

SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

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IN the analysis of revolutionary change (whether by this is meant the seizure of power or the transformation of the core institutional order or both), the situations in which such change becomes possible have generally been conceived of as a complex combination of two types of conditions. These are, on the one hand, objective or structural conditions including the distribution of power, economic crises, the incapacity of the government to govern, etc, and, on the other hand, subjective factors including the political beliefs or consciousness of one or more sections of the population, political actions etc.

Despite, however, this characterization of the revolutionary situation in terms of both objective and subjective elements, not only has systematic analysis tended to focus on the processes which produce the objective conditions of revolutionary situations, but it is also in this area that theory is most advanced. The considerable body of empirical and theoretical analysis of structural contradictions in the economic system testifies to this.

By contrast, there has been relatively little progress towards the elaboration of a theory concerning the development of the subjective conditions of revolutionary situations. In part, this is no doubt due to the inherent complexities of the issues but in addition, with notable exceptions,¹ there has been a tendency to neglect the analytical problems involved. This, in itself is curious, given the fact that the assertion that mass revolutionary consciousness is a condition of radical social change was made long ago by writers as divergent in their approaches as Tocqueville and Marx² and that the latter, in particular, provided some of the basic propositions for the development of such a theory. Be that as it may, the fact nevertheless remains that much of the empirical analysis of the conditions and manner in which the subjective perceptions of the relevant groups develop is, as a consequence, either *ad hoc* and unsystematic, or treats revolutionary consciousness as the unproblematical outcome of certain situations and actions. In this way the very questions which require explanation become obscured.

Thus, to take only one example at this stage, Mandel³ in a recent article ascribes the revolutionary upsurge in France in May, 1968 to the contradictions in the capitalist system coupled with the detonating

effect of the students revolting against the deficiencies of the educational system. But why, given the fact that the inadequacies in the Universities arose not in 1968 but long before, did the student revolt occur only in May, 1968 and furthermore, why, given the persistence of the contradictions of capitalism and the occurrence of earlier dramatic events (strikes etc.) did the workers respond as they did only in May 1968? The point is that radical changes in attitudes and action cannot simply be ascribed to *relatively unchanged* structural conditions. What needs to be examined is the way in which objective reality comes to be subjectively perceived and this entails more than an analysis of objective conditions coupled with a description of subjective reactions.

For various reasons⁴ the inadequacies of approaching the subject in this way have been, in the recent past, increasingly subjected to scrutiny and it is with some of the theoretical bases of these inadequacies that the present essay is concerned. Before turning to an examination of the issues involved, however, the scope of the essay must be delineated more explicitly.

It is necessary to emphasize, in the first instance, that the main concern here is the question of *mass* revolutionary consciousness. This means that the focus of interest is not on the systematic ideologies developed by intellectuals but rather on what Gramsci termed 'the philosophy of common sense... the philosophy of the non-philosopher'. From this perspective formal ideologies may be regarded as possibly constituting one of the ingredients (perhaps, in particular concrete instances, an important or even crucial one) of common sense "philosophy".

This, it should be made clear, is not to contend that it is either a necessary or a sufficient condition of revolutionary change that the masses should intend it. On the contrary, it is perfectly possible, for example, that large scale action by the masses, in pursuance of goals which are themselves rather limited, may result in a situation in which it becomes feasible for a party or group intent upon the revolutionary seizure of power, being able to seize it. Arguably the general strike in France, in May/June, 1968, which rendered the state temporarily incapable of exercising control in the face of very limited economic demands, is an illustration of this type of possibility.

Nevertheless, the preparedness or otherwise of the masses to pursue revolutionary demands is clearly an extremely important element at certain points in the process of effecting revolutionary change. It is precisely for this reason that theorists of revolution have regarded mass revolutionary consciousness as generally relevant to effective mass action and, therefore, as an important condition of revolution.

The second main limitation on the scope of the paper is that it is

in no sense intended as a systematic examination of theories of revolution. It is restricted to one aspect of such theories, namely: under what conditions and in what way does mass revolutionary consciousness develop?

Clearly, this question raises vast issues which ultimately cannot be satisfactorily resolved out of the context of, not only a theory of revolution, but more generally, a theory of society—in fact, it will be argued that the failure to incorporate the analysis of revolutionary consciousness into such a theory lies at the core of many of the difficulties besetting the subject. Nevertheless, it is possible to focus on the specific elements which have direct bearing on the creation of revolutionary consciousness in such a way as to expose the links that various writers make between consciousness and other factors. Although this necessarily results in a somewhat abstract analysis, it has the advantage of bringing to light problems and weaknesses which otherwise tend to remain hidden in the discussion.

The strategy adopted in this paper is to examine what a number of writers have had to say about revolutionary consciousness. This makes it possible to show how each writer, in explaining consciousness, stresses some conditions or processes but neglects others which constitute the focus of attention of one of the other writers reviewed. At the same time this provides the basis for the central contention in this paper which is that an adequate approach requires that the conditions or processes which are separately discussed by each writer be brought together and incorporated into an analysis which simultaneously takes account of all of them.

II

The notion that revolutionary consciousness emerges spontaneously from certain objective conditions is to be found in a number of approaches. The property which is common to these approaches, and which links them, is the assumption that the conditions which are necessary and sufficient to the development of mass revolutionary consciousness are to be found exclusively in the 'external' environment in which the masses act; that is to say, the actions of the masses themselves are not considered relevant. What differentiates the various views within this common category is the range and nature of the conditions of the "external" environment which are specified as being operative.

It is convenient to begin with the 'theory' of revolution advanced by J. C. Davies,⁶ an academic sociologist, whose analysis is both fairly representative of a particular type of approach and has the merit, for present purposes, of raising sharply some of the major problems with which the paper is concerned.

Davies presents a variant of the theory that increasing impoverishment leads to revolutionary consciousness. The impoverishment thesis is widely held although sometimes it is not easy to see that it is this view which is being advanced because it is incorporated into a sophisticated and complex account of the way in which impoverishment occurs. Nonetheless both the simple and complex forms suffer from the same inadequacies.

Davies' argument is that if a prolonged period of rising living standards is followed by a sharp decline in social and economic levels, then the resulting gap between the actors' expectations of need satisfaction and the actual level of satisfaction of those needs,⁷ whatever they are, will come to be perceived as intolerable and that this perception amounts to revolutionary consciousness.⁸

It is apparent that the restriction of the content of revolutionary consciousness in this way flows directly from the selection of a single, isolated variable as the necessary and sufficient condition of its production. For, if the gap between expectation and satisfaction is postulated as the sole producer of revolutionary consciousness, there is no reason to suppose that the latter comprises anything other than a perception of the intolerability of the gap. While there can be no doubt that one of the constituent elements of revolutionary consciousness is a feeling of overwhelming dissatisfaction with, or an awareness of the intolerability of, "living in the old way",⁹ it is not, however, adequate to assume, as Davies does, that this is the only, or at least, the only essential aspect of revolutionary consciousness.

The obvious limitations of narrowing down the concept in this manner are related to the fact that overwhelming dissatisfaction may also be linked with a belief that suitable changes can be effected within the existing structure, or with a belief in the immutability of the status quo and the impossibility of change. Thus, since a perception of the present as intolerable may be common to both revolutionary and non-revolutionary consciousness, the former can only be differentiated from the latter in terms of some additional factors.

Briefly, the two *specifica differentia* of revolutionary consciousness are, it is suggested, as follows:—First, there must be a belief that "revolution is necessary".¹⁰ That is, the oppressed classes or masses must have a consciousness.

" . . . of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system"¹¹

—a belief, that is, that the intolerable conditions of life can be terminated only in a radically different social system. This entails, as Gramsci has shown, not only a vision (however crude) of new economic

and political structures, but also a more or less integrated, coherent and total challenge to the political, cultural and ideological "hegemony" of the existing order.¹²

The second distinctive quality of revolutionary consciousness, and one which has not generally been discussed in the literature, is that change must be perceived as possible in two different senses. In one sense, the belief in the possibility of change involves an understanding of the relative nature of social institutions. That is to say, institutions which have assumed a natural, reified and immutable appearance must come to be seen as man-made and changeable. This implies the de-reification of the institutional structure in men's consciousness.¹³ In the second sense, the belief in the possibility of change, is a belief in the "physical" capacity to secure the desired change whatever the given distribution of resources, men and material, may be. This involves, above all, a conception of the assailability of the structure of power.

If, then, revolutionary consciousness is conceived of as a conjuncture of the three above-mentioned characteristics, the crucial question relates to the conditions in which this conjuncture develops.

It follows from this characterization of revolutionary belief that if Davies' theory is to have any substance it must be a necessary implication of his analysis that the same conditions, that is the objectively declining living standards etc., which produce an awareness of the intolerability of the gap between expectations and reality, must also result in a belief in the necessity and possibility of radical change. The hard empirical fact is, however, that this simple conjuncture does not occur—on the contrary extreme impoverishment may be accompanied by extreme passivity.

It is, perhaps, the unacknowledged recognition of this fact that forces Davies ultimately to "explain" revolutionary consciousness completely independently of the objective conditions with which his analysis began. This point is of considerable importance because the relationship between objective conditions and revolutionary consciousness presents an apparently intractable problem which tends to be "solved", not only by Davies but, as I will attempt to show, by Marxist writers also, by the expedient of rupturing the relationship between objective or structural conditions and subjective responses. A further reference to Davies' analysis will help clarify this point.

As I have already indicated Davies begins by answering the question: Under what conditions does the gap between expectations and actual satisfaction come to be perceived as intolerable?, by referring to a particular objective development. He says:

" . . . when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal."¹⁴

This is apparently so, because under these conditions,

"The all important effect on the minds of people . . . is to produce during the former period, an expectation of continued ability to satisfy **needs**—which continue to rise—and during the latter, a mental state of anxiety and frustration when manifest reality breaks away from anticipated **reality**."¹⁵

It may be pointed out, in parenthesis, that Davies does not show on theoretical grounds why such a gap should be perceived as intolerable only after a period of *increasing* satisfaction nor do his extremely vague case studies of specific revolutions bear out this contention.

More importantly, since the gap between expectations and actual satisfaction of needs is crucial, the question arises whether any gap whatsoever will produce revolutionary consciousness or only gaps of a particular type or size. One answer proffered by Davies is that only gaps of a certain magnitude will have revolutionary consequences. He refers to "sharp reversals" of social and economic development and in considering why revolutions did not occur in certain historical situations asks :

"Had expectations . . . not risen *high* enough? Had the subsequent decline not been sufficiently *sharp* or *deep*?" (My emphasis).¹⁶

From this it seems to follow that, for Davies, the utility of the theory depends upon the possibility of measuring the gap since this would enable him to predict at what point revolutionary consciousness would develop. Unfortunately, at present the gap cannot be measured, but only, he argues, because we do not yet have available the appropriate techniques of measurement.

Curiously, he fails to see that on the basis of his own further argument the measurement of the critical gap becomes, in principle, of no consequence. He says :

"The actual state of socio-economic development is less significant than the expectation that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue in the future."¹⁷

And again

"It is the dissatisfied state of mind rather than the tangible provision of 'adequate' or 'inadequate' supplies of food, equality or liberty which produces the **revolution**."¹⁸

This being the case, the objective conditions, the reality of the gap and of the decline in socio-economic conditions become irrelevant and need not, therefore, exist at all. Starting, then, with the conception of objective economic etc. decline as the basis of revolutionary consciousness, the theory ends by treating the objective conditions as irrelevant to consciousness. Thus, we have to take the actors' perceptions as

given since the origins are not revealed. Unless we assume that the conditions under which revolutionary consciousness develops cannot be ascertained, we are left with the original question: under what conditions will the gap be perceived as intolerable? Presumably, for Davies this question merely begins an infinite regress.¹⁸

In one sense this conclusion makes it superfluous to consider any further Davies' treatment of the objective conditions, but since there is a close affinity, in certain respects, between Davies' approach and widely held views of contemporary "Conflict Theory"^{v20}, it is worth pursuing the enquiry a little further.

Briefly, the particularly important points here are whether the theory relates the relevant objective factors to the social structure and accounts for the generation of these factors on the basis of some systematic, recurrent social process, or whether it assumes that they occur at random. Conflict theory, for example, asserts that changing exigencies give rise to conflicts between actors which result in the formation of conflict groups. But which conflicts are relevant to revolutionary change and how do the appropriate exigencies arise? To this question conflict theory has no answer because it includes no notion of systematic structural contradictions which tend to generate the exigencies which give rise to the conflicts. Furthermore, since it has no conception of the social structure in terms of crucial groups (classes), it can only define, *post hoc*, those groups which actually develop in response to random conflicts.²¹

More specifically, Davies clearly has no theory about the way in which the gap between expectations and need satisfaction is systematically generated in the society; nor does he relate this factor in any way to the social or class structure. It is for this reason that his theory is unable to differentiate groups in the social structure which have a propensity to develop revolutionary consciousness, and it is thus unable to explain why only some sections of a population which is subject to declining living standards are likely to turn to revolutionary action and others not.

It is, of course, the extremely different view of the objective structure which most sharply distinguishes a Marxist approach from this type of "objective theory". This very difference serves to highlight the analytical similarities in the discussion of revolutionary consciousness which are common to Davies' approach and to some versions of Marxism to which I now turn.

III

Those versions of Marxism which share with the "objective approach" the notion that revolutionary consciousness emerges solely from the development of certain objective conditions seem to be derived

from a one-sided selection of certain of the ideas of Marx and Engels. That is to say, they are based upon one or other of the objective consequences of the contradictions in the mode of production which Marx and Engels identified, but they exclude certain other processes which these writers stressed. To the latter point I will return later. For the present I want to distinguish a line of analysis which bases its conclusions on the objective consequences flowing from the contradictions in the economic system.

As is well known the key proposition in Marx's scheme of social change is the following :

"At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production. . . ."²³

In the stage of industrial capitalism this antagonism takes the form of the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation.²³ The consequence of this is the general crisis of capitalism:

"From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution."²⁴

One of the consequences of this contradiction is the increasing incapacity of the productive system to meet the material wants of the proletariat because capitalist production for profit is incapable of utilizing the productive capacity of the socialized forces of production to the full in order to meet social needs.

While it is usually suggested that Marx and Engels identified economic deprivation with increasing absolute impoverishment of the industrial working class²⁶ this overlooks their observation that deprivation could equally occur in conditions in which economic levels were rising :

"A noticeable increase in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. The rapid growth of productive capital brings about an equally rapid growth of wealth, luxury, social wants, social enjoyments. Thus although the enjoyments of the workers have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyment of the capitalist which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the state of development of society in general. Our desires and pleasures spring from society; we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature."²⁵

The point which seems to emerge from this is that for Marx and Engels the important issue was not whether economic deprivation was relative or absolute, but that it was an inherent and necessary consequence of the exploitive relations of production of the capitalist mode of production. Thus the differential economic conditions which

act upon the consciousness of men, are not accidental or random, they are structured by a system of production.

But although economic deprivation, whether relative or not, is an ever present condition of life of some classes in capitalist society, revolutionary consciousness is not. In order therefore, to account for revolutionary consciousness additional factors have to be introduced into the analysis. As is well-known, in the Communist Manifesto, for example, Marx and Engels briefly drew attention to some of the factors which provide the basis for the emergence of an awareness of common situation and interests, that is, of class consciousness. These are, firstly, the creation of objectively identical working conditions through the development of the productive forces and secondly the improved means of communication between workers through their concentration in large-scale industry.²⁷

However, a class which is aware of itself is not necessarily a revolutionary class, and consequently the analysis must be pushed still further. Marx and Engels in fact did so by focusing on the struggles of the proletariat and the development of political conflict. Some writers, of whom Labriola²⁸ is a sophisticated example, stop, however, short of this point. The analytical consequence of this is that impoverishment is considered to be the sole producer of revolutionary attitudes. The only or main difference, then, between such an approach and Davies' theory is that in the present case economic deprivation is seen as the systematically generated experience of particular social classes.

IV

In the previous section the material, economic consequences of the contradictory relations of production were discussed. There is, however, implicit in a passage of Engels, the notion that, in addition, the "internal" structure of these contradictory relations may be of relevance. Engels says :

"On the one hand, therefore, the capitalist mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces*. This rebellion of the productive forces, against their quality as capital, *this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognized, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces...*"²⁹ (second emphasis is mine).

The idea that the actual structure of production in terms of size, technology and methods may affect the relationships and, therefore, perceptions of the working class, has been utilized in opposite ways by

writers who contend that capitalism has proved capable of meeting at least the elemental "needs" of the majority.

Marcuse,³⁰ has argued that while the main contradiction of capitalist society is more acute than ever, it has not had the expected consequences because the society has been able to disguise its existence. There is as a result no revolutionary consciousness.

"... advanced capitalist society suppresses the need for a qualitative change in the system as it exists and repulses its absolute negation. This is its very basis, and on this basis it succeeds in absorbing all revolutionary potential."³¹

and again :

"Does it make sense to go on speaking of alienation and reification when people really feel and find themselves in this society—in their motor cars, in their T.V. sets, their gadgets, their newspapers, their politicians . . . etc. This is a world of identification: the objects which are around no longer seem alien and dead."³²

The structural conditions in which this occurs are, firstly, the massive, all pervasive production and distribution apparatus which creates and determines needs of every kind and internalizes them in men, and *satisfies* those needs by an ever rising supply of goods.

Secondly, the class structure tends to be "flattened" out because of three features. First, the technological changes in the character of the instruments of production lead to an "assimilating" trend in occupational stratification. Second, the development of the managerial hierarchy removes from sight the object of hatred—the capitalist boss. Third, the availability of consumer goods leads to an equalization of life styles.³³

But of equal relevance here is the effect of the structure and process of the situation in production—the growing isolation accompanying mechanization, the psycho-technical rather than physical nature of work, and in addition the rhythm of the machines which mobilizes the workers' mind at work, in the street and on holiday.³⁴

The point of interest which emerges from the above brief summary is the overwhelming efficacy which Marcuse accords to the productive system. Thus, not only does the production and distribution apparatus determine every need but, in addition, its very nature preconditions people to receive the ideology propagated in the mass media :

"Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrinating power of the 'media' The objection misses the point. The preconditioning does not start with the mass production of radio-television and with the centralization of their control. But, and this is the point of importance—the people enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long-standing."³⁵

Preconditioned, that is, by the productive process.

Particularly significant, in the present context, is that it follows from Marcuse's argument, that changing objective conditions do not have consequences for social change. That is to say, since the apparatus of production and distribution determines needs, there is established a moving equilibrium between needs and the objective conditions of their satisfaction. It is not too much to say that for Marcuse the system induces in men the need to need to the system.

In a recent analysis, Mallet³⁶, like Marcuse, has argued that the enormous development of the material forces of production in advanced capitalist society has maximized the basic contradiction between socialized production and private ownership. But, unlike Marcuse, he holds that this increases, more than ever, the potential vulnerability of the capitalist system to opposition forces which may come into existence and which will

“ . . . contest the nature of the productive relations.”³⁷

Mallet accepts that the source of revolutionary consciousness is no longer to be found in largely non-existent material deprivation but, he contends, it is to be found in the "internal" structure of relations which reflect the development of the material productive forces. That is to say, the workers' actions which constitute the particular industrial relations produce a revolutionary consciousness of those relations. Mallet's argument is as follows :

The technological productive forces have "parcellized" work and induced also a separation between work and private life. These factors together with the more or less conscious diversion of workers' demands to the realm of consumption, has blocked the formation of such a revolutionary opposition. The working-class parties, the trade unions and the mass of workers ignore the relations of production in order to concentrate on winning wages increases.³⁸

However, the very developments in the productive forces have brought into existence a new working-class consisting of researchers, technicians, and skilled workers and

"the objective conditions in which the new working-class acts and works makes it the vanguard of the revolutionary and socialist movement."³⁹

What are these objective conditions? Firstly, the new working-class is at the "centre of the most complex mechanisms of modern capitalism".⁴⁰ It is engaged in the increasingly more important sphere of preparation for and organization of production. This, Mallet argues, is an area of great initiative and responsibility and wins

“ . . . back for the modern worker, at the collective level, the professional independence which he lost during the stage when work was mechanized.”⁴¹

The other objective condition is that the basic demands of the new working class within the field of consumption have been met.⁴³ From the above Mallet concludes :

"Thus its objective position puts it in a position both to grasp the weakness of modern capitalist organization and to reach a state where it is conscious of a new type of organization of productive relations, designed to satisfy those human needs which cannot express themselves within the present structures."⁴³

How does he arrive at this conclusion?

The actions in production which constitute the work of the new working-class by virtue of their position at the centre of modern capitalist production lead these workers to turn from demands about consumption to demands for an increased share in management and for self-management. The revolutionary content of this lies in the fact that it involves a direct, conscious confrontation with

" . . . the capitalist structure of productive relations . . . and also with the techno-bureaucratic structure of concerns."⁴⁴

Leaving aside the question of the correctness of the empirical analysis of the objective conditions, some other difficulties arise.

Why should workers who are participants in important organizational work in production and whose material needs have been satisfied, demand managerial control? Mallet's answer here seems to flow from the notion that such workers have a "professional" interest in seeing that industry is run properly. This is presumably why he refers to the "enhanced value of initiative or responsibility" of the new working-class; and why he argues that the new working-class insists on two pre-conditions for revolution. It insists firstly that the transformation should not destroy or weaken the existing apparatus of production and, secondly, it "is inclined to ask 'what for?' before it shouts 'seize power'."⁴⁵

Given that this is so, it seems equally tenable to argue that the structural position of the new-working class is as likely to engender a conservative as a revolutionary consciousness. It becomes important to ask, therefore, on what basis can it be assumed that the demand for an increased share in management also involves a consciousness that such demands cannot be satisfied within the existing system? The possibility does presumably exist that this class may develop revolutionary consciousness if it puts forward demands for greater control which are frustrated, but this will depend on the operation of additional factors (for example, the struggle for control, political organization, ideologies and so on) to which Mallet refers only obliquely. Once again as in the case of the "objective approach" the theory makes no provision for such other factors.

Mallet's analysis shares an additional feature with Davies' theory of revolution. Having located the political attitudes of the new-working class in the structure of production, Mallet then confronts the problem of accounting for the spread (as he asserts) of revolutionary ideas to those sections of the working-class which are not part of the new-working class and which are subject to different structural conditions. In attempting to explain this fact, Mallet relies on a process of diffusion :

"The all embracing character of the economy today tends to *diffuse* demands for a share in management into sectors *which still do not have the objective conditions in which such demands could spontaneously arise.*" (my italics).²²

This, of course, amounts to an abandonment of the structural argument without, however, putting anything in its place. The all important question : Under what conditions does diffusion successfully take place? is neither posed nor answered by Mallet.

From the above considerations it follows that in some, unspecified, circumstances that Mallet relies only on action in the industrial structure and, in other, also unspecified, circumstances he relies only on a type of ideological diffusion.

The difficulty of resting on analysis only on objective conditions of the type under discussion is illustrated, I think, by the fact that it is perfectly possible to arrive at different, even opposite, conclusions, which appear equally plausible, by simply stressing different aspects of the same structural or objective conditions. This has already emerged from a comparison of Mallet and Marcuse, but the point becomes even clearer if we look briefly at Nairn's²³ analysis which is very similar in some respects to Mallet's.

Nairn, like Mallet, considers that the basic material needs of most people have been met, that there is a high degree of "parcellization" and an impersonal, hierarchial structure of authority in industry. But instead of stressing the position of the new-working class in industry, he places great emphasis on the fragmentation of tasks.

He argues that the productive system requires educated personnel and that capitalism, therefore, has to develop the forces of mental production. There is a contradiction between the specialization demanded by industry and imposed in education and the consequences of this education which operates against specialization. And his conclusion about the consciousness which emanates is :

"A simple, anonymous statement by someone from the Mouvement du 22 Mars . . . put it best of all: 'In a world of abundance, the young European of '68 wants to be a whole man!'"²⁴

More formally :

"The revolutionary movement . . . aims at the *total* recuperation of what the system drains away. The 'whole man' must feel and act, wholly."

Thus the same (although differently stressed) structural conditions give rise to a new revolutionary working-class for Mallet, revolutionary students for Nairn and a non-revolutionary working class for Marcuse!

Before leaving Nairn's study, it is curious to note that he, like Mallet and Davies, also ultimately abandons the structural basis of the analysis. He says, for example :

"His subjectivity is the *instinctive* assertion of control over what happens: work, 'leisure', life!" (my emphasis)."

It seems difficult to resist the conclusion that in all three cases the resort to non-structural explanations stems from the inadequacies of the analytical framework used.

Obviously, it has not been the intention in this section to deny the relevance of the type of processes which these authors have stressed. On the contrary, the search for the conflictual potentialities of contradictory structures within which people are acting is highly important. This applies not only to the industrial sector but also to other major spheres in the society. What is questioned, however, is the validity of attempting to locate the sources of revolutionary consciousness only in such terms. The issue can be put in this way : given a high degree of systematic contradiction (as asserted by all three writers) but a low level of revolutionary consciousness (and conflict) there is no reason to suppose that the conditions or actions which produce consciousness are to be found only in the systematic contradictions (particularly when these are confined to the industrial *structure*).⁵¹



The theories discussed in the preceding section limit themselves to the effect of the action, which constitutes the relations within production, upon attitudes and beliefs—although in the end the relevance of the former becomes, to say the least, tenuous. Debray,⁵² on the other hand, confines his analysis to political action—generally characterized as a subjective factor—and in so doing fails to analyze the objective conditions in which it occurs. His approach, nevertheless, converges strikingly with the "objective approach" discussed in Sections 2 and 3 in that both focus exclusively on factors which appear as "*external*" *objective conditions from the point of view of the masses*.

By approaching Debray's theory through his critique of Trotskyism it will be possible both to make the above points clear and expose the limitations of his analysis. According to Debray the underlying con-

ception of the Trotskyists is their belief in the essential, unalterable goodness of workers and peasants. This essence involves a craving for socialism of which, however, for various reasons the workers are not aware. What is needed, therefore, is that this "latent spontaneity" be aroused.¹³ How is this to be done? The Trotskyist answer, says Debray, is a theoretical one—the constant repetition of declarations that the revolution should be a socialist one.¹⁴

Debray rejects this view on two grounds. The first is that mere declarations addressed to the masses do not lead to revolutionary consciousness and the second is that, in the repressive conditions of Latin America, propaganda work leads to the liquidation of political movements by the forces of the governing régime.

What is the alternative to propaganda? The alternative is revolutionary action. Of course, this raises a problem since by definition revolutionary action involves the support of the masses and therefore presupposes revolutionary consciousness. Debray overcomes this quite simply by dismissing the "old obsession" that revolutionary consciousness and the organization of the masses must always precede revolutionary action.¹⁵ This enables him to argue that revolutionary action by a minority can develop revolutionary consciousness in the masses. How is this effected? Debray argues that

" . . . the physical force of the police and the army is considered to be unassailable (by the masses), and unassailability cannot be challenged by words but by showing that a soldier and a policeman are no more bullet proof than anyone else. . . . In order to destroy the idea of unassailability . . . there is nothing better than combat."¹⁶

Now quite obviously if the only impediment to mass revolutionary action is a belief in overwhelming *power* of the state forces, that is, if there is no belief in the possibility of revolution, action which can prove that the state is vulnerable may well have significant consequences for consciousness and action. But Debray, having here discussed the effect of combat on the masses' perception of the power of the régime's security forces, later, without explanation, considerably extends the consequences of combat—fighting, he now asserts, convinces the local population that the *state forces are the enemy*. He says :

"The destruction of a troop transport truck or the public execution of a police torturer is more effective propaganda for the local population than a hundred speeches. Such conduct convinces them of the essential: that the Revolution is on the march, that the enemy is no longer invulnerable. *It convinces them, to begin with, that the soldier is an enemy—their enemy—and that a war is underway.* . . ."¹⁷ (my emphasis)

It will have been noticed that for the verbal declarations of the Trotskyists, Debray has substituted combat action by the guerilla forces,

But for all the differences between his views and those of the Trotskyists whom he criticizes, there is a remarkable similarity. Both see political consciousness as being brought from the "outside" by the actions of a small Clite group—the party and the foco, words and combat—to the inert, passive but receptive masses. That is to say, for both, the action of the activist minority is simply a further "external" objective condition acting upon the masses from which mass revolutionary consciousness emanates. But why should foco action have any greater effect than Trotskyist words? If the mere attack upon state forces persuades workers and peasants that these forces are their enemy, that is, destroys the legitimacy of the government, (and not only proves it assailable) it must be, since Debray does not point to other factors, because of the essential "goodness" of the workers and peasants who only need to have their spontaneity aroused.

An adequate explanation, however, would have to be rooted in the concrete conditions in which guerilla warfare is launched. Thus, for example, the proposition: "Revolutionary consciousness will be produced by actions which reveal the vulnerability of the security forces," can only be meaningful if it relates to the production of a consciousness of the possibility of revolution among people who are already convinced of its necessity, that is, among those who already believe that "the soldier is their enemy". This brings the argument full circle, for if the masses do not yet reject the legitimacy of the state etc., it cannot be assumed that guerilla action will produce such an attitude—Guevara's Bolivian Diary shows this.

What is required, it is suggested, is an analysis of existing political consciousness, the objective conditions in which the action of the activist minority occurs and the way in which mass action interrelates with objective conditions and the action of activist groups to affect mass consciousness.²⁴

VI

I have so far focused on two types of theories which do not make the connection between mass and minority-activist action and objective conditions and I now want to deal with two theories which do, although in different ways.

I have already touched upon the relevance of structural conditions to revolutionary struggle in Marx's writings. It is clear, however, that he also regarded mass action as a crucial factor in the development of revolutionary consciousness although he did not deal, in a sociological sense, with this either systematically or in great detail. What he had to say was nevertheless highly pertinent.

The limitations in the analysis of Marxist writers discussed earlier stems in part from their failure to keep in mind the distinction which

Marx drew between the "class in itself" and the "class for itself". Marx made the point that the objective position of a class does not necessarily involve a consciousness of that objective position. He contended that this consciousness comes about in stages, as a consequence of the conflicts and struggles which it carried on in certain conditions:

"Thus this mass is already a class in relation to capital, but not yet a class for itself. In the struggle, of which we have only indicated a few phases, this mass unites and forms itself into a class for itself. The interests which it defends become class interests. But the struggle between classes is a political struggle."⁶⁰

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels described briefly these phases.⁶⁰

But, as I indicated previously, the theory is incomplete since there is no discussion, except in the most general terms of the role, inter alia, of party and ideology.

Lenin agreed with Marx that the conditions of capitalist production directly "awaken the mind of the workers" and bring about the unification of the working class in an organized class struggle.⁶¹ He rejected the "revisionist" contention that Marx had held that revolutionary consciousness would emanate directly either from the conditions of production or the class struggle. He quoted with approval Kautsky's criticism of the belief

" . . . that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions of socialist production, but also, and directly, the consciousness of its necessity."⁶²

It follows from this, and Lenin argued the point strongly, "that left to itself" the working class is able to develop only a trade-union consciousness.⁶³

Revolutionary consciousness has to be brought to the workers "from without, that is only from outside the economic struggle. . . ." ⁶⁴ The first requirement is, of course, the existence of a revolutionary party whose task it is to bring "class political consciousness" to the workers.⁶⁵ How, and under what conditions, is this task to be accomplished according to Lenin? It is not easy to give a straightforward answer to this question. It is possible to extract from his polemical writings an approach to the problem of revolutionary consciousness which not only incorporates and synthesizes some of the central ideas contained in the different views already analyzed but also adds to them. In the final analysis, nevertheless, he left unanswered a key question.

In his earlier writing (1898), Lenin appears to have considered that revolutionary consciousness could be brought to the working-class by propaganda :

"The socialist activities of Russian Social Democrats consist in spreading by propaganda the teachings of scientific socialism, in spreading among the

workers a proper understanding of the present social and economic system, its basis and its development, an understanding of the various *classes* . . . of the interrelation, of the struggle between these classes, of the role of the working-class in this struggle. . . .¹⁰⁰

However, by 1902 he had already amended this view and in "What is to be Done?" he wrote :

"The question arises, what should political education consist in? Can it be confined to the propaganda of working class hostility to the autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough to *explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (any more than it is to *explain* to them that their interests are antagonistic to the interests of the employers)."¹⁰¹

Since propaganda alone is not sufficient, what more is required to prepare the "socio-psychological" conditions for revolution?

Writing in 1905, Lenin argued that in 1901 and 1902 neither the call for "assault tactics" nor the "tailist" call for concentration on the economic struggle were correct.

"*At that time* propaganda and agitation . . . were really brought to the fore by the objective state of affairs. . . . *At that time* slogans advocating mass agitation *instead* of direct armed action, preparation of the socio-psychological conditions for insurrection *instead* of pyrotechnics were revolutionary. Social Democracy's only correct *slogans*."¹⁰²

Here Lenin reaches a position substantially different from the writers discussed earlier, for at this point his contention is that it is not merely the objective conditions which are relevant, nor merely propaganda addressed to the workers from the "outside", but propaganda addressed to them in the course of their (the workers) confrontation with the objective *conditions*.¹⁰³ Thus the crucial mode of bringing revolutionary consciousness to people is through agitation, that is, political explanation given, not abstractly, but to workers actually experiencing and confronting in action a "problem" :

" . . . for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a full clear theoretical understanding—it would be even truer to say, not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical understanding —of the relationship between all the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. . . . It can be obtained only from living examples. It cannot be obtained from any *book*."¹⁰⁴

Thus Lenin prescribed the kind of action, of both party and masses, which may be necessary to the emergence of revolutionary consciousness, but does this take the argument far enough? Since neither mass action nor agitational activities of the party necessarily produces revolutionary consciousness, we need to know what the conditions of "success" *are*.¹⁰⁵ Lenin, himself, made this point in another connection.

"The real question that arises in appraising the social activity of an individual is: what conditions ensure the success of his actions, what guarantee is there that these actions will not remain an isolated act lost in a welter of contrary acts."¹²

Whatever practical success Lenin may have had in the particular conditions of Russia, there are a number of theoretical difficulties which make his writings on the subject less than satisfactory from the point of view of generalizations concerning the relationship of different factors and conditions in the creation of revolutionary beliefs.

Thus consider, for example, his position on the issue of partial reforms. Lenin contended that Marxists were in favour of such reforms but that, at the same time, in order to prevent reforms leading to a reformist consciousness it was necessary for Social Democrats to explain the nature of capitalism to the masses.¹³ That is all very well as a statement of political policy, but what are the consequences for consciousness? If there is a correlation between improved conditions and non-revolutionary consciousness can "mere" propaganda by the party destroy the effect of the "objective" conditions?

But more importantly the inadequacy of Lenin's treatment appears from the following argument :

It is clear from his whole attack upon spontaneity that Lenin rejected the notion that consciousness is so determined by the mode and conditions of production that ideological factors, the conscious element, can have no effect. He argues, in fact, that workers could express either of two ideologies—"the only choice is: either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course. . . ."¹⁴

What then determines which ideology will enter into the consciousness of workers?

At several points Lenin emphasizes that bourgeois ideology will dominate because there is a spontaneous tendency for the working class to adopt it :

" . . . bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working-class. . . ."¹⁵

This view, of course, accords with the thesis that the working-class, "left to itself" will engage only in an economic struggle. For if the working-class is spontaneously led only into a trade union struggle of a limited, reformist type, then presumably bourgeois ideology which is reflected and inherent in this action also emerges spontaneously.

At the same time, however, and in contradiction to the above, Lenin asserts that the objective conditions of the workers is a predisposing factor to the adoption of revolutionary consciousness.

"It is often said that the working-class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory measures

the causes of misery of the working-class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily. . . ."⁷⁰

It follows from the above considerations that workers are in a given objective situation which is equally conducive to two completely opposing ideologies. This, indeed, seems to be the logical outcome of the attack on spontaneity. But if this is so then the objective conditions themselves appear to have become irrelevant to Lenin's argument as they did in the case of the other writers discussed earlier.

If, then, the objective conditions are to be discounted, what other factors are relevant? Here, Lenin appears to give, in general, great weight to propaganda. In the polemic against the Economists, for instance, he argued that to "belittle" the role of the "conscious element" was, whether intended or not, to strengthen the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers by leaving the field open to bourgeois ideologists.⁷¹

But more specifically, while in regard to proletarian consciousness, Lenin contended that mere propaganda was not enough, in the case of bourgeois ideology, he asserted that its overpowering weight was sufficient to lead to its domination :

"But why . . . does the spontaneous movement . . . lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination."⁷²

Since none of these factors, either singly or in combination, are alone, as a matter of empirical fact, always sufficient for the "success" of an ideology, we still require to have the appropriate conditions specified. This Lenin failed to do.

Thus, having rejected the view that the mode of production creates, directly, revolutionary consciousness, he assigned a determining role to ideology by means of, or through, political action of the party. But in so doing he made the objective conditions irrelevant altogether and, therefore, necessarily had to treat the ideological factors in isolation from them.⁷³ For an approach which suggests the basis of a solution to this problem we must turn to Gramsci's work.⁸⁰

VII

The starting point of Gramsci's analysis is the proposition that a distinction must be drawn between the implicit meaning or significance of action and the "theoretical" consciousness of it. More precisely, he distinguishes between the actual consequences of action and the conception actors have of the consequences or significance of that action.⁸¹

In "normal" times there is a contradiction or lack of congruence between the theoretical consciousness and the actual consequences of action, which is not accidental, or due to "bad faith" or such like, but

"cannot be other than the expression of more profound contradictions of an historical or social order."⁸⁵

It is precisely this lack of "fit" between consciousness and reality which permits the continuance of the system. The explanation of this is to be found in Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" to which I referred earlier. In the first place "hegemony" which means (to quote a portion of Williams' description):

" . . . an order in which . . . one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its manifestations, infusing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and moral connotation."⁸⁵

In this sense the notion of "hegemony" appears to be more or less identical with Weber's conception of legitimate authority. That is to say, the content of the "concept of reality" is such as to legitimate the institutions and structures of the society.

But there is a crucial distinction between "hegemony" and "legitimate authority". Whereas for Weber legitimacy appears to be a source of domination, for Gramsci "hegemony" refers to the set of ideas which are dominant as a consequence of a particular structure of power. More precisely, as Williams has pointed out, "hegemony" implies a control which corresponds to power conceived of in terms of a ruling class.⁸⁴ There is clearly an implication here of the "hegemony" as a legitimating mask over the real structure of power.

In fact Gramsci argues that the hegemonic theoretical consciousness, contradicts the real consequences and meaning of action; it, therefore, disguises a reality which, if its "true" significance were present to the consciousness, would result in its rejection.

This means that since the régime exists not only (and perhaps not even mainly) by means of the exercise of coercive power, but also through the common man's theoretical understanding which obscures the actual consequences of action, revolutionary consciousness will have developed when the content of consciousness coincides with the reality of practice.

The process by which this comes about takes place in two stages.

"The awareness of being part of a determined hegemonic force (i.e. political consciousness) is the first step towards a further and progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice fully unite."⁸⁶

The second or further step is the "socializing" of truths already discovered so that they become the basis of "live" action. That is to say, the existing hegemony must be replaced by a new "ethico-political" hegemony of the working-class.⁸⁶

The question which has to be posed is: How, in Gramsci's scheme, can this come about?

The view has been expressed that Gramsci ascribed the development of consciousness to the immanent working of "the intellect and the ethico-political" factors.⁸⁷ This seems to me to be mistaken. Gramsci himself posed the question as follows in the "*Modern Prince*":

"When can the conditions for the arousing and development of a national-popular collective will be said to exist? Here an historical (economic) analysis must be made of the social structure of the given country together with a 'dramatic' presentation of the attempts made throughout the centuries to arouse this will and the reasons for the successive failure."⁸⁸

Merrington, furthermore, points out that Gramsci conceived one of the main tasks of analysis to be the discovery of the form of struggle which would activate a response in the "real historical situation", that is, in the conditions of the moment.⁸⁹

Moreover, Gramsci directly related "the formation of a collective will" to Marx's proposition that "society does not set itself problems for whose solution the material pre-conditions do not already exist" and to economic conditions which:

"... create a more favourable ground for the propagation of certain ways of thinking, posing and solving questions."⁹⁰

Neither, however, did he accept the contention that the superstructure in general and mass consciousness in particular must be seen as a simple, direct expression of the economic structure. This view he described as "primitive infantilism".⁹¹

It is here that Gramsci confronts the issue which led Lenin into a contradictory position. He points out that economism or ideologism results respectively from either,

"... expounding as directly operative causes that instead only operate indirectly, or ... asserting that immediate causes are the only operative ones."⁹²

This clearly implies that the relationship between base and superstructure, between ideology and economic conditions, must not be conceived of as simple and direct, but as complex and indirect.

It is in this context that Gramsci, like Lenin, laid great stress upon the activity of the party and the masses and, in particular, on the intellectual—mass dialectic which, he argues, "bounds" the creation of consciousness.⁹³

But Gramsci goes beyond Lenin in that the production or non-production of mass revolutionary consciousness is not for him simply the outcome of the party-mass or intellectual-mass dialectic in given political and economic conditions; it is, in addition, bound by a range of "intervening" conditions and processes which mediate between base and superstructure. These include the nature of bureaucratic organiza-

tions, the intellectual strata, the organization of culture and education and so on.

As important as this development by Gramsci is, it nevertheless leaves open a crucial issue which has increasingly become the dominant concern of a number of Marxist writers." This issue can be formulated in the following way. What elements of the superstructure must be taken into account and in what way? Thus, on what basis can it be argued that political action is more important, than, say, political speeches, or that the education system rather than the religious system is crucial or that a particular combination of factors is more relevant than another combination?

It seems clear that such questions can only be answered in terms of an adequate theory of society which includes a theory of the superstructure.

VIII

Some writers have argued that no such theory of the superstructure is possible⁶⁵ and for this view there appears to be support in the works of Marx and Engels.

In the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx wrote of the "ideological forms in which men become conscious . . ." of the contradiction between the relations and forces of production and he concluded that :

" . . . this consciousness must be explained . . . from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production."⁶⁶

It is clear, that interpreted literally, as it has been in much of the work of later Marxists, this passage sets up a direct, determining relationship between the economic base and consciousness. There is no room, in such an interpretation, for the operation of factors outside the economic structure—consciousness is a mere reflection of the economic, the elements of the superstructure having no influence on one another and still less on the infrastructure.

As is well known, however, both Marx and Engels in various theoretical passages as well as in their empirical analyses, emphasized the influence of superstructural factors upon history and consciousness. A good example is Engels' frequently referred to letter to Bloch in which he wrote :

"According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. . . . The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure: political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc. juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in

the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas, also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which . . . the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary."¹⁰

The superstructure is said to have a double efficacy. On the one hand, it acts upon the infrastructure so that the relations within the latter always assume a specific form according to the dictates of the former.¹¹ On the other hand, the infrastructure's effect upon consciousness is not direct and immediate but is affected by the specific content of the superstructure.

This type of general statement concerning the relationship between base and superstructure obviously serves an important function since it directs attention to a category of factors which must be taken into account if an analysis is to have any utility. If, for instance, we refer back to the section on Mallet, Nairn and Marcuse, the one-sidedness of an analysis which is restricted to the effect of the economic structure is underlined. At the same time a general prescription in the above terms does not give any guidance on the crucial problems I referred to above—what elements of the superstructure must be taken into account and in what way?

It would seem that for Marx and Engels no theoretical answer can be given to these questions. Thus in *The Preface to The Critique of Political Economy* Marx specifically contrasts

“ . . . the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic and philosophic—in short ideological forms. . . .”¹²

Again, if we re-examine the passages quoted from Engels and from Marx in Note 97, it is very clear that we are simply referred to the “empirically given circumstances”. There is no attempt to delineate, except by way of example, the specific aspects of the superstructure which should be included in an analysis.

In other words, there is an empiricist-like directive to examine the superstructure “which is there”.

It hardly needs to be said that there is no superstructure available to be grasped outside of a conceptual framework. The implicit assumption that there is, leads inevitably either to the arbitrary emphasis upon one or other factor and the equally arbitrary exclusion of others. (In different ways both Debray and Lenin provide examples of this), or, alternatively, to the simple expedient of treating the superstructure as an undifferentiated, amorphous ideological sphere. This suggests the need to develop a theory of the superstructure. It seems clear that one requirement of a theory, if such a theory is possible, is the systematic

demarcation or differentiation of the parts of the superstructure and the specification of the relationship between them. Thus, it is not enough simply to catalogue the differentiated structures which make up the superstructure and to analyze them in isolation or to assume a symmetrical relationship between them.¹⁰⁰ In his Introduction to *The Critique of Political Economy*, Marx drew attention to the fact that within the economic structure itself it is not possible to treat the elements which make up the whole on an equal footing. We argued that production dominates over exchange and distribution.

The extension of this to the society as a whole is only a reflection of the general methodological principle which is essential to a Marxist analysis, namely that the relationship between the parts which make the whole is not symmetrical. Korsch has argued that the utility of Marx's theory lies precisely in its "one-sided" emphasis on the economic structure since this "one-sidedness" is of the essence of any theoretical analytical formulation. It is this, in fact, which sets a Marxist analysis apart from *hoc* empiricist, or supposedly complete, descriptions, of phenomena.¹⁰¹

In order, then, to arrive at the conditions which explain the emergence of a particular form of consciousness, a range of factors in both the infrastructure and superstructure have to be taken account of simultaneously. This requires an analysis of the relationship between the differentiated superstructural factors and the infrastructure—a relationship which, however, requires not merely to be stated in general, but to be specified. But as was shown from the work of Mallet, Lenin and Debray, it is not sufficient to assume that these conditions simply act on people "from the outside". For the actions of people in, and on, the structural conditions—whether these be the productive or political or some other structures—simultaneously contribute to the transformation of their consciousness. This paper has attempted to do no more than point to the types of conditions as well as the kinds of actions which need to be incorporated into an adequate theory for the analysis of the development of mass revolutionary consciousness.

NOTES

1. Among the most important of the exceptions referred to are Lenin, Gramsci and Lukács. See in this connection particularly the following: V. I. Lenin, "What is to be Done?" in *Selected Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961), Vol. 5, p. 347; A. Gramsci, "The Study of Philosophy and Historical Materialism", "Critical Notes on an attempt at a Popular Presentation of Marxism by Bukharin" and "The Modern Prince" collected in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, translated by L. Marks (London: Lawrence & Wishart 1967); G. Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1923).

2. See, for example: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962), Vol. 1, p. 34; A. de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, translated by S. Gilbert (Garden City: Doubleday and Co. Inc. 1955).
3. E. Mandel, "The Lessons of May", *New Left Review*, No. 52, November-December, 1968, p. 9.
4. The analysis of these reasons does not fall within the scope of this paper but no doubt includes the Cuban revolution, the failure of revolutionary consciousness to develop in the advanced capitalist states (France notwithstanding) and the revitalization of Marxist thought following upon de-Stalinization.
"Critical Notes", p. 90; A. Gorz, "Reform and Revolution" in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.) *The Socialist Register 1968* (The Merlin Press, 1968), p. 111; V. G. Kiernan, "Notes on Marxism 1968" in *ibid.*, p. 177; T. Nairn, "Why it Happened" in A. Quattrochi and T. Nairn, *The Beginning of the End* (Panther Books, 1968), p. 103.
6. J. C. Davies, "Towards a Theory of Revolution", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1962, p. 5. See also: R. Tanter and M. Midlarsky, "A Theory of Revolution", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. II, 1967, p. 264.

7. With regard to the nature of the relevant needs the author says (p. 8):
"A revolutionary state of mind requires the . . . expectation . . . to satisfy basic needs, which may range from merely physical (food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety from bodily harm) to social (the affectional ties of family and friends) to the need for equal dignity and justice."

Similar in this respect is the approach of D. Willer and G. K. Zollschan, "Prolegomenon to a Theory of Revolution" in G. K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch *Explorations in Social Change* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 125. Relevant here is the definition by these authors (p. 130) of their term "exigency" as:

" . . . a feeling of unease in the person and the occurrence of unrest in a collectivity stemming from a differential between the person's definition of the relevant social situation as it is and as it should be. Typically an exigency as such is on a pre-verbal level."

In their view the relevant discrepancies have an even wider source than in Davies' theory. See p. 130 and the following on p. 89:

" . . . whereas sources of exigencies are diffuse—all manner of discrepancies exist that have the potentiality of presenting themselves to the awareness—three types of discrepancy may be distinguished . . . affective or cathectic, evaluative and cognitive."

See also R. Dahrendorf: *Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society* (Routledge, 1959).

8. Davies, *op. cit.*, represents this point graphically in Figure 1 on page 6.
9. V. I. Lenin, "Left Wing Communism", 1920, in *Selected Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow), Vol. III, p. 430.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 430.
11. V. I. Lenin, "What is to be Done" in *Collected Works*, Vol. V, pp. 374-5.
12. I will return to the notion of hegemony later in the paper. Briefly, hegemony can be defined as the consensual aspect of the dominant position of

the ruling classes: it is the set of guiding ideas which permeate consciousness and legitimate the social arrangements. The notion of hegemony seems to have much in common with the concept of a "symbolic universe" as used by Berger and Luckmann (see P. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Allen Lane, 1967), Part 2, section 2). The central concern of these authors is with the social-psychological mechanism by which symbolic universes develop and consequently in general they take the power structure as given. They do, however, draw attention to the possible development of alternative symbolic universes.

"The confrontation of alternative symbolic universes implies a problem of power—which of the conflicting definitions of reality will be 'made to stick' in the society." (pp. 126-7).

It is precisely in this aspect that Gramsci is primarily interested. One of his central concerns is with the conditions in, and processes by which fragmented, partial and incoherent "alternative definitions" develop into integrated, coherent hegemonies which confront and oppose the existing hegemony. The development of such an opposing hegemony implies, of course, the subjective breakdown of the institutional separation of life into encapsulated spheres and the consequent understanding that the rejection of any of the apparently discrete spheres involves the rejection of the whole of the society.

13. On this aspect see: Berger and Luckmann, *op. cit.*; P. Berger and S. Pullberg, "The Concept of Reification", *New Left Review*, No. 35, January-February, 1966, p. 56; M. Harrison, *A Critique of the Social-Psychological Assumptions in Contemporary Functionalism* (unpublished Seminar Paper).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
19. In addition to the studies which are examined later in the present paper, the same type of problem seems to arise in: H. Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars" in G. H. Nadel (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of History* (Harper Torch Books, 1965), p. 117; and Willer and Zollschan, *op. cit.* (Note 9 above).
20. The theories of Willer and Zollschan, *op. cit.*, Tanter and Midlarsky; *op. cit.*, among others, show the same characteristics. See also: R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society* (Routledge, 1959).
21. Compare on this point: D. Lockwood, "Social Integration and System Integration" in Willer and Zollschan, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
22. K. Marx, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy" in *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 363.
23. F. Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" in *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 143.
24. Marx, *Preface, loc. cit.*
25. "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", F. Engels, *Anti-Duhring* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow).
26. K. Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital" in *Marx-Engels Selected Works* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962), p. 94.

27. "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", pp. 42-3.
28. A. Labriola, *Essays in the Materialistic Interpretation of History* (Monthly Review Press, 1966).
29. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, pp. 146-7.
30. H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964). "Socialism in the Developed Countries", *International Socialist Journal*, No. 8, 1965, p. 139.
31. Marcuse (1965), p. 140.
32. Marcuse (1965), p. 142; see also (1964), p. 8.
33. On the points in this paragraph see: Marcuse (1965), pp. 147,148; (1964), pp. 9, 24, 25.
34. See Marcuse (1965), pp. 142-3; (1964), p. 32.
35. Marcuse (1964), p. 8.
36. S. Mallet, "The New Working Class", *International Socialist Journal*, No. 8, April, 1965, p. 156.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-7.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
43. *Loc. cit.*
44. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
47. T. Nairn, "Why It Happened" (see note 5 above), p. 122.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
50. *Loc. cit.*
51. For discussion of this point see: D. Lockwood, "Social Integration & System Integration" in Zollschan & Hirsch (see note 5 above); M. Godelier, "System, Structure and Contradiction in Capital" in *The Socialist Register*, 1967.
52. R. Debray, "Revolution in the Revolution", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3., July-August, 1967, on which the discussion in this paper is entirely based. In his earlier English publications Debray took a very different position. It will be seen from my analysis in the paper that the following passage from an earlier article by Debray is quite contrary to the position criticized here. "... the appearance of a guerilla centre is to be subordinated to a vigorous political analysis of the situation: the selection of the moment at which to launch the action and of the right place for it presumes a searching analysis of national contradictions understood in class terms". Page 37 of "Latin America: The Long March", *New Left Review*, No. 33, 1965. See also his "Problems of Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America", *New Left Review*, No. 45, 1967.
53. "Revolution in the Revolution", p. 36.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

57. Ibid., pp. 53-4.
58. For an assessment of Debray generally see: "Régis Debray and the Latin American Revolution", in *Monthly Review*, Vol. 20, July-August, 1968. There is a particularly perceptive article on the issue of consciousness and the role of the foco by E. Ahman p. 70, although he seems to miss the main point of his own analysis. He shows that Debray himself contended that the peasants recognized the legitimacy of the Government and regarded the guerilla as alien. This being the case, there seems to be no warrant at all for the assumption that combat will undermine the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the peasant.
59. K. Marx, "Poverty of Philosophy" quoted in T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel, *Karl Marx* (Pelican Books, 1961), p. 195.
60. *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 41-43.
61. e.g. V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are" (1905) in *Collected Works* (Lawrence and Wishart), Vol. I, 236.
62. Lenin, "What is to be Done?" (1902), *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 383.
63. See for example Ibid., pp. 375-6.
64. Ibid., p. 422, p. 375.
65. Ibid., p. 422.
66. V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats" (1898) in *Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 346. See also "What is to be Done?", p. 425.
67. Ibid., pp. 400-1. See also: V. I. Lenin, "Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" (1920), *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 437.
68. "What the 'Friends of the People' Are", p. 535.
69. "What is to be Done?", pp. 400-401. See also "The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats", p. 329.
70. "What is to be Done?", pp. 412-413.
71. The doubtful view that Lenin was not concerned with this problem at all has been put forward by Z. A. Jordan in: *The Development of Dialectical Materialism* (Macmillan, 1967), pp. 355-6.
72. "What the 'Friends of the People' Are", p. 159.
73. V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism" (1895), *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 370. For an interesting discussion of this question see: Gorz, *op. cit.*
74. *Loc. cit.*
75. Ibid., p. 386 note.
76. *Loc. cit.*
77. "What is to be Done?", pp. 382-4.
78. Ibid., p. 386.
79. At one point Lenin appears to attempt to escape from the difficulties by relying on the proletariat's instinctive realization of its needs for political liberty. See: "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (1905) in *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 571.
80. I attempt this brief examination of Gramsci's ideas with a great deal of hesitation. So little of his writing is available in English that it is naturally impossible to form a full and coherent view of his work. However, the importance of his insights for the present paper seem to me to justify the risk involved in basing an argument on the essays published in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*. (See note above).

81. *Ibid.*, p. 61, pp. 66-7.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
83. G. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1960, p. 586.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 587.
85. Gramsci, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-7.
86. See on this point: Gramsci, the essays referred to in Note 79; Williams *op. cit.*, p. 594; J. Merrington, "Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism", *Socialist Register 1968* (Merlin Press), p. 145, particularly pp. 154, 157.
87. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 590.
88. Page 138.
89. Merrington, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-6.
90. *Modern Prince*, pp. 172, 185-6.
91. Quoted by Merrington, pp. 146, 147.
92. Quoted by Merrington, p. 154.
93. See, for example: *The Modern Prince*, pp. 67-9, 95-6; Williams, p. 592; Merrington, pp. 151, 157, 165-6.
94. For example: L. Althusser: "Contradiction and Overdetermination", *New Left Review*, No. 41, January-February, 1967, p. 15.
95. Korsch, among others, has argued that no such theory is possible. He says: ". . . Marx's materialistic social science is not sociology, but economics. For the other branches of the so-called social science there remains then, according to the materialistic principles of Marxism, a scale of phenomena which become in proportion to their increasing distance from the economic foundation, less and less accessible to a strictly scientific investigation, less and less 'material', more and more 'ideological', and which, finally, cannot be treated in a theoretical manner at all, but only critically in the closest connection with the practical tasks of the proletariat." K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (Russell & Russell, 1963), pp. 234-5.
96. Marx: *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 363.
97. F. Engels, "Letter to J. Bloch", *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 488. Also see: K. Marx, *Capital* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow), Vol. III, p. 722:
 "This does not prevent the same economic bases—the same from the standpoint of its main conditions—due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances." See also L. Althusser, p. 31.
98. Althusser, p. 27.
99. *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 361.
100. K. Marx, "The Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy" reprinted in D. Horowitz, *Marx and Modern Economics* (MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), p. 21; B. Brewster, "Presentation of Althusser", *New Left Review*, No. 41, January-February, 1967; K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (1938) (Russell and Russell, 1967), Chapters VI and VII.
 Korsch, *op. cit.*