.

The point of view adopted in this analysis, the materialist conception, seeks to understand the development of community media in the light of the economic and political conditions which gave rise to them.

Prior to a specific analysis of the community media and their underlying conceptions of social animation, ideology of participation and "counter-information", the first two parts of the text concern the development of the Canadian and Quebecan economy and its effects on the political scene. These two aspects need to be clearly understood in order to better grasp the ideological functions filled by the community media. Without doing this, one avoids the real questions and turns to false solutions.

#### I. THE GESTATION OF DEPENDENCE

With the conquest of Canada, British capital was firmly established, leading to the constitution of an Anglo-Canadian national bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie controlled the entire economic activity of the country and directed its development in function of its interests.

However, at the beginning of the 20th century, Canada and Quebec experienced the influx of American capital. Particularly after World War II, American capitalists invested in our country installing themselves in the most profitable sectors. By progressively occupying the primary sector (the exploitation of natural resources) and an important

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fraction of the secondary sector (heavy industrial processing), American capital was thus assured of the quasi-control of the Quebecan and Canadian economy. Local enterprises, installed in the primary and secondary sectors, too small to resist and compete with American companies on the capitalist market, rapidly passed under Yankee control. Thus, a part of the Anglo-Canadian middle- and petite-bourgeoisie saw itself ousted from the sectors monopolised by the Americans who left them only the roles of subcontractors or managers of American-owned enterprises.

As for the Anglo-Canadian bourgeoisie, it withdrew especially into finance (Bank of Montreal, Royal Trust, Sun Life etc). These institutions enabled it to use the savings of workers to invest in American and Canadian enterprises. It nevertheless also succeeded in guarding certain enterprises in the primary sector such as pulp and paper (Price Brothers, Consolidated Bathurst etc), in the secondary manufacturing sector, such as clothing, textiles, furniture, printing and publishing (Dominion Textile, Canada Packers etc) and continues to occupy a large part of the commercial and service sector (Steinberg, Hudson's Bay Company, T. C. Eaton, etc).

Large French-speaking Quebecan capital, quasi-non-existent up until the 1950s, has nevertheless developed itself, especially since 1960, thanks to the backing given by the Quebecan State to French-speaking enterprises. The latter are mainly found in manufacturing (Bombardier, Marine Industries, etc), commerce (Dupuis Frères etc), services (Power Corporation, BCP Publicité etc) and construction (Désourdy-Duranceau, Sicotte Construction etc). Even if in practice, several big French-speaking capitalists exist in Quebec (the Simards, Paul Desmarais, Marc Carrière, J.-L. Lévesque), it is difficult to talk of a Quebecan national bourgeoisie. They have always been associated with the big Anglo-Canadian capitalists, sitting together on their respective boards of directors. They only constitute, in fact, the French-speaking portion of the Canadian bourgeoisie and their interests are the same.

The new functions of the large American, Anglo-Canadian and French-speaking monopoly enterprises and the State bureaucracy have favoured the emergence of a *new class fraction of salaried technocrats* in the service of monopoly capitalism.

On the other hand, the specialisation of production has enabled the installation of small industrial enterprises (sub-contractors of the monopolies or the State) as well as the growing importance of the tertiary sector (commerce and private services). The proliferation of distribution points for consumer goods — the era of the general store is over — has necessitated the multiplication of small local commerce generating a strata of *small businessmen*. Generally owners of small means of production and only employing few workers, they only play the rôle of auxiliaries or intermediaries in the production process and their interests are directly linked to those of the medium and big bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, their rôle in the production process situates them in the petite bourgeoisie that we will call *neo-capitalist* for want of a better term.

The passage of capitalism from a competitive to a monopoly stage has effects on the State. Thus the

State, on top of its political and ideological attributes, has had to take over responsibility for the least profitable sectors of the economy (energy, transport, communications etc), assure the influx of qualified labour for the new production and service tasks, develop experimental sectors profitable only in the very long term for the economy (aeronautics, scientific research, tele-communications) and finally, intervene directly in the economy, either through the installation of State or mixed State-private enterprises, or through direct subsidies to enterprises which are temporarily in difficulty (eg the subsidies to United Aircraft).

## II. THE POLITICAL SCENE

### 1. Under Duplessis: A Developed Economy, But A Backward Political and Ideological Superstructure

Under the reign of Duplessis, the provincial State largely favoured foreign economic domination, more particularly, American imperialism. *L'Union nationale*, the party of the traditional rural petite bourgeoisie and dominated by a conservative and religious ideology made maximum use of the rivalries between Anglo-Canadian and American interests in the movement towards monopolisation. Desiring more autonomy and power for Quebec (in order to assure the French-speaking and Catholic character of the Quebecan nation), and opposed to the Anglo-Canadian and protestant federal State, Duplessis favoured the implantation of American monopolies.

The American monopolies, dominating the industrial cities of the province, directly encouraged the economic interests of this traditional rural petite bourgeoisie. In effect, having a large factory or mine which employed many people assured the functioning of small local commerce and private professional services etc.

However, the extremely reactionary, conservative and regressive character of the ideology and the policies of the Duplessis government prevented the transformation of the State which were needed by a developed economy. New blood was needed at the controls of the State to carry out the reforms needed by monopoly capitalism. The monopoly bourgeoisie and its subordinated technocrat and neo-capitalist fractions of the petite bourgeoisie thus proposed a clean up of the State.

### 2. The "Quiet Revolution": A Bourgeois Front

In 1960, when Jean Lesage, with his famous slogan "*Maitre chez nous*" took power, it was the new French-Canadian petite bourgeoisie (whose interests were then represented by the Liberal Party) that assured its hegemony within the State power bloc, obviously supported by the monopoly bourgeoisie. The ideology of this class was then dominated by nationalism and liberalism.

*Nationalism*, as this class, economically dependent on the Anglo-Canadian monopoly bourgeoisie and American imperialism, was not aided by the employment plans or promotions because it was French-speaking, and *ne speak pas English*.

*Liberalism*, as this new French-Canadian

bourgeoisie favoured free enterprise and the maintenance of capitalist exploitation. Furthermore, it needed an interventionist, regulatory State to enable it to realise its class interests (in fact, its bourgeois aims) by trying to re-establish the equilibrium broken by American and Anglo-Canadian domination under Duplessis. The State as the principal employer and supplier of services became the privileged instrument of this class to start up its "own business" and raise itself up to the rank of a national bourgeoisie.

Even if the rise of Quebecan nationalism since 1960 constitutes one of the most marked effects, at the political level, of this "quiet revolution", it was first of all the economic interventions of the State and its social measures which were to dominate in these transformations.

### 3. The Beginning Of The Recession And Slowdown Of The Quiet Revolution: The Bloc In Power Splits (Federalism/Nationalism)

The construction of the modern Quebecan State was not to proceed without problems.

From 1965 on, the government ran out of breath, which was characterised by a slowdown in its social and economic measures. At the time, early signs of a major economic crisis began to appear. The affect of this, in Quebec, was to exacerbate the internal contradictions of the ruling power bloc.

The two fractions of the new French-speaking petite bourgeoisie were allied in 1960 around an economic and social programme, on the basis of a nationalist and liberal ideology which suited both at the time.

The *salaried technocrat* fraction considered the Quebecan State as the principal social and economic entrepreneur. Not possessing the means of production, it saw the State as a lever enabling it to realise its bourgeois aspirations and wanted to push forward its autonomist and national demands in face of federal demands. In sum, it wanted to be endowed with a State which belonged to it alone.

The *neo-capitalist* fraction, controlling minor means of production and supported by the economic policies of Jean Lesage which favoured the development of a French-speaking capitalism, found itself blocked by American imperialism which, more and more, monopolised the commercial, financial and service sectors where this fraction was mainly rooted. To counter both the American monopolies and the coming crisis, an alliance with the Anglo-Canadian bourgeoisie became necessary, as the latter was also seriously under attack by American imperialism. The Federal state, possessing more powerful economic and political levers, became its mainstay and last hope. To make the French-speaking viewpoint heard in Ottawa, they sent the "three doves", Trudeau, Pelletier and Marchand.

In 1967, the split in the ruling power bloc was consummated. The *technocratic*, social-democratic and nationalist fraction, left with Rene Lévesque to found the MSA, then the *Parti Québécois*. The *neo-capitalist*, liberal and federalist fraction, maintained its hegemony in the *Parti Libéral*, making Robert Bourassa party leader.

### 4. The Return Of The "Union Nationale" In 1966: An Interlude

The return to power in 1966 of the Union nationale (which conserved part of its support among the traditional rural petite-bourgeoisie) with Daniel Johnson at its head, constituted an interlude enabling the two fractions of the new petite bourgeoisie to organise their own political instruments and programmes, in the form of the Parti Liberal and the Parti Québécois.

### 5. The Neo-Capitalist Fraction Retakes Power With The Parti Liberal

The election in 1970 of the Parti Liberal to the Quebecan national assembly, confirmed the hegemony of the neo-capitalist fraction of the new petite-bourgeoisie and the Canadian bourgeoisie in the State power bloc.

However, this does not mean that the technocratic fraction was completely ousted from power. On the contrary, it continued to exercise a certain power inside the Liberal government by conserving key posts in the more "social" or "cultural" ministries.

### 6. The Absence Of Proletarian Political Organisation

The absence of an autonomous political organisation of the proletariat (75% of the population) since the World War II has kept them outside of the debates taking place on the political scene between the various bourgeois fractions. The majority of working class struggles took place on the economic terrain (improvement of work conditions, wage demands, resistance to the downgrading of living conditions, struggles against the effects of inflation and unemployment etc) through the only instruments with which at least part of the workers identify: the trade unions.

This situation resulted in the proletariat always serving as the support class for one or the other political formations of the bourgeoisie via the electoral game. Given the absence of an autonomous organisation which would enable it to put forth its own class interests on the political scene, the proletariat could only modify the electoral balance between the different fractions of the bourgeoisie, according to the way in which the latter catered more or less badly to its immediate demands.

In this way, the Parti Québécois, behind a trade union and democratic vocabulary, succeeded in gradually winning over the masses by presenting the fight for national liberation (as seen by the petite bourgeoisie) allied to a social-democratic programme, as the only way of escaping the crisis.

## III. SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL ANIMATION AND PARTICIPATION

Serving the class interests of the technocratic fraction of the new petite-bourgeoisie, social democracy is founded on a pact between capital and the working class to conserve industrial peace and assure the smooth reproduction of State monopoly capitalism.

Social-democracy is essentially based on two axes:

(a) The improvement of social measures through the State;

(b) the "democratisation" of the State and its apparatuses through the setting up of mechanisms assuring the citizen's participation in social and cultural development.

It is this second axis which particularly interests us in order to question the political function of social animation and the ideology of participation which are at the origin of the community media. From now on, we will consider that *the ideology of participation and the practices of social animation constitute specific forms which social-democratic ideology has taken in our country.*

### 1. Social Animation Does Not Fall From The Sky

If we say that social animation and the ideology of participation are specific forms taken in Quebec by social-democratic ideology, we must however make it clear that the latter was not born with the Parti Québécois. It is, in fact, the ideological product of the class practices and interests of the salaried technocratic fraction of the new petite bourgeoisie. Its direct participation in State power since 1960 has meant that most state intervention in the economic, cultural and social sectors has been initiated by this class fraction.

What we are now going to see is that the *ideology of participation and practices of social animation, in the forms they have taken in Quebec, have their origin in class practices and their finality in the economic, political and ideological class interests of the salaried technocratic fraction of the new petite bourgeoisie.*

But what do we mean by "origin" and "finality"?

If we look a little more closely, we realise that the salaried technocrat fraction is situated in an oscillating position by the place it occupies in the relations of production. Not possessing the means of production (factories, commerce, in short; capital) which are monopolised by the bourgeoisie, but occupying a privileged place in production by mainly supplying only intellectual work, its class interests are assimilated to those of the bourgeoisie. Not only does this fraction of the petite bourgeoisie have bourgeois aims, it profits also from the exploitation of the proletariat. It is only because there is an over-exploited mass of workers in factories that the bourgeois can not only accumulate profits, but also pay the salaries of those whose job it is to frame, organise and administrate the production of goods.

On the other hand, being *salaried*, the technocrat fraction subjectively tends to liken itself to other salaried workers, i.e. the proletariat. Like the latter, not owning the means of production, important economic decisions escape it, locally as well as nationally, in favour of the neo-capitalist fraction of the petite-bourgeoisie and the medium and big bourgeoisie (both Canadian and American).

The technocratic fraction thus tends to be allied with, and to rely upon the popular masses, not only to influence the economic, political and cultural development of society, but also and at the same time, to promote its class interests. In this sense, has it not often been remarked that community television is

only useful for channelling popular demands in order to "nibble away" at the powers of the bourgeoisie and neo-capitalist fraction (notables and local elites) too often in favour of the technocrat fraction which controls community television? And that, always under the sign of "the democratic participation of citizens in decision-making".

We can thus see that "citizens' participation" is not a concept which falls from the sky, and that the reality it hides objectively serves the interests of the technocratic fraction, and consequently, those of the State. Let us not forget that *even if divergences of interests can conjuncturally oppose the technocratic fraction to other capitalist class fractions, their interests remain fundamentally the same: to continue to exploit the proletariat, one for their class privileges and the other for the direct profits they draw from them.*

But, on what analysis of society is based the ideology of participation which lies behind the practices of social animators in the 1960s and the community media of today?

### 2. The Ideology Of Participation Is Based On A False Analysis Of Society

The severe "Participationitis" which most social animators suffered from, was based on a wrong analysis of society, an analysis drawn from the new American sociology and/or utopian socialism. This point of view, by masking class divisions and the resulting contradictions of society, considers the social formation as a series of distinct social groups, with sometimes divergent interests, but which all participate, each in their own way, to the development of society. In this framework, one had to avoid conflicts which did not politically oppose the technocratic fraction to the monopolist bourgeoisie. Obviously, what was at stake was political power. In this framework the technocratic fraction did not hesitate using a populist and worker discourse in order to attract the support of the masses and use them as a pressure group against bourgeois power.

Thus, the ideology of participation tends to level out class antagonisms. By setting up mechanisms allowing "citizens to participate in power" or by organising "pressure groups" in places where power escaped it, social animation acted not only as a wet-blanket for the political demands of the proletariat (by masking class divisions and capitalist exploitation as the source of problems) but also as a support for the demands of the technocratic petite bourgeoisie.

### 3. The Functions Of The Ideology Of Participation And Social Animation

"A pluralist society should assure the right of communication to all groups of citizens, taking into account the range of their needs and conforming to the objectives and priorities of the development of the territory".

Jean-Paul l'Allier

*Pour une politique québécoise des communications,*  
(Working document,  
Quebec Ministry of Communication, May 1976, p.16).

The concept of community, linked to that of "participation", which is the basis of community media, suggests that the fundamental unit of all social

organisation is the individual. Starting from the principle that everyone is equal, everyone can participate in the definition of the objectives of development for the whole of society, whereas, in fact, this idea of harmonious development through the exchange and concertation of individuals only serves to assure smooth capitalist growth and everyone's participation in it. In this sense, social animation and the ideology of participation will essentially be based on individual promotion (self-expression, creativity) and reduce social conflicts to individual tensions.

Thus, the concept of individual development in a wider process (where everyone is supposed to have the same chance) remains a striking characteristic of capitalist ideology which tends to forget — in fact, mask — the concrete socio-economic characteristics of the population, by hiding the notion of class behind that of the individual.

The function of social animation (in the wider sense of the term concerning its practices at the origin of community media) is thus to organise and control the peoples' consentment, while favouring social change, both a consequence and a condition of capitalist economic growth. As the aim of social animation was to reorganise traditional social relations (well-anchored under Duplessis and constituting an obstacle to monopolist growth), it was a question of preventing the radicalisation of class conflicts through the creation of a social consensus founded on dialogue, concertation and participation. When the concept of "community media" sprouted in Normandin, was it not referred to as an electronic public place where regional socio-economic issues were to be resolved through dialogue and participation?

Community television is an instrument that the members of a community give themselves in order to more easily communicate with each other so as to tackle the vital concerns of their environment (Memorandum of the Community Television of Normandin to the CRTC).

### 4. A Social Animation In The Service Of Economic Planning

The Planning Office for East Quebec (POEQ) carried out one of the first Quebec experiences (June 1963-June 1966) of concerted, overall planning using social animation and popular participation. These later would become a technique of research and planning, a relay between governors and governed.

Bringing the Gaspesian people to participate in the execution of an economic planning and rationalisation program (already realised by surveys with the help of POEQ researchers) was the principal objective of this group of social animators. Here, they attempted to obtain the population's support of the phenomena of modernisation and social change by requiring a change in the level of the concentration of labour (the closing of so-called "marginal" villages and packing of people into council flats in urban regions) and the regulation of the exploitation of resources to satisfy rationalised capitalist growth.

Participation in planning is never situated at the level of an analysis of the situation (which is essentially reserved for specialists), nor of objectives (reserved for technocrats), but only at the level of the means of implementation to apply a policy of regional trans-

formation defined by others.

Thus, participation does not only constitute a simple consultation destined to facilitate the implementation of the project while avoiding protest by pacifying a population so that it will only participate in the carrying-out stages of the plan. The participationist ideology inherent in this type of project also leaves the illusion of power, as the whole of the planning has been previously carried out by State technocrats. Thus, instead of leading to a grass-roots democratic participation and a real consciousness of the socio-economic situation, the project only reinforces the position of the neo-capitalist and technocratic fractions of the petite-bourgeoisie who are erected as the leaders of change, and maintain the population in an alienating *status quo*.

The model used by the State for social animation to encourage popular participation in its technocratic projects, such as those developed by the POEQ, was more or less reproduced everywhere afterwards (cinema and education, for example). One also finds this model used in the promotion of community television.

## IV. COMMUNITY MEDIA

### 1. The Origin Of Community Media

The mass media, through control, filtering, and "censorship", while renewing capitalist ideology, relegate us to our status of message-consumers and prohibit all processes of exchange, turning this non-communication into an instrument of social control and maintenance of bourgeois power. On top of this hold over information, the mass media are also characterised by a maximisation of profits, from advertising to cable distribution.

Community media, in reaction to the mass media, attempt to redefine the communication realm (the relations between informer/informed) and to restore, through the acquisition of simple technology, the possibilities of intervention in the process of information production. But unfortunately, it takes more than everyone becoming a manipulator of technical means to ensure that the information produced does not renew capitalist ideology..

Through the so-called "community" use of the media, two main axes can be distinguished: one modelled on social animation (largely dominant) whose aims we have already outlined, the other, a little less disseminated, along the lines of a counter-information or "left journalism" in State or private media. This latter, impregnated with a petite-bourgeois humanism, perpetuates the myth of objectivity, and fragments and denatures workers' struggles to turn them into news without any apparent connection with the economic, social and political context. In its very diffuse interpretation and treatment of facts, "counter-information" too often extirpates all knowledge and class consciousness.

Three principal factors thus can be found at the origin of community television (CTV):

(1) The intervention of theoreticians and social animators and the setting up of large-scale animation projects by the State;

(2) The collaboration of cable owners who saw a

supplementary source of revenue in community cable ("images from our local areas sell subscriptions") with minimal investments that were sometimes entirely assumed by the State in the framework of its aid programme for community media; and

(3) The advent of lightweight and inexpensive video equipment on the market.

Furthermore, in relation to this third factor, there was the mythical belief that a so-called technological revolution (generating new models of audio-visual production and therefore democratising information through some vague magic virtues) was capable of transforming the social order, a belief which quickly made its way into the technocratic fraction who installed itself at the head of community media.

While reducing the notion of revolution, a new social-democracy was envisaged, based on the re-establishment of communication between individuals (cleverly picked up in the advertisement "Gotta speak to one another" [*Faut s'parler*]), as if the relations of domination and exploitation, the antagonisms between classes, could be reduced to a simple communication activity (psychological and interpersonal), above and beyond all questions of a political, economic or ideological nature.

Instead of becoming the actors of these transformations through a conscious intervention based on a concrete, objective analysis of the reality to be changed, one is imprisoned within the yoke of passivity, remaining pious operators of a pseudo-revolution whose only effect has been to increase the capital of the monopolies producing technical equipment (Sony, RCA, AKAI, Ampex) and legitimate this new market as well as the communication research and experiments that it creates and determines.

Behind these pretexts of mitigating the lack of regional or local information, giving speech back to the people and creating a new public meeting place — all guarantees of harmonious development — the State, by encouraging the implantation of community media, sought to better camouflage the fact that the air waves are controlled by the bourgeoisie who use them as apparatuses of diversion and integration.

In most cases, we could say that the subsidies provided by government programmes (and thus paid for by workers' taxes) to CTVs were a sort of disguised financing of private enterprises (cable distribution companies, manufacturers of technical equipment). In effect, by subsidising community production groups, the State enabled cable distributors to circumvent their 'social' obligations (the financing of community channels) and maintain an ever-increasing profit margin. The slight pressure exerted by the State apparatuses regulating the communications sector (CRTC in Ottawa and the State Public Service agency in Quebec (RSPQ)) to force cable distributors to reinvest part of their profits in community production shows clearly the collusion existing between the Canadian bourgeoisie owning the cable companies and the State. In this respect, it is not surprising that during the public hearings of the CRTC and the RSPQ on this question, the opinions of the firm National Cablevision had more weight in the decisions than all the CTVs put together.

## 2. Community Media And Social Animation

To the extent that the State used the ideology of participation for a profitable economic development, it also had to find the means to channel the expression of popular discontent. But this internalized goal of the community media was veiled by the illusion of a pseudo-power of decision wherein the people had no control over the essential: the circulation of capital, investments, the implantation of industry, and the control of economic development monopolised by the Canadian bourgeoisie and American imperialism. How could one believe that the community media could obtain the power of decision when multinationals like Alcan and Consolidated Bathurst at Shawinigan, and Iron Ore and IIT in Sept-Îles controlled regional economic development with the help of State economic policies.

Thus the only power of decision within the framework of the CTVs could concern only very secondary elements, such as leisure, education, community organisation etc. Thus, there were many illusions on the possibilities of consensus (so cherished by social animation) of a population divided into classes and whose interests were fundamentally contradictory.

However the development of this objective function of community media remains uneven, and because of this, two types of groups arose over the years.

Firstly, there were the groups which defined themselves essentially in terms of the accessibility of the medium "as a new public meeting place where all members of the community, without class distinction, can express themselves and participate". For these groups, which included most CTVs, there was no question of doubting their practice: a broad programming reflecting the "many facets" of the environment, giving them the peaceful assurance of possessing the democratic truth of our very liberal society and through this, fully satisfying the needs of local elites and consequently, the subsidising State.

As for the others, somewhat more progressive, they differentiated themselves from most of the groups by questioning their practices, trying more and more to ground their interventions in working-class struggles and refusing to let themselves be imprisoned within a narrow, neutralising concept of *community media*.

These different groups came together within the CDCM by putting aside their political and ideological contradictions — characterised, on the one hand, by the inertia and confusion that was concretised in the bureaucratic stagnation of this structure, and on the other, through the tangible will to transform their practices on the basis of a political formation leading to a more militant type of work based on the needs and interests of the popular masses.

The CDCM, as an umbrella group, has to be considered as the reflection of community media and the contradictions found at its base, i.e. the two types of constituent groups. Their divergence of interests were thus only expressed in the superstructure.

## 3. The CDCM

The possibility of being subsidised by the State was to be more than determinant in the creation of the CDCM. In effect, on the basis of this State aid, it became a para-governmental body (although one refused to admit this) whose principal function was to take charge of the organisation and development of community media.

Thus the CDCM was not born solely from the groups' desire to set up a planning and service apparatus, but from the intervention of State technocrats who organised meetings between groups (by polarising the problems) and stimulating the need to work together.

In doing this, the State therefore facilitated the cohesion of its projects (both in their economic and ideological functions) while also assuring itself of control over groups through the blackmail of subsidies. By taking over the "experiences" of some already existing groups, the State defined the criteria of "community" as being central and determinant for the attribution of subsidies, thus stigmatising the "a-political" character of groups (thus assuring in fact, their ideological function). Those who didn't fit into this criteria saw their subsidies diminish or be deliberately withheld (e.g. the CTV of Thetford Mines).

The principal tasks of the CDCM thus consisted in pressuring the authorities to denounce structural problems and promote the interests of the community media (e.g. legislation on cable distribution, radio-broadcasting policies). Its work was thus limited to developing different types of services: technical and juridical, information, and documentation centres etc.

The lack of political aims thus reduced all activity for defending the rights and interests of community media to a corporatist character. The CDCM did not arise from political debate on the notion of community media or on the question of the collective appropriation of the means of production in the information sector, but rather from the fact that thirty-odd scattered and diverse groups existed in Quebec and that utopian thought had it that the meeting of these in a superstructure like the CDCM could only be beneficial and that it would become a locus of organisation and debates.

Furthermore, no precise and specific criteria had been established to enable the grouping together of community media in terms of the interests they defended, either those of the proletariat or of the bourgeoisie. The forms of membership in the CDCM were as vague as its orientation, and some groups, like the CHUT-FM for example, were simply rejected on subjective grounds. This membership problem arose often. In fact, *only the medium and its mode of use determined the association*.

The CDCM, as a large associative structure, was soon to be confronted with the different interests it represented and with a number of contradictions which only a political clarification could wipe out. First of all, most of the CTVs defined their role at the level of the whole community and sought participation from all social classes in their activities; then there were the groups who defined themselves essentially as supports for popular groups, unions and citizens' committees

and their activity was one of technical backing (equipment loans, technical training, montage etc); and finally, there were other groups, more politically advanced, who defined themselves as direct actors through a practice of counter-information and an analysis of the political and economic situation in liaison with progressive groups from the locality or region. These contradictions between groups, constantly renewed in the superstructure, were very quickly to polarise debates and generate conflict and, in the medium term lead to stagnation, then a break-up.

## 4. The Structures Of The CDCM

The necessarily bureaucratic character of the CDCM's activities must be emphasised. In order to cover all of the groups throughout Quebec with its relatively limited means, the CDCM centralised all of its work in Montreal. Liaison with groups was generally carried out sporadically through tours by staff members or through the activities of sector-based conferences. The knowledge of groups between themselves, their practices and the CDCM always remained very superficial.

The CDCM's structure seemed flexible (or at least gave this appearance) and was based on a system of regional delegates (on the basis of the regional division already used by the MCQ) which assured its democratic, objective and functional character. There were also round-table discussions between CTVs and cable distributors, radios and the CRTC, between different newspapers, and finally, video groups planning an eventual popular communication network. The CDCM, despite its desire to be flexible and functional, was opposed through its very structure (bogged down in legal clauses) to a common discourse on CTVs, radio, newspapers and video groups. In addition to making the communication sector autonomous, the CDCM also played on technical differences.

For whom, for what reason, and how should information be produced? These questions were evaded over and over again and left the field open to a compartmentalisation of problems. Fragmenting the community media lead one to believe in their apparent autonomy, covering up the economic political and ideological conditions of their very existence.

In doing this, the CDCM reproduced the dominant bureaucratic model, an obstacle to collective dialogue, by dividing up problems on a purely technical basis (the reduction of the subject to the object-medium) rather than on the fundamental interests underlying the use of these means.

The bureaucratic and centralising nature of the CDCM reproduced the internal contradictions of community media and extended them by compartmentalising them. By doing nothing to fight and transform these contradictions, the CDCM withdrew into its role of administrator-representative.

It thus found itself with a structure formally copied from the dominant models like those of other para-governmental bodies (like the Regional Development Council, etc) with an executive, compartmental committees, division into administrative regions, without agreeing on the



notion of community media and its political implications, and without making sure that member groups were informed on each others' activities.

When for example the CDCM carried out a study or analysis of community media and their impact, it did so on the basis of the dominant criteria of capitalist efficiency: audience ratings, ownership of new equipment, technical advances etc. It never based its analysis on a progressive critique of the information production process, on the democratic relationship of the popular masses in this process, or on the role of surveys and criticism etc. If this had been done, one would have run counter to the class interests of the technocrat fraction which dominates community media, allowing technicist and reductionist attitudes towards audio-visual work to be reproduced, as well as personal, formalist and aestheticist ones.

Moreover, it soon became very obvious that the MQC was (and is still) not particularly interested in seeing the development of community media linked to the democratic and political struggles of the masses. This explains its control, exercised through all possible legal means, from protocol agreements with groups to cable distribution laws. The criteria of eligibility set out in the last aid programme to community media are the tangible proof of this:

This programme is addressed to media of the community type, i.e. non-profitmaking media, in the framework of a non-restrictive participation of citizens, as much at the level of ownership as the orientation and use of the medium, with a view to the educational, social, cultural and economic development of an area. *These media, in their programming, must not give preference to one political option over another.* [our emphasis]. (Programme d'aide au développement des media communautaires, QMC, April 1976, p.3.)

In the beginning of this text, we put forward the idea that the CDCM was a reflection of the practice of community media. However, the practice of several groups was modified because of important changes in the political conditions over two years, while the CDCM remained almost the same from the time of its origin; a technicist association of community media, offering services and a collective representation. Thus, gradually the community media were caught up in a process of questioning which was political and no longer technicist.

While the illusion of "community" and "participation" was spread, different groups aligned their activities with those of political organizations and mass and working-class organisations, seeing the possibility of using audiovisual tools from a perspective of class struggle in order to clarify, point out and explain the real causes of the problems confronted daily by workers and the popular masses.

Several groups overcame the technicist aspect of the medium to question its goal and situate it within the ideological struggle. The CDCM had to take the same step or disappear . . .

### 5. For The Future: What Are The Tasks Of Media Groups On The Cultural And Information Fronts?

The CDCM is dead. There still remains nearly 50

"community" media groups, carrying out information work throughout all the regions of Quebec. This work is developing sporadically and unevenly, with varying degrees of efficiency. However, these groups are far from being dead.

Today, the question is posed — with even greater clarity following the break-up of the CDCM and the foregoing observations in this analysis — of how can we characterise the tasks of the media groups?

Certain tasks, *at the present moment*, can be considered decisive in the process of demarcation in respect to bourgeois and petit-bourgeois concepts conveyed within and through the community media:

(a) The appropriation of a materialist concept of the process of production of cultural, information and educational tools by militants of media groups. In sum, a work of analysis and political formation needs to be undertaken on the current conjuncture and more specifically on the place that the audiovisual tools should occupy in peoples' struggles;

(b) the application of a mass line, i.e. the articulation of information work with the present needs of the masses through surveys and by linking-up with class organisations (workers' committees, unions etc) and mass organisations (popular groups, cooperatives, committees struggling for democratic rights (women, housing, health, education etc)). The application of a mass line in information work implies furthermore the negation of the role of the "specialist" in favour of a democratic participation of the masses (no longer in order to recuperate them, but to encourage the greatest possible number to take responsibility for production tasks and undertaking popular initiatives) in the process of elaboration, development and criticism etc of the tools of information (whether a radio broadcast or the editing of a newspaper); and

(c) the continual critique of bourgeois content and forms which will surely continue to manifest themselves as much in cultural tools as in the whole process of realising information work.

Let us finally emphasise that the breakup of the CDCM does not mean that liaison between groups, the exchange of assessments and the sharing of experiences are impossible. On the contrary, this must be continued, no longer on a technicist basis (because one uses the media) or one of specialisation (radios between each other, newspapers among themselves etc), but on the basis of a political understanding of information work in the service of peoples' struggles. These links must not only serve to make known victories and errors (problems linked to the specificity of information work and media use), but above all to popularise struggles and go beyond localism.

These tasks await media groups seeking to truly realise their aims (being at the service of the majority, i.e. the exploited workers) and who wish to carry out useful information work that will not serve to reproduce capitalist ideology. These definitions ensue on the one hand from the analysis of the contradictions within community media we have set forth here and, on the other, from several paths pointed out by the critical assessments by groups that have begun a redefinition of their work.

Obviously, reflection and analysis are only

partial activities and from now on, it is the task of media groups to question their practices. The analysis of community media put forward by the CDCM came from practice and must not remain a dead letter. It must be reintegrated into practice in order to be transformed.

The acknowledgement of failure that we make here essentially applies to the "concept" and the "practices" of community media such as they have been defined since 1970. It remains, however, that a work of information, education and analysis in the service of the people with cultural tools (whether they be television, radio, video or journalism) is more necessary than ever and must be largely developed and articulated to the needs of organisations and groups fighting against capitalist exploitation. More than ever, media groups have a role to play and a place to occupy in these struggles.

The possibility of a new communication apparatus only emerges from the moment there exist new mass organisations that seek and find new forms to communicate among themselves or with other sectors, in a process of mobilisation (Armand Mattelart, "Appareils ideologiques d'Etat et lutte de classes", *Les Cahiers du cinema* (Paris), 254-5, p.24).

## Giuseppe Richeri LOCAL RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS IN ITALY

(Italy, 1979-80)

In less than four years, the phenomenon of local over-the-air broadcasting has radically transformed the Italian radio and television system, and has had repercussions on the whole network of mass communication media.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION

According to official figures, in 1978 Italy had 2275 local radio stations and 503 local television stations. However, these figures also include those stations (approximately 10%) which at present have a frequency assigned to them but which do not broadcast regularly.

Over three quarters of these are commercial stations, operating essentially for profit. Their broadcasts consist almost entirely of musical programmes (radio) and specially produced films (television), light entertainment and advertising. The audiences at whom they are aimed are defined solely in terms of the technical characteristics of the transmitter used, and are seen as an indistinct, generic whole. While most of these stations regard themselves as being an "alternative" to Radiotelevisione Italiana, with rare exceptions they all reproduce its type of programming, its canons and stereotypes — only worse. The sole differences are those due to their smaller scale, their precarious nature, rough-and-ready technology and amateurism.

While in the case of radio, non-commercial ventures account for a minority, but nevertheless appreciable, proportion of broadcasting, the same cannot be said of television. This is to be explained primarily by the large capital outlay and the high level of technical expertise and organization required in the case of television, a factor which puts it beyond the means of "democratic" social and cultural organizations, and local community groups not concerned to make profits, whose priority objective is to serve the community by broadcasting news and cultural programmes.

What may generally be termed the *non-commercial* local radio sector is essentially made up of stations affiliated to political parties and organizations. Although operating in the fields of information and culture, their essential aim is all too often to carry on propaganda on behalf of their own positions and actions.

This text was first published in part as the author's contribution to UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems in 1979, and was slightly revised and enlarged for publication here. Reprinted by permission of the author. This is its first complete publication.

The remainder is made up of those few stations firmly resolved to remain in touch with the community and to reflect its life through news and cultural programmes, discussions, political debates, etc.

### A FEW FACTORS WORTH NOTING

(a) On the basis of the figures for June 1978, Italy can claim to hold a new world record in local broadcasting stations. For although the United States rank first as regards the absolute number of radio stations (8240) and television stations (984), Italy has recently taken first place in the relative number of stations per inhabitant. Compared with the USA, which has one radio station for every 25,825 inhabitants, and one television station for every 216,260 inhabitants, Italy boasts one radio station for every 24,747 inhabitants and one television station for every 111,930 inhabitants. Italy is even more clearly ahead of the USA as regards the ratio between surface area and numbers of stations. In Italy, there is one radio station per 132 square kilometers, and one television station per 595 square kilometers, whereas in the USA these figures are respectively 1,170 and 9,808.

(b) RAI, which had already lost a proportion of its television viewers to foreign (or pseudo-foreign) stations broadcasting to the Italian public has lost a further appreciable number to local stations.

(c) Experts estimate that the advertising outlay for the entire radio and television sector accounts for 32.1% (10% in the case of radio, 22.1% in the case of television) of total advertising outlay (press, cinema, radio and television in 1978 (610 billion lira).

A rough-and-ready analysis of the break-down of advertising outlay between private stations, carried out on the basis of the estimated break-down for 1977, suggests that 80-90% of this outlay goes to approximately 10% of the stations, i.e. to those which, in terms of their structure, position, levels of organisation and professional skills must be regarded as the most powerful.

The conclusion is evident: only these 10 per cent will derive sufficient income from advertising to be able to afford a level of programming sufficiently high (in terms of quantity and quality) as to attract the majority of the public (i.e. the public tuned in to private stations), while the remainder will find their audience slowly shrinking and, concomitantly, their advertising revenue steadily diminishing. If they are left to operate freely, it may be predicted that the normal mechanisms of the market, and hence of competition, will in the medium term create a situation in which only a very few stations will be able to make a profit, or at least to cover costs, while the others will become increasingly marginal and eventually have to shut down if certain forms of capital financing are not provided.

(d) the development of local stations has also had an evident impact on the turn-over of the electronics industry. Although no precise or reliable data are at present available, it is estimated that in 1976 this phenomenon led to a 1,000% increase in the sale of FM radio receivers.

It is fair to assume that a similar phenomenon has occurred in the case of colour television sets, although the growth rate is probably less high. This trend has been fostered by foreign colour television

broadcasting, as is proved by the fact that when RAI began colour broadcasts there already existed in Italy an estimated 700,000 colour sets.

(e) A particularly interesting feature of private television programming is the screening of films. As compared with State television, which screened 129 films in 1977, Tele-Lugano (a Swiss station broadcasting in Italian) which screened 110 and Tele-Capo d'Istria and Tele-Monte-Carlo (respectively 176 and 365), the 506 local television stations screen an average of 1 to 2 films a day. This represents a total of 506 to 1012 films a day, giving an annual total of between 200,000 and 400,000.

(f) Most of the major dailies already have direct or indirect links with a television station. Such stations are launched in particularly favourable conditions, benefitting from the powerful hard and soft news gathering and production services operated by the major newspapers and from their network of links. Everything suggests (and, as we shall see below, the proposal put forward by the Government confirms this) that, once the necessary authorizations have been granted and the imperative needed to win an increasingly large audience has set the market mechanisms in operation, those television stations affiliated to newspapers such as *Corriere, la Stampa* and *la Nazione* will prove themselves to be far more powerful competitors than all the others. Economies of scale, advertising mechanisms and a whole series of other factors will turn newspaper publishers into a privileged class of owners, while television stations affiliated with the major dailies will serve as a bridgehead, in the television sector, for the oligopolies that already control newspaper publishing. Moreover, the integration of the different media within a single control centre will certainly not help to foster pluralism, diversification and "give-and-take" in the fields of information and culture.

These few factors suffice to indicate how radically the development of local stations has, in a few years, disrupted the structures of the entire radio and television broadcasting system in Italy, and how vast has been its impact upon the other media of communication. However, in order to understand fully how such a "disruption" has come about and to grasp what were the factors which gradually fostered its development, we must recapitulate the process which led, at an initial stage, to the wholesale "reform" of RAI (in April 1975) — a reform by which Parliament reasserted the State's monopoly on radio and television over-the-air broadcasting, and which was followed shortly after (July 1976) by the decision of the Constitutional Court ruling that such a monopoly was not legitimate at the local level.

### THE BATTLE FOR THE REFORM OF RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING

We must go back at least to the early 1970s in order to identify certain important factors which paved the way for, and largely determined, the events and processes in question. For it was in those years that the struggle to reform RAI first began to gain momentum, as the new electronic media became available on the Italian market.

The political group which controlled RAI vigorously resisted all proposals for reform while

seeking to bring about its own restructuring of the State Corporation. It refused to yield on the following points: RAI was accountable to the Government, the Corporation was a centralized and hierarchically organized body, and its services were compartmentalized.

At the same time, the availability of new electronic techniques of audio-visual production and dissemination — from recording apparatus to cable distribution — begun to open up new horizons. While, on the one hand, this new technology seemed ideally suited, thanks to its adaptability and low cost, for decentralizing the planning and production of RAI broadcasts as well as for meeting the need for local public access communication channels, it also provided economic and political pressure groups with an opportunity to relaunch the struggle to put an end to the government monopoly on radio and television broadcasting, and to denationalize this sector.

Local organizations, groups and associations working in the social and cultural fields as well as grass-roots groups all stepped up their activities thereby alerting more and more people to the problems involved in the reform of RAI and strengthening demands at the local level for "new" information and communication media designed to permit public access and involvement.

### THE INTERVENTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

The stalemate in efforts to arrive at an agreement between the Government and the reform movement was accentuated in July 1974 as a result of the ruling of the Constitutional Court.

By its decision No. 225, the Constitutional Court declared that the State monopoly on broadcasting was anti-constitutional so long as Parliament failed to adopt a new law designed to guarantee that, in the operation of the monopoly, the objectives pursued are truly in the public interest, as the Constitution requires in order to be able to grant the monopoly.

The objectives in respect of which RAI was deemed to have failed all related to the obligation to offer the public a range of services providing "full and objective information", a "broad representation of all cultural currents" and "impartial presentation of ideas voiced in society" as well as the obligation to foster and guarantee the right of access. On the same occasion, the Constitutional Court handed down another ruling (No. 226) to the effect that the State monopoly could not be extended to local cable television.

During the period following these rulings one of the most confused and arduous parliamentary battles of recent years was waged. It culminated in April 1975 in the passing of a new law, known as the Reform Act, at a time when the private occupation of radio and television over-the-air broadcasting channels was beginning.

Although the new law reaffirms the legitimacy of the State monopoly in respect to over-the-air radio and television broadcasting, and calls for a very extensive overhaul of RAI (termination of the tutelary power of the executive, new role assigned to the regions, restructuring right of access, etc.), it faithfully reflects the difficult negotiations of which it is

the outcome, and gives only partial expression to the spirit and letter of the proposals made by the reform movement.

### FACTORS FAVOURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL STATIONS

Private local stations, which had grown up prior to the new act and were therefore illegal by its terms, nevertheless enjoyed a (for some) quite unexpected and indeed phenomenal boom. Their expansion — the result of initiatives that differed alike in their nature, underlying causes and objectives — benefited from the convergence of quite contradictory social, economic and political factors.

Thanks in particular to the positive attitude shown by certain forces in the battle to reform RAI, public opinion became increasingly alive at the local level to the necessity of, and the role played by, the local media. There emerged a growing demand for genuine access to and participation in news and cultural broadcasts, not only as receivers but as producers also. Concomitantly, new forms of association ("aggregazione") began to take shape.

At the *economic level*, private operators and local groups are preparing to enter this sector with a view to making either direct or indirect profits. The major economic and financial groups have lent their support to this development, albeit without as yet intervening on a large scale in a sector whose future is still uncertain (and still illegal). Operating essentially through the independent mass-circulation newspapers, they are seeking to mould public opinion in favour of private stations.

Both kinds of stations (commercial and community) receive favourable coverage in most newspapers. There is also an association — set up in great haste — which undertakes, free of charge, the defence of such stations and provides its own legal services (generally declined by left-wing stations) when legal complications arise.

What cannot be denied — though it may be somewhat less evident — is the bonus this expansion has meant for the producers of electronic equipment (linked to the more aggressive multinationals operating on the international market), which have reaped immediate benefits, while those responsible for producing the programmes (frequently the same companies) see a new golden age opening up for them.

At the *political level*, the development of private stations is in fact supported by many members of the Christian Democrat party, who consider that the period of domination exercised for so many years by their party over RAI is now over.

Those who support this movement are on the one hand trying to limit the damage caused by the loss of a controlling power within the Corporation and, on the other hand, are banking on a recovery of the power forfeited in State radio and television broadcasting by encouraging private stations. The more farsighted have in fact discerned, in the process of denationalizing radio and television, the formation of oligopolies which will ultimately be in the hands of groups with whom the Christian Democrats will have no trouble in reaching agreement.

While the Christian Democrats, or at least a

section of their party, appear to have a specific plan in which local stations are integrated, the same cannot be said — at least at this initial stage — of the left-wing parties and other formations which make up the "reform movement". Their aim is to avoid calling openly for repressive measures which would among other things also hamper the many initiatives which have developed to meet the demands for "democratic" forms of news-reporting and culture, while at the same time seeking to speed up application of the new law on radio broadcasting by supporting the calls for decentralization, participation, pluralism and access and by insisting that these be met first and foremost by the reformed public broadcasting service or even simply within its framework. It is felt that the reformed Corporation should be made solely responsible for ensuring the stable and democratic management of the broadcasting system, at a time when the unauthorized proliferation of stations is weakening the drive for reform and is serving not the interests of users but those of private economic groups.

By contrast, the political formations belonging to the radical left, which are excluded from the mass media and whose own small-circulation newspapers are having to cope with difficult economic conditions (and have no hope of seeing their own situation improve with the reform of RAI) look upon the radio stations as a means of informing and mobilizing the public and carrying on propaganda that is ideally suited to their purposes.

These formations depend on the grass-roots support of sympathisers and militants whereas most of the other stations benefit from an extremely favourable (and, initially, even indispensable) factor, namely, the presence of a mass of young out-of-work intellectuals ready to engage in an experiment that gives full reign to their creative capacities (employed almost wholly in musical programming) and that facilitates social contacts. Indeed, it has been said that such undertakings represent a new form of association. For some of these young people, working in a local radio station has replaced political activity and may even offer good prospects of gainful employment. For those already gainfully employed in this way, the work is a form of "moon-lighting", underpaid and without guarantees of any kind. Local radio stations are thus thriving thanks to favourable conditions resulting from the convergence of radically different and even contradictory factors and objectives.

### THE ITALIAN LABORATORY

Whether the objective is to denationalize the public service or to extend it at the local level no one seems to be sufficiently powerful or to have enough drive to control a phenomenon which, at the international level is pointed to as an example not to be followed. Although the Italian "case" may at first sight appear to be one of disorder and even chaos, in which everyone enjoys discretionary powers, when placed in a wider context it may be considered rather as a vast laboratory in which all possible approaches are being tried out in order to produce certain results aimed at by those operating on the international market.

We have listed a series of protagonists who play a national role in fostering this phenomenon, and we have also alluded to various industrial interests of more distant origins. If such a phenomenon which began and developed in Italy in the way we have seen, has subsequently emerged in other European countries, this has certainly not happened by contagion. By contrast, in each country in which it occurs it has certain specific features of its own. In any case, the problem of local stations — considered as a factor of renewal or transformation of, or rupture with, the existing radio broadcasting system — is very much at issue in France, Spain, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom and Sweden, to mention only a few European countries.

### DECISION No. 202

Neither the disorder nor the problems to which we have referred are declining despite a new ruling by the Constitutional Court (Decision No. 202 of July 1976) which nevertheless represents a decisive turning-point. This ruling recognizes the legitimacy of private local over-the-air broadcasting operations (radio and television) and contains precise provisions governing the regulation of this sector.

This ruling is important in another respect. Broadcasting, which till then was regarded, at least in its major principles, as "an essential public service of major value to the community", is thereby subordinated again in principle, to the *market system*. Here again, then, the correlation between freedom of expression and information and freedom of enterprise is recognized. This correlation has always been affirmed as an essential principle by the vital force of the capitalist system. The consequence of such a principle is self-evident: "the *free* flow of information and ideas is but one aspect of the *free* flow of goods in general via the market". In reality, however, the market tends to be organized in accordance with the mechanisms and processes specific to the present stage in the development of the capitalist system, namely, in compact structures and in the form of oligopolies.

The liberalization of private stations at the local level has, in any case, had the result of speeding up the development of this sector, albeit without resolving the fundamental contradictions inherent therein, and thereby leading to the situation as we know it today.

While it also put an end to the State monopoly on over-the-air radio and television broadcasting, the Constitutional Court's ruling has in fact brought about no major change in the reality of the local station phenomenon; however, it has opened the doors once and for all to the major investors by giving legitimacy and security to this sector, in particular at the legal level. This new situation has compelled the political powers to reconsider the problems of broadcasting in general and that of local stations in particular.

### CONTRADICTIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL RADIO

The unauthorized development of local stations has highlighted, but also helped to clarify, certain major contradictions which must be taken into account if we wish to understand present-day trends

and to determine for which of these stations the proposed regulations are likely to be an encouragement, or, conversely, a curb.

Before all else, however, it should be pointed out that it is not quite legitimate to consider radio stations and television stations in the aggregate. As was already noted at the start of this account, while private radio stations show a certain variety of approach and can, in the first place, be divided into exclusively commercial stations and those whose purpose is also to promote various processes intended to socialize communication and culture, such a distinction cannot at present be made in the case of private television stations. Thus for purposes of our analysis the most interesting data are those relating to radio. However, it would be a great mistake to overlook the fact that the uniformity of television broadcasting — which is due to the pervasive presence of commercial stations, whose programming is almost wholly made up of conventional light entertainment, games and regional news — indicates how, given the conditions under which private enterprises operate, the tendency to reproduce the standard communication model (albeit with more or less "rationalized" variations) and, hence, the traditional function of the media, corresponds to demands for increasing capital outlay and a need for greater structural flexibility.

Obviously, it is by analysing the experience of community radio stations that the most revealing contradictions can best be identified. However, this does not mean that such contradictions cannot and do not occur, to different degrees, even in the case of certain commercial stations. The chief of these contradictions relate, in our view, to the following factors:

(a) The siting of the station in relation to the territory and the social environment. The *local* nature of a station is not determined solely by the range of its transmitter, or by the content of its programmes. To these must be added a further factor, namely its siting. Some stations tend to serve as the mouth-piece for a central political or cultural body, and thus to express the concerns and interests of this body, while using local resources. By contrast, there are stations which effectively aim to express local interests or even to reflect the dialectics of the interests and demands generated by the social and cultural processes at work in their transmitting zone.

(b) the structures and models of production. There are some local stations which operate as though in an ivory tower, within which "messages" are formulated (or via which "messages" formulated by other, similar bodies are selected and transmitted) in order to influence or entertain a particular audience. There are other stations, by contrast, which seek to establish more or less organic links with the outside world, in particular with those areas in which productive and social groups are concentrated (factories, schools, neighbourhoods, etc.). Lastly, there are stations which operate as mere channels or instruments of dissemination, wholly open to all forms of spontaneous broadcasting activity.

(c) "professionalism" and the organization of work. Some radio stations tend to model their internal organization on traditional, "professional" patterns, thereby reproducing, albeit in less complex

forms, the organization of work intrinsic to the capitalist culture industry. There are other stations engaged in developing a new form of "professionalism", quite at variance with traditional patterns of organization, which seeks to stimulate the organized participation of all those involved in the processes of cultural production and to be present in the various situations in which grass-roots cultural activities are undertaken. Lastly, there are stations which tend to reject all forms of "professionalism", on the hypothesis that anyone is capable of doing anything (but which in actual fact frequently put limits on this total socialization of functions and tasks within the station itself).

Clearly, these various contradictions call into question, at all levels involved, the very nature of the *social function* of the station. One trend reproduces, at the local level and possibly in new forms, the logic of the one-way communication flow, and of the strict separation of the production and consumption processes. At the other extreme, the trend is to use the station as a means of socializing not just consumption but the production process also; it seeks to multiply the sources of information and production points, and not only the transmission channels. Lastly, what may be regarded as the leading trend (i.e. stations which operate on the principle of receptivity to all spontaneous "happenings" and which do away with all internal organization) appears to result in dilettantism and in an excessive and deceptive emphasis on "participation".

If we wish to see the phenomenon in perspective, in terms of the *social function* of local stations, it is today essential to take account of these contradictions and of their consequences. In reality, we may be moving towards a broadcasting system in which private local stations serve as relays for oligopolistic networks, competing with the State monopoly. It can be said right away that such competition would not help to promote freedom of expression and the pluralism of information sources, but would be aimed essentially at winning over, by aggressive tactics, as large a section of the public as possible. In such a context, commercial stations will have ever greater chances of survival as they decrease in number and merge with one another. Community stations are bound to encounter ever greater difficulties. They will in any case continue to play a marginal and precarious role, and will be subject to the influence of vastly more powerful models.

By contrast, we may envisage the possibility of a broadcasting system radically transformed both at the national and local levels, and organized in networks and stations designed to facilitate, on the one hand, a diversification of the structures and centres of production, information and culture, and, on the other hand, a vertical and horizontal flow of knowledge and information which would be truly two-way. Such a possibility, which naturally entails establishing a precise relationship between the radically reformed RAI and the local stations — so as to create new integrated networks — may ultimately lead to the development of a popular basis for the production of radio and television broadcasts corresponding precisely to the demands and needs generated by current trends and processes and by the contradictions im-

plicit in them.

### TOWARDS A NEW RADIO MODEL

The time has come to summarize and review what is really new about local radio insofar as its social role is concerned. At first glance it appears that the most interesting indications come from a very limited number of broadcasting stations who have set out with the intention of contradicting the facts and the traditional mode of operation of the radio-television apparatus.

If this is the case, can we then speak of a *new model* capable of giving the broadcast media a different role or of a new way of using the radio?

Although it is doubtful whether enough detailed elements have sufficiently emerged from the most advanced experiences in this direction to articulate a new fully-defined radio model, it does appear that there are a few important gains in this direction, particularly concerning the local environment, the model of production, and the relation between the public and private sectors.

### THE LOCAL LEVEL

The *local* character of a broadcasting station cannot be satisfactorily defined either in terms of its broadcast range or its potential audience. Nor are the program contents or the relation between the broadcasting station and regional or national networks sufficient criteria for determining its *local* specificity.

This *local* character can only be determined on the basis of the *social role* of the broadcasting station in relation to its community. Whether a particular station corresponds to the demand for information, expression and the socialization of culture and knowledge — a demand identified as a need by the community itself — is the only way of defining the specific local nature of the station in its concrete determinations.

But if the broadcasting station limits itself to sending out *locally* information-culture-knowledge originating locally or elaborated elsewhere, it would only be an echo-chamber for local interests or the local outlet of an outside organization.

A broadcasting station must be able, without becoming a local ghetto, to operate both horizontally and vertically. This means constantly verifying the events and tendencies occurring in its area with whose elsewhere, to the degree that useful comparisons can be made.

On the vertical plane, what happens locally needs to be linked with more general processes, showing to what degree they are similar or contradictory. In the other direction, general (regional, national and international) events and facts whenever possible should be compared with what is going on locally. This two-sided interaction, which can take place in various ways, can be enhanced by exchanges and links with other broadcasting stations on a local, regional or national scale.

If on the one hand the broadcasting station, to avoid being a local ghetto, must compare local events with the general situation, on the other, it must also take the general facts and situations and compare

them with local conditions.

### THE "MODEL OF PRODUCTION"

The social role of a broadcasting station is guaranteed and concretized by the way it is produced.

Starting with a just critical attitude towards traditional production methods based on a rigid division of labor, the parcellization of work, and the social division between the producer and consumer of information and culture in the medium term (particularly in what may be called "community media", which for us was a typical United States import), it was widely believed that the new electronic technology would eliminate the role of the media professional, regarded as an unnecessary sounding-board between the information apparatus and social reality.

The typical practice of the traditional professional, which is incompatible with the operation of a local broadcasting station is either to wait for events to happen or for a process to be completed, so that an individual assessment could be made *after the fact* by reconstituting the event from evidence supplied by a few isolated witnesses, either gathered directly or from other news media.

However, the true character of the local broadcasting station's model of production should be based on a *new type of professionalism*, and a different relationship with the protagonists of the real social processes taking place in the area in which it operates. But in order to define the local station's new professionalism and model of production we must first answer the question: who produces information and knowledge?

The first indispensable presupposition in creating the concrete conditions for the participation and access to the means of communication is that anyone can be a source of information, especially regarding events in which they take part.

These social subjects, who often have been excluded from the necessary means of expression, must have the real conditions available to transform their concrete experience into information and knowledge for others.

It is in this precise area that the new professionalism can be identified and defined specifically in relation to the production model of the local broadcasting station. The new professionalism should aim to aid, support and encourage the ability of the social subjects to produce information and consciousness from their own real experience in which they take part.

The local broadcasting station, operating in a given area in which it has organic relations with social reality, can base its model of production on recognizing and following-up social processes as they develop. Events do not always happen incidentally or unexpectedly; in many cases, especially the more important ones, they have been brewing and developing over a long time. This process can be followed by keeping in contact with the people concerned. This means not just reconstructing things after the fact, but watching how they develop through the protagonists involved in their concrete dialectic and real pluralism.

It is this *real pluralism* that the broadcasting station must explain: *how a pluralism of forces and tendencies bring about a given process or event*. What is of interest here is *the dialectic; the contradictions*

*which are revealed through the facts.*

The positions and interpretations of political or institutional leaders, which are important for understanding the impact of events and for completing the overall picture, are in this case an additional element of this pluralism.

In presenting the facts and processes in this way, the local station enables the listeners to locate themselves in relation to reality and to relate it to their own concrete experience. The lack of this type of broadcasting is one of the reasons why most viewers and listeners feel completely alienated from what they see or hear, even when it deals with situations similar to their own lives and work.

This model of production, together with its consequent type of new professionalism in continuous and close contact with real processes and their protagonists *forms the palimpsest*. And this palimpsest is no longer the product of a local broadcasting station detached from reality, but is defined and determined by the urgencies and rhythms of the needs manifested by the community. Non-timely cultural subjects, talk shows and music programs can all be integrated into this framework.

One problem which should be mentioned before going on to the next point is that on the basis of the proposed model of production whoever operates the station will decide what links to have with exterior conditions. From the moment that the community is organized (political-institutional, trade union or grass-roots level, etc.), it should exercise a coordinated effort to direct and solicit mass democratic control over the activity of the local station, so that, on the basis of the proposed model, it can carry out its social role without acting unilaterally or voluntaristically. This means opening up channels between social forces and the broadcasting station for discussing, comparing and deciding on programming.

This would achieve a real participation in production, in programming decisions and in the palimpsest, the participation in the planning of activities.

### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Radio and television form a single entity. It is conveyed via a series of channels captured, for the most part, by users on their receivers via a unique medium, which is considered by everybody as being the property of the collectivity: ether.

Relations between the public and private sector must be considered within the framework of this unity and should not be regarded as conflicts between two opposing sectors. Local broadcasting stations should be given an organic role within the overall radio-television system and at the same time the task of renewing and transforming the public service.

Relations between the public service and the private sector can really only be effective when the community concerned is engaged in determining the social role of the broadcasting station on the basis of the model of production outlined earlier. Local stations of this type can provide a *multiplication* of sources of production and representivity for the public service, which cannot easily reach the local level. This would give the entire radio-television

system a broader base for the production of information, culture and knowledge which is rooted in the processes and dynamics of the country's diverse reality.

The productive role which local broadcasting stations can offer the public service (regional or national) has nothing to do with the public service's own production or the work it sends out to subcontractors. It is not as if the public service asks the local stations to do what it could do itself. The relation between the public radio-television system and the external stations, in this case, local broadcasting, concerns a type of production which could not be realized by anyone else. Furthermore, there would be no point in the public agency setting up production relations with a broadcasting station which at a local level simply reproduced the logic of the "separated body".

The existence of a network of local broadcasting stations organically linked throughout the country to production and social centers, to cultural creation and realizations, should not be regarded by the public broadcasting entity merely as possible outlets, but as permanent collaborators with whom it could be possible to widen the *areas of contact*, exchanges and interaction between the public service and the reality of the country.

John Lindsay

## RADICAL LIBRARIANSHIP

(UK, 1977)

What I am going to do here is to try and run through what I understand the components of radical librarianship to be. That means that we have got some idea of what a contemporary librarianship is, or we have got some idea of what a standard librarianship is, or a scientific body of knowledge which has been communicated to the initiates, you, by the gurus, them, who know what is going on. Now fortunately that is not true — there isn't a body of knowledge to be transmitted to the neophytes, so when I talk about a radical librarianship I can talk about just about anything, and it will to some extent fit into what I am going to say. So though I am putting forward what I consider to be a consistent and coherent body of practice, one part of it might seem to be common sense. One part of it is practiced in some libraries now. One part of it is practiced in a few libraries here and there. The whole of it, therefore is not necessarily anything new at all. What I would like to suggest is that by putting the lot together though, we have a slightly more coherent view of what we are doing and why we are doing it. I want to talk in three basic sections which I have called: service, stock and study. I have alliterated them so that it is easier to remember them (or so somebody or other says). Service is the most concrete; that is the one that goes on on a day to day basis. Stock is slightly more abstracted. Study is at the most abstracted level. Study will have to be tied back continually to stock and service; this is so that the theoretical positions which I outline are continually tied down to the day to day practice of the librarian in the workplace. I work in a secondary school in Hackney; I have worked in public libraries, and I have also taught and lectured — so I try to gather together these various bits the whole time.

### SERVICE

What then is a radical idea of service? First of all it involves things like the way in which you deliver that service — the difference between the expert who knows things telling the inexpert what they ought to know and the me sharing experience with other people so that they can come to know what I know and use it for themselves. In practical terms: in my school library it means I don't find the books for the kids but I teach them how to use the subject guide. A very elementary example of the direction of service. In a public library it would mean much the same thing — not that the librarian says "Oh, they're over there"

This text was presented in 1977 as a lecture at the School of Librarianship, Polytechnic of North London. It was revised and first published as a pamphlet under the same title (Brighton, UK: John L. Noyce, Publisher, 1979). Copyright John Lindsay 1979. Reprinted by permission of the author.

or "Go and look in the catalogue", the way in which I have heard public librarians at various times saying to people; it actually means that the librarian as a trained person has a responsibility to share that experience with the people who require it.

Now, when you look at the people to whom that service is given, radical librarianship would then broaden the area of people that you would be serving. I think, classically, one could say that librarianship says that we are here to satisfy the needs of those who want. And that completely begs the question of how needs and wants come into being: where do they come from? How do they arise? How does someone feel a want at a particular time? And certainly, how does the person who has experienced that want ever come to dream that a public library system or an information system might be the key to satisfying that need? A radical librarianship would shift its notion of to whom the service is given from those who are battering down the doors of the Victorian mausolea that we call public libraries and would instead have to find the people who the librarianship has told us have the potential to use that which we know. This has to some extent been done in the past. A lot of Boroughs — Manchester is an example — set up very sophisticated commercial information systems for companies in their towns which cannot afford to run their own information system. I have yet to find the Borough Library which sets up a sophisticated information system giving information to the trade unionists who are trying to do the health and safety work, who are trying to protect their members' living standards, who are trying to advise their workers on correct tactics in a strike. Brent Public Library has certainly provided an information system for George Ward at Grunwick. I suspect that it is unlikely that they have provided the same information system for Mrs. Desai and the strikers on the picket line.

When we talk therefore of whom we are providing the service to, a radical librarian would say you shift the categories of people you make the effort to communicate your body of knowledge to. Those of us who have been involved in librarianship for social change over the last three or four years have been involved to quite a large extent in advising people how to set up their own information system, how to do their own newspaper cuttings, how to classify and catalogue, the sort of information they require for their own purposes. You may already know of the Alternative Press Index and of News from Neasden which aim to provide an indexing system for periodicals and publications that do not normally find their way into the British National Bibliography, the British Education Index, British Humanities Index, British Technology Index, and all the rest of them.

In service then, it is first how we provide the service. Secondly, it is to whom we provide the service. Thirdly, it is where we provide it that matters. It is not simply going to be in a large public library or in a college or university library, or in industry, if it is a scientific library, or even necessarily a school — though I *do* think that schools are closer to the direction we want to move in than anything else we have at the moment. I think school librarianship is the most exciting area of librarianship; it is the most open to change and innovation at the moment. We would

have to take our stock to the meetings of the local community groups. It means the television cameras, filmstrip projectors, cassette players which are now standard stock of all ILEA secondary school library systems would have to be made available to people in the community who may want to use them. (Then, of course, there would be a nice fight over whether the National Front should be allowed access to them or not!)

Fourthly, our radical service is going to be concerned with *what we give as the service*. What is it we are dealing with? What is the nature of the information that we are involving ourselves with? That 'what' ties in with the second category of problem that we are looking at:

### STOCK

Whether we like it or not, public libraries tend to have a conservative stock selection, which means that they tend to buy from the big publishers. The bulk of public and university budgeting on book selection is going to the five major book publishers in Britain, who are in turn controlled by three multi-nationals (who, as an aside, just happen to also own independent television, local radio, and Macdonalds & the Golden Egg food chains). Public libraries do not provide in any systematic way the sort of information being generated by the groups in the community. I have recently been funded by the British Library with a £10,000 research grant to employ a research fellow and clerical officer, to investigate the community information systems which exist in Hackney, and to teach the kids in my school how to use those systems after they have left school. I am pretty certain that I am going to find that the vast majority of that information is not available in public libraries. This is despite the fact that Hackney is one of the better public libraries.

In our stock there is then, first of all the problem of coverage. Generally stuff which one might call, very broadly, left-wing literature is not readily available in public library systems just as it is not readily available in W.H. Smith's bookshops on the railway station, nor is it readily available in the local newsagent. When that material is not available, yet Barbara Cartland is, we cannot usefully talk about satisfying people's wants and needs, without going back to the questions I put at the beginning: where do people's wants and needs come from?

Secondly, on coverage, must come the media with which we are concerned. Public libraries are still primarily concerned with books, and to a certain extent with magazines and newspapers. Again, whether we like it or not, there are more media around now than simply print. Television is undoubtedly more influential a medium than print. School libraries of course are now involved in integrating all these media into a coherent whole, which provides me as librarian with some very interesting tasks: how and when do I advise, a group of teachers to use a television programme; when do I suggest a set of textbooks; when do I run off 100 copies of a newspaper cutting; when do I suggest an outside speaker for a lecture; how do I tie together visual images, print, group discussion, fieldwork, for each of the different departments of the school, for each of the

different years, across the whole of mixed ability education. That is quite a fun job for a librarian. It is a bit more fun than saying shall I buy 50 or 70 copies of Enid Blyton. The medium is increasingly going to present librarians with a whole range of problems.

The third area of stock is the problem of bibliographical control. This I alluded to earlier. Bibliographical control, not only in its practice, but in its theoretical underpinnings, continually and necessarily reinforces a dominant ideology. There are a set of ideas on which any documentation retrieval system is based, and at that most theoretical level that information system cannot contain the input from local community groups — to put it very basically, people in struggle to change the world as they find it. Beyond that, even when we find that there are parts of the system that we can change, when we find that we can finally convince Dewey that homosexuality should be put under sociological variances instead of criminal pathologies, we are still presented with the problem that that sort of material is not, and cannot be, readily available because of the cost of production as the system operates at the moment. We then have to set up our own information systems, alternative systems. *Up Against the Law*, a magazine that ran for a couple of years and gave advice to people as to how to defend themselves against the police, had to set up its own system. Release has an information system; the radical collection called The Public Library now consists of something like 100,000 documents. This illustrates one of the problems of alternative systems, because those 100,000 documents were until recently actually packed in cardboard boxes and stored in a rather soggy basement. The money is rarely available to do it any other way. The Merton Alternative Library, the Gay Studies Collection, the Womens Research and Resources Centre, the Attic Library, and a whole number of others can be mentioned here. Community information systems probably contain as much material now as the conventional library system, and it throws up all the interesting problems of bibliographic control, documentation, and all the theoretical problems that we as librarians have been tackling for the last hundred years.

To recap: firstly there is service; how we provide it, to whom we provide it, where we provide it, and what we provide. Then secondly, there is stock selection, which involves the problems of the range of coverage which is given at present, the media which are available to conduct that coverage, and the bibliographic control which is necessary in order that the arguments and materials being produced by the struggling or emergent ideology can come to be controlled in as sophisticated a way as the dominant ideology. That leads me to the third section, the section in which I, personally, am most interested, unfortunately, which is the area of the theoretical study.

### STUDY

That is the study of the problems that I face on a day to day basis and the attempt to find coherent, consistent and logical conclusions to those problems, of which I think I have already indicated the first. The first one is this notion of a paradigm shift; at any rate that is what the German philosopher Kuhn calls it, in

direct opposition to the great, glorious and necessarily indirect Sir Karl Popper, who says that the whole thing is totally different. Very crudely, what Popper says is that we find out that we don't know something when something goes wrong, and that we play around and experiment with it until it doesn't go wrong. Until it goes wrong again, it's then right. That is what he calls knowing something. Kuhn, on the other hand, says that there is in any historical period a consistent and coherent dominant ideology, which at certain historical periods explains everything. Most periods are in fact the periods when certain social classes are in complete control of the situation. He reckons that the last time that happened was round about the time of Newton. He then says that as the contradictions of the society develop then so too that dominant ideology begins to crack, and has to be patched up. An example of this is when Le Voissier proved that the flagiston theory didn't work, so Dalston invented anti-flagiston to try and make flagiston work, until somebody else proved that neither of them worked, and the whole thing had to be thrown out of the window. Now, the only people who know anything about flagiston are a few philosophers of the history of science. Not many people know that while Aristotle was proving the world was flat and that the sun went round the earth, a guy called Aristomices in fact insisted that the world went round the sun and that the world was round. Now he was wrong by two thousand years, but the only people who know and who argue that Aristotle was right and that Aristomices was wrong would be a few flat-earthers and possibly the Professor of Classical Studies at Cambridge University.

So we find that rightness and wrongness in theoretical struggles might take two thousand years. I, unfortunately, haven't got that long to wait. And I am rather insistent that the changes that come about in the world come about during my life time, because I want to be part of them. So when we look at theoretical struggle we then say we have got these two arguments: you patch around with the bits that aren't quite working and on the other side that the whole lot is wrong and has to be overthrown. And the method of overthrowing it is by the growing of this emerging, subordinate ideology which comes into conflict with the dominant ideology until at a particular historical moment there is what Kuhn calls a paradigm shift.

Now you have probably had a good chunk of some sort of theory of librarianship which is in terms of the existing dominant ideology. I want to hint to some of the arguments which I consider to be part of the emerging ideology — which I would suggest is in turn going to become the dominant ideology, because it is right. At the moment it is right because I agree with it, and if I didn't think it was right I wouldn't agree with it.

The starting point of our paradigm has to be society as it is organised at the moment. I would suggest that society as it is organised at present exists in order to create conditions favourable to capital accumulation. That very crudely is so that the people who profit can make more profits. That is put at its crudest. Now I think that Sir Geoffrey Howe, Martin Webster, Jim Callaghan, and me might agree about that one thing: that society as it presently exists does

so so that those that control capital can maximise profits. From here onwards we would probably disagree.

I would then go on to say that society, and in particular the formation we are concerned with as librarians, the state, exists as two parts: to contribute to capitalist reproduction; and to contribute to capitalist production. Production of capital is of course creating conditions for the production of profit. The role of libraries in that one is in fact quite simple; every time we buy a book from Macmillans we are contributing to the profit of Macmillans. Every time we buy a book from Hamlyn, we are contributing to the profits of Granada Television. That is quite simple.

Contributing to capitalist reproduction in turn divides into two parts: reproducing the labour force, and reproducing the relations of production. Reproducing the labour force is quite simple: if we need skilled workers who can work in factories, then educating those skilled workers is reproducing the labour force. So school libraries and university libraries contribute directly to reproducing the labour force. They make better, more efficient workers. And of course by buying the books they contribute directly to capitalist production. The last one is a little more complicated: reproducing the relations of production. Not only do we have to reproduce workers who are skilled in their work, we also have to produce workers who are prepared to work, who are prepared to clock in in the morning and stay there till they go home at night. Workers who are prepared to not go on strike the whole time, despite what the *Daily Mail* might have you believe. Workers who are prepared to accept certain authority patterns, which lead to them doing what they are told to do — and that applies to the kiddi-winks in the schools and you and me, just as much as the rest. It requires them to work for wages, despite what the *Daily Mail* would have you believe. It requires them to have ideas about the family — about women working in the home, about women having a second job working in the workplace. It requires them having ideas about how children ought to be brought up, how children ought to behave. Libraries very clearly co-operate in that.

The other part of reproducing the relations of production is the actual repression that is necessary, because sometimes some of these people do not actually tow the line. Then the police, or the army as in Northern Ireland, Spain, and Chile, and a whole lot of other places, get called in. And we find a not-often mentioned role for librarianship in that lot. I was driving my banger around Old Street in London recently, and the exhaust pipe fell off, and I got stopped by a very pleasant policeman who said something to the effect of 'Excuse me sir, but your motor car is making a frightful noise. Who are you? May I see your driver's licence.' I gave him my name and address, and he trundled off to his motor car, got onto his dial-a-computer and forgot to switch the loud-speaker off. I was treated, for the next three minutes, to an extremely detailed description of my life, my practices, sexual proclivities, political activities, Uncle Tom Cobley and all. That is the kind of librarianship we don't hear an awful lot about. But it is the kind of librarianship that contributes directly to the

repressive aspects of introducing relations of production. So I would suggest that by looking at a model like that, we can see the particular forms of the roles that libraries operate under capitalism. When we see that, we see why it is that there are so many radical and alternative libraries which have some difficulty fitting into that.

And when I work as a committed socialist in a secondary school I am saying that somehow or other I have got to work with those kids in a different way than if I didn't have the political perspective that I have at the moment. That means that in my library I have to go back to my stock selection. I now have to look at the stock, ideas about racism, about the glories of the British Empire, about those poor savages in Africa and the West Indies, who, having been rescued from barbarism, are now living in Hackney in the most appalling living conditions, with the National Front daubing slogans on their walls, smashing their windows, and beating them up. I have got to look at my literature in terms of what it teaches me and the kids about a woman's position in society, about the woman in the home, about the whole thing of children and churches, and cooking. About the way housework is organised, about the equality of wages, about the job opportunities those kids are going to have when they leave school. I have to look at all that in terms of the whole stock I am providing for every single academic department in the school, plus the tutorial work, plus the bibliotherapy we do and the remedial education with the kids who have escaped the net so far and who cannot read or write, even though they are 12 or 13.

At the same time I have got to bear in mind that although those kids who can't read and write must learn how to read and write, if they learn from *The Sun* they're going to learn quite a lot else while they are learning to read and write. That presents some very interesting problems of stock selection. When you go on to advising the literature sections of the different departments: what is the role of fiction, poetry, plays? Then the whole thing comes out really beautifully because we have a whole field of philosophy called aesthetics which studies the good, the beautiful, the bad and the evil. I don't know how many of you took degrees in English literature, but if you did you probably did chunks of F.R. Leavis and Co. Ltd. Once you begin to restructure the organisation of society, what Leavis, Eliot and Co. have been doing becomes a very clear political and ideological operation, which then has to be combatted on its own grounds. You then have to go through a whole range of problems that people like Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams posed twenty years ago, to the almost indigestible stuff that Terry Eagleton and New Left Review are throwing out at the moment — you have got to try and make sense of that yourself, and then try and persuade a bunch of English teachers that it actually does make some difference that they understand it. So, once you have analysed society as you understand it, you have then got to go into a field like aesthetics, as they undoubtedly involve themselves in library systems and in library practice. You have to go into the whole school of systems theory, which is tremendously fashionable in schools of librarianship at the moment. This business of mana-

gement by directives and Communications Research — there is a whole lot of *Times* Crossword Code letters which are also fashionable in schools of librarianship at the moment. You have to go to the theoreticians behind it — people like Laslo and Schirer — and look at the internal contradictions to what they are saying and you have to be able to disprove general systems theory, not only on Kuhn's ground (that it is a dominant ideology in conflict with an emergent ideology) but that it is also internally contradictory on Karl Popper's grounds (in other words, it doesn't answer the questions).

There are other areas of study which you need to go into. I would suggest for us at the moment the most important one is to look at what I very crudely call

### THE RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

It is basically concerned with the way an item of stock becomes an item of stock. How do a filmstrip, a television programme, a book, an audio tape, come to be what they are? What is their relationship with the people who are involved in them? The people I am saying are involved in them are, first of all, the person who creates it, who then sends a script to a publisher, the publisher who sends the script to a printer, the printer who sends the script to a marketer, the marketer who sends the script to a distributor, and the distributor who sends a product to a purchaser. Here I must point out the various subordinate significances — the different forms, the type of relationship; for example, the publisher's major relationship is with the profit of his directors and shareholders. The relationship between the marketer, the art editor, the other media who are likely to be involved and advertisers, are going to be in terms of a very close company relationship, probably the same company. The distributor will have relationships with the whole of the distribution network of advertisers and marketers. By the time the purchaser gets that product it is not simply what the author originally wrote, it is this whole accumulation of ideological and economic and political influences. I shan't go into those in detail at the moment.

What we do find over the last twenty years, through the accumulation of capital, is that those institutions are increasingly controlled by the small number of people who control very large multi-nationals. For example, Octopus Book Publishing Company is directly owned by W.H. Smith's, who also have a large proportion of the shareholding of two of the Japanese electronic components production companies. They own a big chunk of Finland, where they produce their own paper, they own their own paper mills, and I gather they have recently bought up a shipping company to actually shift the stuff from one place to another. Smith's is not a large multi-national, nothing like Reed International for example, or the Thompson-Longman-Penguin-etc group, which is in turn a subsidiary of another multi-national.

From the point of purchase we then see the way in which librarians directly influence the text. For some bizarre reason, even in my library, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* goes at 398, but *Noah and the Ark*

goes at 220. As far as I am concerned Ali Baba and Noah are equally valid historical documentary material. They are probably equally sound as either a moral basis or as a philosophical basis if one actually wants one of them. But because one goes on the shelf under religion and the other on the shelf under fairy tales, the kids actually approach that material in very different ways. The difference between fiction and literature, the difference between the history of Europe and the history of Africa and Asia: these are differences which we influence directly in a very elementary way by the way we classify the stuff.

Once it is on the shelf, the act of selection that goes on, the relationship between the potential user, and the context of the use, is what has been rather glibly and poorly dealt with in what are usually called User Studies. In my mind they are almost a waste of time, because they haven't been put in a situation where you can make sense of what they are talking about. It is pointless talking about wants and needs. What we are talking about is a very complex relationship between context, perceiver, and product. Then, I read the book, but I don't approach it as an object in itself; I'm not some sort of Tabula Rasa that that Book can impress itself on. I'm not even a palimpsest that it can engrave itself on. I approach that book dialectically; in other words I make sense of that book in terms of my view of the world, and I change myself as a result of my view of that book. I then externalise that relationship in practice — usually of course by writing another book, at which point the whole of this model becomes like a roll-up cigarette. You can approach the problem from anywhere on it because there is a continual dialectical process in operation. So, any author who writes any book is the summation of that author's life world which in turn will be influencing the whole of the rest of society by the production of that commodity. That is what I call the relations of production and consumption and knowledge. I would suggest that is the major area of theoretical study for librarianship.

## TO RECAP

At a level of theoretical study we need to develop a model by which we understand the intersecting networks of operation of the whole of society, and libraries' place within it.

We need to understand the relations of production and consumption within that particular society as they affect us, our libraries and our stock.

We need to consider the various ideologies around our stock. At the moment the most important for me is aesthetics, tied up with the problems of racism and sexism. Those theoretical studies however need to continually impinge on stock selection, our ideas of the interrelationships of the media, and in our activities ensuring necessary bibliographical control. That area of professional practice needs to be continually transmitted through service to the people who are actually going to need that information in their everyday struggle.

No one person can communicate or involve himself in the whole of this performance. When any librarian wants to operate effectively in a workplace situation, then she does have to be involved in what is

going on in that workplace situation. That involves trade union activity, fighting against cuts in public spending so that this whole contradictory set-up can continue, because while libraries do in the main deal with rubbish, the fact they still exist is still important; defending them against cuts in public spending is then necessary. It is necessary that one doesn't get totally exhausted and demoralised by the whole performance, that one operates with a group of other people who actually share the perspective that you are operating on; that means building a large body of people for a long period of time who will together be capable of giving that push so that the emerging ideology can clear out the dominant ideology, purge the system of the rubbish that is around, because now we are held back the whole time by these social relations. Clear those social relations and we can move forward at a rate we cannot at the moment even imagine.

That is going to require a social transformation of such magnitude that the people who involve themselves in this process are generally called by *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail* 'revolutionaries'. What they call themselves depends on how tired they are as a result of having spent the last twenty-four hours involved in it.

Armand Mattelart  
Jean-Marie Piemme

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES, DECENTRALISATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE

(Belgium, 1980)

### UNDEFINED PLURALISM

One particular aspect of the new communication technologies which must be dealt with concerns their affects on the structure of the communication field and the problems which this poses. While it is of no use imagining all the possibilities of a new technology without situating it within the relations of force, there is, nevertheless, another domain where its impact can be measured: the other media. How does a new technology force the other media to be redefined? It is sufficient to see the regional press's uneasiness concerning the community television experiments to realise that this is not simply a theoretical question. We could also mention how the national press faces competition from videotext services or how radio-television institutions have undertaken a policy of overture towards non-professional participation. Even on the level of the content and structure of discourse, it is impossible not to take into account the interrelations of the media. The language of video, for example, in both its positive and negative aspects, is profoundly marked by the existence of various television languages. This is not the place to go into the restructuring of the communications field, medium by medium, or on the level of content, their function and their public. We would simply like to point out that the appearance of new technologies questions two notions which until now have seemed relatively self-explanatory: *monopoly* and *pluralism*.

The public monopoly, in contrast to the idea of a commercial communication model, has long been the major axis of a progressive communication model. By removing communication from financial interests has come the possibility of developing it as a public service. However, if this monopoly is to belong to everyone and not just a few, there must be guarantees of representation; hence arose the notion of pluralism in which public service became equivalent to the monopoly plus pluralism. For many, this idea of public service remains perfectly acceptable. It is still largely defended by certain sectors of the Left who regard its re-examination or even its simple questioning, as evidence of a suspicious adventurism. However, it cannot be denied that both the public

This text was first published in the authors' *Télévision: enjeux sans frontières (industries culturelles et politique de la communication)*, Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1980. Reprinted by permission of the authors. It was translated from the French by David Buxton. English translation Copyright International General 1982. This is its first English publication.

monopoly and pluralism have produced some powerful counter-effects. In addition to the fact that its real existence has to be continually questioned (in France, the public service very often appears on radio and television as a pale shadow of itself), pluralism has a dangerous tendency to be confused with a body of accepted opinion, even if antagonistic ones. As Henri Lefebvre writes in his *Manifeste différentialiste*:

Pluralism allows several ideologies, several opinions, several morals. For this liberality, it creates a philosophy. It forbids dogmatism and opposes itself to repressive systematisations. Very good. However, liberal pluralism systematises and dogmatizes in its own way. The list of accepted opinions is short; the liberal allows several morals, but demands one morality. It accepts several religious but demands one religiosity. In both in paleo- and neo- forms, liberalism tends to institutionalise accepted opinions, acceptable or moral ideologies ... Because of this, there is a tendency to consecrate the opinions and values admitted by the establishment.

It is precisely the perception of the institution's overly-strong presence which has often been, in principle, the video and community television groups' point of departure in the name of re-establishing intimacy between people. From this comes the demand for participation in the communication process, thus implicitly questioning the notion of monopoly. Of course, confronted with the offensive of private interests which dream — and consequently act — of dismantling the radio-television institutions such as they now exist, one can understand the caution of those who find it difficult to accept the destruction of a national instrument in exchange for the vague hope of a regenerated local communication. This healthy scepticism should not prevent us, however, from recognising that today the public monopoly is no longer identified with the idea of public service. Or, more precisely, a new definition for the idea of public service must be found, one which integrates both old and new technologies, as well as the national and local context.

The basis of this new definition should be the relation to active groups, whether or not they are institutional. Today, the most pressing problem of information seems to be essentially its relative incapacity to give the right to speak, or even the possibility, to groups whose activity is obvious, but whose minority character in practice prevents them from having an effective presence in the domain of information. It is in relation to these minority groups that the notion of public service reveals its most blatant ambiguities.

Does the notion of public service necessarily refer back to a form of organisation of the consensus, or, on the contrary, should it be defined starting from the opposing idea of private appropriation? The consequences vary enormously if one chooses one or the other option. The notion of public service as a way of organising the consensus fits in very well with the connections between institutional groups, recognised as being more or less representative in function of the state of the general political relations of force. In this case, public service thus coincides with the interests of the parties, pressures groups, trade union leaderships, etc, apparatuses. This, of course,

1. Henri Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste différentialiste*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970, pp 134-5.

does not exclude differences, or even contradictions, between these apparatuses. However, if there is a consensus, it only exists to the extent that it arises from the more or less precarious equilibrium between the discourses of these apparatuses. The idea that pluralism coincides with apparatuses can be defended in so far as these apparatuses really do, in fact coincide with the social bases they are supposed to represent. The fierces representatives of pluralism defend in general the strong presence of majorities and the minoritisation of minorities by basing themselves on the representative character of the apparatuses. But they rarely question whether or not the apparatuses are representative; and above all, of what they are supposed to be representative.

Today's socio-political reality is such that large sectors of people no longer identify with these apparatuses, or at best, identify only partially. The spectre of parliamentary Cretinism haunts Europe again as the official Left sells off its thought and its future in favour of exclusively electoral tactics. The old debate from the 19th and early 20th centuries between revolutionary marxism and reformism survives today as a self-parody, and compared to present-day social democrats, the great names of social democracy in the past appear as serious and coherent thinkers. The trade union hierarchies also do not escape from the rank and file contestation; in Belgium, union officials often complain that the RTB [Radio-Television Belge] pays too much attention to wildcat strikes.

Here, and there, inside and outside the apparatuses, specific groups arise and take forms which develop, on the flanks of old discourses and organisations, a number of new contradictions which effect the social body in another way. At the moment, we cannot say that this inadequacy or that thrust, whose consequences weight heavily on the future, have the place they should have in media information policy. Today, public service is more conceived as a mirror of accepted opinion than as a place reflecting the inadequacies, incoherencies, contradictions and decisive questions posed by these acts of displacement exterior to these apparatuses. Apart from starry-eyed dreams of "really existing socialism" or claims to be on the Left through sheer opportunism, it is difficult to see how reflections on communication which seek to be an alternative to current policy could envisage a public service information which gives preference to those who are the *status quo* rather than to the places where change is taking place. To attain this objective, a number of established facts must be questioned, notably the sacrosanct notion of monopoly.

The idea of monopoly has been fundamental in blocking the development of the private, commercial concept of the audio-visual communication media, but it also carries a weight of its own. In a country like France, the monopoly is used by the Right, while simultaneously, it slowly dismantles it; in a country like Belgium, the notion has lost all meaning due to the very development of cable television. This means that television viewers in Belgium—the most cabled country in the world—have over ten foreign channels to choose from (Luxembourg, France, the Netherlands, West Germany, and even Britain) in addition

to its own national channels. These factors, together with the possibilities offered by new technologies, transform the idea of public monopoly into something different from what it was in the 1950s and 1960s. This calls for a re-valuation of the relevancy, not in the light of a return to a liberal media concept—the Italian example is convincing enough not to need repeating—but in light of a positive offensive to deepen the possibilities of a real political alternative. If, however, it seems obvious that the notion of monopoly must be re-evaluated, then new problems arise, mainly in the disjunction which is made between the monopoly question and adjacent realities. Thus, we find, for example, that even when taking into account the advent of new technologies, partisans for the reconversion of the public monopoly will rarely link this reconversion to a half-way serious redefinition of pluralism and public service. In affirming a fidelity to these two notions, believing or pretending that they are utterly progressive, one omits, above all, to question the concrete content of these notions in the context of a general concept of how the Left functions today. One wants to redistribute the cards but without admitting that this could change the rules of the game.

If the question of the use of new technologies is inseparable from a redefinition of the mode of operation of old technologies, it is because both depend on a more profound reflection on the concrete problems posed by the elaboration of a communication policy. Today, this deepening of understanding is taking place in terms accessible to everyone, and it cannot be avoided. Among the most important are the following: What are the possible material conditions in which an effective pluralism can function, one which resolutely turns its back on the search for consensus as well as the religious certitudes of dogmatism? Does such a pluralism imply that anyone can say anything? If not, where can the line of demarcation be drawn between what is allowed and what is not? Who decides this line and who monitors it? Is pluralism a notion which applies equally to other fields? How can we reconcile the existence of pluralism with the fact that opinions are never present with equal strength in the communication field? Are there certain cases of urgency or where priorities have been established in which it is better to tone-down pluralism? In which case, how can we avoid entering the cycle of Left repression, when we know that the Left itself is always the final victim? What sort of historical analysis must we produce to determine at a given moment, the exact limits of the contradictions of pluralism? How can we avoid turning the preceding questions into academic or doctrinal debates and proceed to work concretely on concrete situations? What should be the structure of a public service which would avoid, as much as possible, the process of elimination and the deprivation of the right to speak? In what context can subjectivity be spoken without simply reducing communications to be the sum total of different subjectivities? How can we construct a communication apparatus which is close to active groups without simply being their transmission belt? How can we maintain quality and competence in the communication process without simply making these barriers

to its own national channels. These factors, together with the possibilities offered by new technologies, transform the idea of public monopoly into something different from what it was in the 1950s and 1960s. This calls for a re-valuation of the relevancy, not in the light of a return to a liberal media concept—the Italian example is convincing enough not to need repeating—but in light of a positive offensive to deepen the possibilities of a real political alternative. If, however, it seems obvious that the notion of monopoly must be re-evaluated, then new problems arise, mainly in the disjunction which is made between the monopoly question and adjacent realities. Thus, we find, for example, that even when taking into account the advent of new technologies, partisans for the reconversion of the public monopoly will rarely link this reconversion to a half-way serious redefinition of pluralism and public service. In affirming a fidelity to these two notions, believing or pretending that they are utterly progressive, one omits, above all, to question the concrete content of these notions in the context of a general concept of how the Left functions today. One wants to redistribute the cards but without admitting that this could change the rules of the game.

These questions are only examples; there are surely others, and even these will probably have to be elaborated much more precisely. To find the right answers, one must first ask the right questions. Without an overall examination of a communication policy, any reflection on the relation between old and new technologies is illusory.

### INTERNATIONALISATION VERSUS THE NATION-STATE

The commercialisation of European television has already largely begun and radically questions the autonomy of Nation-State communication systems. The launching of satellites and the possible extension of cable TV systems may establish competition between national channels, whose operation, based on a *de facto* or legal existence of the public monopoly, reflects a specific historical heritage.

At the same time, the idea of a public service closely linked to that of public monopoly, is called into question. Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies projects the television apparatus into much more complex communications networks which no longer affects only the entertainment industries and news reporting. From video-animation to community television, free radios to Citizen's Band, cassettes to databanks, Eurovision to telematics, television is engaged in a multiple process of redefinition. In such a context, it is difficult to imagine how the notion of public service could remain untouched by any re-questioning.

The business of messages is obviously not recent. But what is radically new today is that it is directly affected, on the one hand, by the structural transformation of international exchanges, and, on the other, by the transformation of communications systems.

To understand these processes, we must rigorously circumscribe the general organic framework in which they are taking place. One cannot talk about the media and the culture industries today by avoiding more general, even abstract, problematics. The transformation of communications systems must therefore be related to the changes occurring in the relations between European states, the links between Europe and the Trilateral system, and finally, last but not least, the interdependent relations between European states and the proletarian nations—as we have seen in the case of Belgium and Malaysia. The restructuring of the world economy has made the reshaping of the Nation-State imperative. This reshaping has granted a prime place to the cultural and communication sector. Here, one is faced with a paradox. Whereas the commercialisation/privatisation process is well advanced, the Nation-State has never before been so preoccupied with communication and culture. How should this interest be interpreted? The paradox is resolved if one refers to the present evolution in the function of the Nation-State. The Nation-State is asked not to dissolve itself in an internationalisation without borders, but to manage its national economic and institutional life in the interests of the multinationals. In this reorganisa-

tion, communication networks within national borders cease being centripetal and become centrifugal. This has a twofold purpose: to facilitate the transmission of internal information for decision-making which will take place externally, and in return, to supply the necessary material for the production of a consensus. It should be remembered once again, that this dynamic is not installed against the Nation-State (as some too easily imagine by postulating a neutral State devoured from the exterior by the multinational *deus ex machina*) but with the complicity of the Nation-State, dominated by national bourgeoisies.

However, these transformations do not occur without resistance which can eventually base themselves on the contradictions within the State, as it is the expression of the compromise between the social classes and groups which make up the nation. Within these resistances, it is important to distinguish those which potentially can produce a "surplus value" of democracy from those fighting a rear-guard action or those progressive forces who cling to the terms of a debate already made obsolete by reality. Here we can include certain discussions on the public service, decentralisation and the political and ideological way of producing new contents and form for both the old and new technologies. The dilemmas which have marked, and still mark, debates—when they exist at all—on communication policies must be denounced. Especially it must be remembered that the public service and decentralisation have no progressive virtues in themselves. Only the identification of the relations of force which are behind the notions of public service and decentralisation, and which give these relations politico-ideological significance, can help advance the positive aspect of these hypotheses. A public service maintained for corporatist reasons is just as pernicious as a decentralisation which aims only at the decentralisation of power.

The political relevance of the public service and decentralisation leads back to the need to evaluate, within the underlying relations of force, if one of the forces is engaged in a process of learning democracy. This condition is the only one which should characterise the avant-garde combats in the communication sector.

However, democracy is not necessarily where we think it is. "Small" is not necessarily "beautiful". At a time when the sphere of capital is being globalised, the bourgeoisie thinks "world-wide", while encouraging the petite-bourgeoisie to think "local". When the local is put forward to hold back the constraints of the "world-wide" or "international", one is led to support a movement in which meaning grows smaller, and a premium is put on the ability to act in concrete situations. The local seems to signify a return to the concrete, at the same time as the concrete it rediscovers takes us definitely further away from the possibilities of understanding a vaster reality from which the concrete takes its meaning.

The "local" is of real interest only where it permits, more so than a traditional use of the communication media, a better grasp, by virtue of its proximity, of the dialectic between the abstract and the concrete, between the experienced and the universal, between the individual and the collectivity. As Claude Julien rightly points out:



It is too easily admitted that by virtue of the speed of the communication media and travelling facilities, the world is more and more interdependent. This community of circumstances, is, in fact, larger, and the future of everyone depends more and more on decisions made in distant places or on events taking place in different parts of the planet. But the real mechanisms of this interdependence are extremely complex and badly explained. This is perhaps why man has rarely felt so alone. He never felt this way when his life was conditioned by a small community whose different members were known to one another. But he is alone when this small community is itself the plaything of unknown forces and powers capable of taking decisions with very sophisticated mechanisms and with diversified effects on a world-wide scale. Is it still possible to discover and make known the links which establish a real fraternity between men who are divided by geography, different civilisations, unequal conditions of existence and the conflicts between their interests? All the communication and information media should aim at this goal by always bearing in mind the two ends of the chain: the "small" local fact and its distance scientific, financial and political causes. . . .<sup>2</sup>

At a time when the model of capital accumulation is changing, no social consciousness can express itself if it does not link the situation of each man and woman with the increasingly distant and abstract causes which condition these situations. To this extent, and to this extent only, the "local" has an interest, a possibility to act, and an ability to change the relations of force between what arises within small groups and the mass information media.

Finally, the information media function as a series of filters. From the local fact to the regional correspondent, then to the regional journal and finally to the national information media there takes place a series of eliminations and incomplete syntheses which are more or less faithful analyses. Even supposing that the "mass" news media do their job correctly, they would still be incapable of bringing attention to the multitude of facts which make up the very framework of the news. Thus, the local press has, in any case, an irreplaceable role to play. But this role cannot be limited to the description of local facts and problems which are ignored by the "mass" information media. This local process cannot treat the town or neighbourhood as an island cut off from the rest of the world. When, for example, it allows laid-off textiles workers to express themselves, it must rediscover the thread which links their destiny to the *fellahs* of the cotton plantations, to the laboratories developing new synthetic fibres, and to financial speculation and international competition.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Belgium, community television practice, sometimes prisoner of a "localist" conception of the local, too often proposes a reductionist

2. Claude Julien "Les deux bouts de la chaîne . . . et le milieu", in *Alternatives* (Paris), 4th Quarter 1977; a issue on the local press.

3. *Ibid.*

4. For a general critique of "localism", see J.-P. Garnier and P. Goldschmidt, *Le socialisme a visage urbain; Essai sur la "local-democracy"* Paris, Eds. Rupture, 1978.

5. On culturalism as politics, see Yannis Thannassekos "La politique culturelle en Belgique: De la misère culturelle au culte de la misère", *Critique Politique* (Brussels), I, December 1978; and Yannis Thannassekos and Roland Lew, "La frenesie culturelle", *Le Monde diplomatique* (Paris), December 1979.

news content so that the national channel succeeds, because of the social forces working there and the means it possesses, in reconstructing a more satisfactory explanatory context. In France, unlike Belgium, the national news sector has always been the principal axis of State power in its struggle for hegemony. Here, the question of the production of local news (and not "localist") takes on more importance in as much as it is able to constitute a counter-information.

How can we give a more precise content to the fundamental idea of linking a communication alternative to the existence of groups involved in learning and deepening the democratic process? In the same way that the local can degenerate into a localism when it only communicates limited, or anecdotal news,<sup>4</sup> the work of groups or movements in opposition to the *status quo* can also have their efficiency reduced as soon as they are limited and isolated from the effects of other movements. It is a question of interrelationships between these groups, and the relations they can maintain with traditional popular movements and the organisations which, historically, these movements have built.

Thus the aim of an alternative communication practice should be the realisation of the dialectic between the particular and the universal, which at the same time brings together in face-to-face debate the different groups and movements concerned. Connecting these links is the only way of concretising the chain of meaning between that which affects oneself and that which affects everyone. From this work of chain-linking, one can hope to break the alliance which the bourgeoisie seeks to forge with the new intellectual and technical petite-bourgeoisie. To conserve its hegemony, the monopoly bourgeoisie must implement a redeployment rationale which redistributes its relations with other classes. This implies giving the new petite-bourgeoisie a part of ruling power, notably in the cultural and communication domain. Thus, the new petite-bourgeoisie is called upon at the local and cultural level to assume the management of the fallout resulting from a global strategic orientation stemming from the process of the internationalisation of capital. With the development of the new petite-bourgeoisie, there is a strong temptation to *culturalise* the social and the political, ie, to treat in a cultural manner problems that one does not want—or has an interest in being unable—to treat in political terms. The most prominent manifestations of this can be found in certain tendencies in cultural animation, certain conceptions of cultural action, a certain neo-Labour Party mythology of self-management, and an over-estimation of culture together with an underestimation of social consciousness.<sup>5</sup> Of course, culturalism was not invented by the crisis. It has always existed as an idealist tendency in the social sciences, in some literary and artistic schools, and in diverse philosophical or "scientific" attempts to grasp the real. But because of the redefinition of the relation bourgeoisie/new petite-bourgeoisie and the ruling power's technological means, culturalism has become a possible way of governing. It presents the strategic advantage of appearing to deal with real problems by giving them in concrete reality, a

mystified solution.

## TOWARDS NEW ALLIANCES

If culturalism exists as an objective strategy, this does not imply the necessity of abandoning the culture and communication field. On the contrary, we must define this field as a political stake and forge other types of alliances there. Through the new systems of communication technology, the dominant classes propose a project of interconnection between groups, classes and individuals. While this logic is necessary for the bourgeoisie, it is not necessarily a victory. The new connections which the bourgeoisie is forced into will only supplement "normalisation" if the dominated classes let develop with these new technologies the bourgeoisie's model for managing the lives of others. A number of old compartmentalisations, between production and non-production; work and leisure; and work, leisure and education could become uncertain under the impetus of technological development. In the 19th century, technological evolution, dominated by a form of capitalist social relations, radically separated the worker from his means of production, thus enabling a new development of capital. Dialectically, however, this situation generated new relations between the exploited; with new forms of communication and struggle to link them together. It is through the dialectical model that we must try to understand the possible effects of the new technologies. One of the effects resides in the eventual possibility of bring together groups and classes in struggles which are different from those encouraged by previous modes of communication. But the forms which this coming together will take remains dependent on the type of social relations which exist where it takes place. In other words, nothing will be like it was before, but nothing indicates that the real will be automatically modified in a democratic direction.

Today, the course being taken by the institutional readjustments in the liberal democracies, the increasing tendency to limit individual liberties and extend the field of exceptional measures, the international constraints imposed on capitalism to overcome the recession, and the profound crisis affecting working-class political and union organisations make a communication policy indispensable, both as an alternative to the dominant model, but also as one which breaks with the concept of both old and new media as being opinion carriers or representative of the public.<sup>6</sup> The media are not—and should no longer be—instruments for the representation of a real which is elaborated from outside, or worse still, on their behalf. They must be direct instruments for the production of the cultural identity of a country's active groups and movements. But they should also ensure that this identity is confronted with others, thus put into question and constantly subject to remodelling. It is not the role of the media to represent groups, but to make them work from the inside, for the outside.

With these objectives, multiple voices can reply

6. See Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *De l'usage des medias en temps de crise*, Paris, Alain Moreau, 1979.

to one another, and different groups can converge. Even if, as we have shown, resistance to "mediated" culture should not only take place within the media, it is nonetheless true that it is essential to try and occupy all the spaces ceded or torn from the ruling power. This applies to journalists, television directors, filmmakers, technicians—who have not always waited to be told to resist—as well as the many professional categories—engineers, scientists, statisticians, managers, computer scientists, *etc.*—who can have direct or indirect influence on the new organisation of information systems. The bearers of these different knowledges, often underestimated as producers of knowledge, consciousness and information—a journalist forbidden from broadcasting is always more "visible" than a technician working for ITT, Philips or Thomson-CSF—through technological change and the effects of its related restructuring, become important chains in the formation of an offensive politics of resistance. All too often, professional categories linked to communication remain impervious to one another because they ignore the remote logic of the development of the new information systems. Henceforth, the creation of another communication model, and in the long run, another way of life, takes place by questioning both the dependency of the news media on multinational news agencies, as well as the formation of databanks which surrender a country's cultural heritage and its economic future. It also takes place through the production of a new imagination and another relation between people, as well as the resistance to the new international division of labour whose effects can be felt in research laboratories, studios and assembly lines, *etc.*

Trade union organisations remain privileged sectors of resistance in companies or institutions responsible for installing and managing these systems of power, on the condition that corporatism does not weigh too heavily. If corporatism is dominant, it blocks any transformations of the communication system by holding back the flood of new actors (informal groups, other movements and institutions, new tendencies, the university, *etc.*) indispensable to these transformations. This implies that trade union movements and parties directly involved in operating the communication systems, must question themselves on the social relations which have developed within them and the mechanisms of power which they support. Communication alternatives are not independent of the development of the debate on their internal operation. Neither are communication alternatives independent in their capacity to run their own information organs.

We are a long way from the flabby amorphous pluralism of a self-mutilating equilibrium, a long way from the sterile quarrels on the definition of objectivity and falsely serious debates on the advent of the audiovisual media, and a long way from petty partisan schemes for reducing the information media to simple transmission belts. We are a long way from alternative communication concepts solely based on the "classic" media self-motivation. The very idea of the media is being transformed, and with it, the idea of information and culture. We can no longer simply reflect on a new kind of radio broadcasting or a

progressive conception of the audio-visual industries. One can only have a new idea of communication conceived as an overall policy in which intervene traditional forms of image and knowledge production, as well as that taking place in education and the work place, new technological contributions, and new forms of production and reception of messages and information.

The production of a communication alternative is more than ever linked to the production of new social relations. We put forth this idea in opposition to the wishful thinking that expects social transformation to come from a "redemptive" form of communication, as well as in opposition to any mythologies which would have us believe that only the coming of the "great day" can generate a new form of communication. Humility is the order of the day. New social relations are not the means for a new communication. And a new form of communication will not be the means for new social relations. One and the other undergo, in parallel, the same long, slow effort in the construction of a popular culture. Neither populist, nor anti-science, nor anti-intellect—these all being characteristics of mass culture in the traditional sense—this popular culture will be forged from the contributions of multiple groups in struggle, in which economic resistance, the questioning of individual and collective forms of power, artistic practices and everyday activities all intersect.

## APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following selected bibliography is intended to assist the reader who wants to study in depth the development of popular and working-class communication and culture, its theory and practice under different historical and social-political conditions, and its contemporary expression, which were analyzed in the second volume of this anthology.

This bibliography includes 660 entries: books, anthologies, and pamphlets written from Marxist, critical and progressive perspectives in English, French, Spanish, Italian and German, for the most part, from the mid-nineteenth century through 1982. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, it includes very few individual articles or mimeographed or unpublished manuscripts, of which there is a virtually unlimited production.

There is no duplication between the 660 entries listed here and the 500 which were previously listed in the first volume (pp. 431-441), many of which would be equally relevant for this volume. This is especially the case for many of the entries in the "Bibliographies" section, and sections "A" and "B", and, naturally, the listing of reviews.

The entries are listed alphabetically by author or title under the two sections and related sub-sections indicated below. Each entry follows standard bibliographic form, with anthologies indicated by an asterisk "\*" preceding the author or title.

The bibliography is organized in the same way as were the contents in the second volume of the anthology itself. In addition, we have added a very brief list of reviews and addresses not included in the first volume:

### I. BOOKS, ANTHOLOGIES, AND PAMPHLETS

- E. Popular Culture and Communication: Elements Towards a Definition
  - F. Popular Communication and Cultural Practices
  - G. Socialist Communication Processes
  - H. Towards a Globalization of Struggles
- ### II. REVIEWS

The entries, selected by the editors, Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelau, for the most part have been drawn from the extensive documentation files and research library of the International Mass Media Research Center, and also, from its ongoing publication, *Marxism and the Mass Media: Towards a Basic Bibliography*.

For the reader searching additional information about these books and publications, the entries ending with a 'CN' number indicates that they have already been annotated and can be found in an issue of the *Marxism and the Mass Media* bibliography. Furthermore, if the reader is searching a copy of the book or publication itself—often Left publications on communications are not purchased by libraries—

he or she can write to the research center in Bagnolet, France, where many of these documents can be consulted at the library by appointment.

Lastly, this bibliography is not a "finished", "definitive" product intended for passive consumption. We hope it will stimulate the reader's own work and thus develop marxist communication theory and political practice. For our small part, we welcome information concerning forthcoming publications or material we may have overlooked, so we can improve our work and include this new information when the next edition of this anthology is published.

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## II. REVIEWS

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## APPENDIX: NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

[NOTE: The biographies of the authors whose work also appeared in the first volume are not duplicated here.]

SALVADOR ALLENDE was born in Valparaiso, Chile, and was a doctor. He was Minister of Health in the "Frente Popular" government under the presidency of Pedro Aguirre Cerda in the late 1930s. He was one of the founders of the Chilean Socialist Party and actively contributed to the process of the union of left parties which resulted in the 1969 creation of the "Popular Unity". He was a senator and deputy for 30 years before becoming President of Chile in September 1970. He was assassinated on 11 September 1973 by revolting rightwing officers in the Moncada, where he resisted with firearms in hand with his collaborators, including Augusto Olivieres, president of the left journalists' association.

GUILIA BARONE was born in 1947 and has a degree as an archivist-paleographer at the Scuola di Paleografia e Diplomatica at the L'Archivio Segreto Vaticano, and is conservator of manuscripts at the School for Archivists and Librarians at the University of Rome; ARMANDO PETRUCCI was born in 1932, and from 1957 through 1972 was librarian at the Library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome, and is a teacher at the Scuola di Paleografia e Diplomatica at the University of Rome.

LLUIS BASSETS, a Catalan, was born in 1952 in Barcelona. He is a Professor of Sociology in the Faculty of Information Sciences at the Universidad Belleterra. In addition to his work as editor of the cultural page for the newspaper *El País*, he is the author of *De las ondas rojas a la radios libres* (Barcelona, Gili, 1982).

BERTOLT BRECHT was born in Germany in 1898 and died in 1956. In addition to his renown as a dramatist and poet, he is also a major marxist cultural theorist, but unfortunately, very little of his work exists in English. During the 1920s he worked in Germany developing his epic theatre until the rise of Nazism, and in 1933 he went into exile, living in Denmark and then the USA, from where he was deported by the HUAC in 1948. Later he moved to East Berlin, where he directed the Berliner Ensemble. Among the important collection of his writings on culture are his *Schriften zum Literatur und Kunst*, 2 volumes, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), *Schriften zum Theatre*, 7 volumes, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1963-64), and *Brecht On Theatre: The Development of An Aesthetic*, John Willet, ed. (N.Y., Hill & Wang, 1964). His numerous plays include *Man Is Man* (1926), *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *Mother Courage* (1941), *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1953), and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1955).

DAVID BUXTON, the translator of the French texts, was born in Oamaru, New Zealand in 1955 and graduated with a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Wellington. He has studied at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and at the Université de Paris VII (Jussieu), where he is currently completing a doctorate on the development of the star-system in rock music, its relationship to musical technology and its influence on consumerist ideology. He has also translated Armand Mattelart's UNESCO report, *The Socio-cultural Influence of Transnational Corporations On Developing Countries*.

ETIENNE CABET (1788-1856), was a French lawyer, member of the *Chambre des Deputés*, and a Utopian Communist, whose doctrine was set forth in his book *Le Voyage en Icarie* (1840). He was also a journalist, and the

editor of *Le populaire*, for which LAURENT-ANTOINE PAGNERRE was the manager.

FIDEL CASTRO was born in Cuba in 1926, and was educated as a lawyer. From 1952 he was an open critic of the Batista dictatorship, and after an unsuccessful attack against an army post on 26 July 1953, he went to Mexico where he organized the "26th of July Movement". In December 1956, he and eleven other people, including his brother Raúl and Che Guevara, landed in Cuba, and after 2 years of intensive guerrilla struggle, they overthrew the Batista dictatorship on 1 January 1959. Since that time, he has continued to guide the gradual installation of a socialist society in Cuba. His books include *Ten Years of Revolution* (1964), *History Will Absolve Me* (1968), and *Fidel Castro Speaks* (1970).

MALCOLM COAD, the translator of most of the Spanish texts, has worked with numerous Latin American theatre groups and filmmakers, and has translated many film scripts and books. He has written on Latin American affairs, and teaches evening classes at a London adult education college. He recently worked on a TV program on Latin American Cinema for the new British TV Channel Four.

The COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (also known as the COMINTERN) was founded in Moscow on 2 March 1919 under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, as a central directing organ for leading world revolution and the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale. The Second Congress met in July 1920, and the Third in July 1921. In total there were seven congresses until its dissolution by Stalin in May 1943.

ARIEL DORFMAN is a Chilean writer now living in exile, and is currently active in the Latin American anti-fascist movement. He is the author of many novels, stories, poems and essays centered on the problem of cultural liberation and imperialism, among which are *How to Read Donald Duck* (with Armand Mattelart) (International General, 1975), *Missing, Moros en la Costa, Crias Ojos, Reader's Nuestros Que Estás en la Tierra, Superman y sus amigos de alma* (with Manuel Jofré), *Pruebas al canto, and Imaginación y violencia en América*.

HANNS EISLER was born in 1898 in Leipzig, and he studied with Arnold Schönberg, and conducted Workers' Choirs in Vienna. In addition to numerous musical compositions, he collaborated on numerous plays and films with Bertolt Brecht, Erich Weinert, Ernest Busch, Joris Ivens, and Edwin Piscator, among others, and was music critic for the *Rote Fahne*. In 1933 he emigrated from Germany, and later travelled extensively, giving concerts, lectures, and making records in London, the USSR, for the International Brigades in Spain, etc. Later he went to the USA, where he worked for many years, with Brecht, T.W. Adorno, Fritz Lang, among others, before being deported by the HUAC in 1948. He then moved to the DDR in 1949, where he died in September 1962. An important collection of his writings can be found in *Hanns Eisler, A Rebel In Music: Selected Writings*, Manfred GRABS, ed. (Berlin, DDR, Seven Seas, 1978).

FRANTZ FANON was born in 1925 in Martinique, and studied medicine in France, later specializing in psychiatry. At the outbreak of the Algerian War he was working at a hospital in Algeria and soon became an active supporter, spokesman and theoretician for the liberation movement, but he did not live to see an independent Algeria, as he died of Leukemia in 1961. His works include *A Dying Colonialism, The Wretched of the Earth, Towards An African Revolution, Black Skins, White Masks, and The Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon*.

AMBROSIO FORNET was born in Cuba in 1932, and is a literary advisor for the Instituto Cubano del Libro in Havana. The text included here is taken from his forthcoming study on the development of the book in Cuba.

JULIO GARCIA ESPINOSA is a Cuban filmmaker. Before the Revolution, he studied film in Italy as an assistant director with the Neo-realists, and later, in Cuba, was one of the first persons responsible for the film department of the "26th of July Movement" during the struggle against the Batista dictatorship. With the triumph of the Revolution, he directed numerous films, notably, *Las aventuras de Juan Quinquín*, and with Alfredo Guevara, founded the ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Artes e Industrias Cinematograficas). In 1977 he was appointed Vice-Minister of Culture, and in 1982 became Director of the ICAIC.

PIERRE GAUDIBERT was born in Paris in 1928, and is an art critic and sociologist of culture. In addition to articles and reports on questions of cultural policy, cultural animation and art/politics, he is the author of *Art et Contestation* (Brussels, 1968), *Action Culturelle: integration et / ou subversion* (Brussels, Paris, Castermann, 1972), and *De L'Ordre Moral* (Paris, Grasset, 1970). He is presently curator at the Musée de peinture et de sculpture de Grenoble.

ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA was born in Rosario, Argentina in 1928. He was a doctor and practiced medicine for a short time in Bolivia. After much travelling throughout Latin America, he was in Guatemala in 1953 when the President Jacobo Arbenz attempted an agrarian reform program against the interests of the United Fruit Company. After the overthrow of Arbenz by the Colonel Castillo Armas supported by the CIA, he went to Mexico, where he met Fidel Castro and his comrades, who were preparing the "Granma" expedition. He landed with them in Cuba, and became the Commander of one of the guerrilla fronts against the Batista dictatorship. After the victory of the "26th of July Movement", he was President of the Central Bank of Cuba. In 1965 he went to Africa, where he fought alongside the national liberation movements in central Africa. After a brief return to Cuba, he left for Bolivia to lead the guerrillas of the ELN. He was taken prisoner by the Bolivian troops and was murdered on the order of the President and US military consellers. His books include *El dairo del Che en Bolivia, La guerra de guerrillas*, and *El Socialismo y el Hombre en Cuba*.

PHIL GUNSON, the translator of the Portuguese texts and some of the Spanish, is a freelance journalist and translator, specializing in Latin America. He also does radio broadcasts for independent local radio, and for the BBC World Service.

WOLFGANG FRITZ HAUG was born in 1936 in Esslinger am Necker, and studied Philosophy, Literature, Theatre and Religion. He is presently Professor of Philosophy at the Free University of Berlin, and since 1959 is a co-founder and director of the review *Das Argument*. His books include *Kritik des Absurdismus* (1966-76), *Der hilflose Antifaschismus* (1967), *Kritik der Warenästhetik* (1971), *Zeitungsroman* (1980), *Warenästhetik und Kapitalistische Massenkultur I* (1980), and co-author of *Theorien über Ideologie* (1979).

EDWIN HOERNLE was an advisor for peasant questions for the Central Committee of the German Communist Party (KPD), and a militant and reporter for both the *Arbeiter-Fotograf* and the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zietung*.

BERT HOGENKAMP was born in Amsterdam in 1951 and studied at the University of Amsterdam. He has written numerous articles on film and photography and the working class, of which many were published in the Dutch film review *Skrien*, of which he was an editor from 1974 to 1977. In 1978 he worked with documentary filmmaker Joris Ivens and the staff of the Netherlands Filmmuseum (Amsterdam) on an exhibition to commemorate Ivens' 80th birthday and 50 years of filmmaking. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and*

*Television*. With Wilfred Oranje he translated and edited Sergei M. Eisenstein's writings, *Lessen in regie* (1979), and *Montage* (1982); and his writings have been published in *Alltag I* (1979), *Möglichkeiten des Dokumentarfilms* (1979), *Culture and Crisis In Britain In the 1930s* (1979), *Photography/Politics: One* (1979), *Sociale Fotografie* (1981), *De Arbeidersfotografen* (1982), and *Propaganda, Politics and Film 1918-45* (1982). He edited *Der Bergarbeiter im Spielfilm* (1982), and *De Borinage* (1983) with Henri Storck. He is currently working on a book about film and the British working-class movement in the 1930s, as well as a major work, *A World Bibliography of Left Writings On Photography, Typography, Design & Posters* (International General, forthcoming 1984).

FRANZ HOLLERING was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* from 1925 through 1928.

STUART HOOD, the translator of the German texts and those of Antonio Gramsci, was born in 1915, and has a M.A. in English Literature from Edinburgh. He saw military service between 1940-46, and from 1946 through 1964 worked for the BBC, as Head of the World Service, as Television News Editor, and as Controller of Programmes (BBC-TV) from which he resigned. He has written three novels, and an autobiography on his time spent with Italian partisans. In addition to his work as a critic, translator and scriptwriter, he is also a Lecturer in Communication at Goldsmith's College. His numerous books include *A Survey of Television* (London, Heinemann, 1967), *The Mass Media* (London, MacMillan, 1972), *On Television* (London, Pluto, 1980), and he contributes regularly to numerous reviews.

DAVID KUNZLE was born in England in 1936. He is an art historian, and has written extensively on the comic strip, political posters, and on questions of art/politics and revolutionary art. His books include *The Early Comic Strip* (Berkeley, UCB, 1973), *U.S. Posters of Protest*, and recently, *Fashion and Fetishism* (1981). He is presently a Professor of Art at UCLA, and continues to research on the history of the comic strip, popular imagery, and cultural history in general.

JOHN LINDSAY was a school librarian in Hackney, East London in 1979, when he wrote the article included here. He is active in numerous groups, including the Gay Librarians Group, Librarians Against Racism, and is a member of Librarians for Social Change, and the Socialist Workers Party. He also writes frequently on librarianship, the media, gay studies, and socialism.

EL LISSITSKY was born near Smolensk in 1890 and died of illness in USSR in 1941. He studied architecture and engineering at Darmstadt, and later taught at the Moscow Academy of Arts. His principle work was as a designer, and after the Revolution he worked mostly on posters, book design, typography and architectural drawings. From the late 1920s, he worked primarily on furniture and interior design, and during the 1930s, on Soviet exhibitions and pavillon buildings.

PAOLA M. MANACORDA has a degree in Mathematical Sciences, and from 1961 she worked in the data-processing field. Presently she is a consultant for the Emilia-Romagna regional government on health and social information, and coordinates a research group on these questions. She has taught at the Politecnico di Milano, collaborates with numerous newspapers and reviews, and is on the editorial board of the review *Sapere*.

OSKAR NEGTE was born in 1934 in Königsberg, and is Professor of Sociology at the Technischen Universität in Hannover; ALEXANDRE KLUGE was born in 1932 in Halberstadt, is a lawyer and filmmaker, and teaches at the Institut für Filmgestaltung in Ulm.

JEAN-MARIE PIEMME received a Doctorate in Letters from the Université de Liege. He is a playwright, and a researcher at the Atelier des Arts in Brussels. He is

the author of *La propaganda inavouée* (Paris, 10/18, 1976), and *Le Télévision comme on la parle* (Paris, Brussels, Nathan-Labor, 1978).

JORGE REBELO is a member of the Central Committee of FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique). He was the head of the FRELIMO ideological department during the period of the Liberation War, and is considered as one of its historic leaders. From the independence of Mozambique in 1974 through 1980 he was Minister of Communications, and since that time he is responsible in the Party for ideological and cultural questions.

GIUSEPPE RICHERI works with Edizione RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana) in Rome, and is also an advisor for information and communication problems in the Office of Information of the Emilia Romagna regional government in Bologna. He has also been an advisor to UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the (Italian) National Research Center, and lectures regularly at numerous European universities. He is co-author of *Television in Europe* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1976), *Radio From the Origin to Satellite* (in Italian) (Milan, Mandadori, 1980), and co-editor of *Decentralizzazione di televisione in Europa* (Milan, Angeli, 1980), and *Un giornali popolare?* (Milan, Angeli, 1980).

FERNANDO SOLANAS and OCTAVIO GETINO are Argentinean filmmakers. In the late 1960s, they together founded the group "Cine Liberación", and jointly created the film *La Hora de los Hornos*. GETINO is also the director of the film *El Familiar*, and currently he lives in exile in Mexico; SOLANAS is the director of the film *Los Hijos de Fierro* and *Le Regard des Autres*, and currently he lives in exile in France.

DANIELLE TARTAKOWSKY was born in 1946 in France. She is an *Agrégée d'histoire*, and her work is especially concerned with the history of the French workers' movement between the two World Wars. She collaborates regularly with the reviews *Mouvement Social* and the *Cahiers de l'Institut de Recherches Marxistes*, and is the author of *Les premières communistes français* (Paris, 1980) and *Une histoire du PCF* (Paris, 1981). In addition, she is a co-editor of the *Histoire de la France Contemporaine 1919-1940* (Paris, 1980), and of a critical edition of the *Congrès de Tours* (Paris, 1980).

SERGEI TRETIAKOV was born in 1892 in Kourdil in Lettonia, of a family of teachers, and he studied law at the University of Moscow, before he left in 1916 to live in the far east of Russia. He collaborated with the futurist poet Asseev with the semi-clandestine Bolsheviks, and later in 1920 published the first issue of the futurist review *The Town Crier*, then *Creation*, and travelled throughout China. In 1922 he returned to Moscow where he wrote plays, for Meyerhold, the Proletcult, and Eisenstein, among others, and began publishing theoretical articles in the newly-founded review *Lef*. During the 1920s and early 1930s he wrote many *reportages*, worked on a Kolhoz, and also travelled in Germany, Austria and Denmark. In the 1930s he directed radio broadcasts from Moscow, was an active member of the Writer's Union, and was on the editorial board of numerous reviews. In September 1937 he was arrested, and he died on 9 September 1939; later he was re-habilitated on 26 February 1956.

LEON TROTSKY was born in 1879 in the South Ukraine, of a prosperous farming family, and he went to school in Odessa, where he became a populist and in 1896 turned towards marxism. He was arrested and exiled numerous times: in London he worked with Lenin on *Iskra*, he was a leading Menshevik spokesman, he worked as a journalist in Vienna from 1907-1914, and also lived in Switzerland, Paris, and New York. He returned to Russia in May 1917 and as a member of the Bolshevik Party, worked with Lenin in organizing the October Revolution. After taking power, Trotsky became Commissar of

Foreign Affairs, and later, Commissar of War from 1918 through 1925. With the growing political split within the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky was gradually pushed out of the leadership by Stalin, and in 1929 was forced to leave the USSR. During his exile he continued to fight the Stalinist regime and was assassinated by a Stalin agent in Mexico in August 1940. His published works include *The Defense of Terrorism* (1921), *Literature and Revolution* (1925), *My Life* (1930), *History of the Russian Revolution*, 3 Volumes (1932), *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937), *Stalin* (1941), and *Dairy in Exile, 1935* (1958).