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# **“We Had a Utopia in the Union”: James Wright, the Farm Equipment Workers Union, and the Struggle for Civil Rights Unionism in Postwar Louisville, 1946–1952**

**Victor G. Devinatz**

The Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union (FE), a comparatively small union that was led by the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA), originated as the Farm Equipment Division of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in July 1938 when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) chartered the FE as the international union whose jurisdiction covered the farm-equipment industry. While possessing 70,000 members at its peak in 1948, and having an overlapping jurisdiction with its rival, the much larger and more powerful United Auto Workers Union (UAW), the FE's major power base was found in the International Harvester Corporation factories, where it represented some 40,000 workers. During the seventeen years (1938–55) of the union's existence, the FE not only pioneered an independent shop-floor unionism in contrast to that of the UAW (Devinatz, 2008 and 1996; Gilpin 1988), but also fought vigorously for the civil rights of African American workers, inspiring its members to participate in such struggles both at and away from work.

One member who was stirred by the FE's militant defense of its members' civil rights was James Wright, an African American activist in Louisville Harvester Local 236 who became, and ended

his career in the 1980s as, a UAW service representative after the FE's absorption into the auto workers' union in 1955. In this paper, I will discuss Wright's background prior to his FE membership and his participation in civil rights struggles at the workplace and in the Louisville community at large that was inspired and encouraged by the FE during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the conclusion, I will argue that the CPUSA-led FE was not unique; its strong advocacy and promotion of civil rights for African American workers among the industrial unions at this time were characteristic of a number of CPUSA-led unions that generally were more progressive on race than the other CIO unions.

### ***Wright's background***

Born in 1919 in a little town in the Earlington coal-mining area in southwestern Kentucky twelve miles from the Tennessee line, Wright first became aware of and excited by unionism's power of promoting interracial unity in the 1930s as a student entering high school when United Mine Workers (UMW) organizers launched a major organizing drive in the Kentucky coal fields. This was hardly surprising given that the UMW had been recruiting African Americans for years, which resulted in the union having more African American members than any other labor organization in the United States. In addition, many UMW organizers and officials were African American (Cayton and Mitchell 1939, 198–99).

Upon graduating from high school, Wright went to work in a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in 1937, laboring in forested areas near his home. Although this was a federal government job, the crews were segregated by race, with whites in one group and camp and African Americans in another. Such an experience contrasted with his memories of CIO activities in the late 1930s in southwestern Kentucky, where he recalls the basic message of the industrial-union federation: all workers, regardless of race, needed to band together for the protection and economic advancement of each worker. "The meetings joined black and white," recalled Wright. "That was heaven then. At least they recognized us" (Wright interviews with Mark Wyman, 23 January 1991; 16 October 1991).

After his stint with the CCC, Wright moved to Louisville in the late 1930s, where he obtained a job hauling cross-ties for ten

hours a day. Next, he worked for a construction company, rising from the position of waterboy to crew foreman in only two years. In spite of his talents and membership in the American Federation of Labor (AFL) Laborers' Union, unlike the CIO unions, the AFL accepted segregation and pay discrimination against African American workers, with Black union members receiving 75 cents an hour and white members receiving \$1.08 per hour (Wright interviews with Mark Wyman, 23 January 1991; 16 October 1991).

Wright worked several months in the early 1940s at a plant organized by the UAW-CIO before beginning his military service on 1 January 1944. Remaining for a few months in India, Wright fought the Japanese in the China-Burma theater of the war, where his unit was captured by the Japanese. After seven months in captivity, Wright was released in 1945 and spent time in military hospitals before being discharged from the military in June 1946 (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991).

### ***Wright's return to Louisville after World War II***

At the war's conclusion, the Old South is what awaited returning African American veterans like Wright. As the poorest section of the United States, the "Southern differential" applied to factory workers who received lower wages than their counterparts laboring in the North. And even among the Southern states, statistics indicate that life was hard in Kentucky for the vast majority of the population in spite of Kentucky being one of the South's richest states, with its many bluegrass horse stables, coal mines, and industrial plants found on the Ohio River's banks. For example, the state ranked fourth from the bottom in terms of per capita income; only two states registered more tuberculosis cases than Kentucky, and only one state had a higher illiteracy rate. Furthermore, in one of the state's rural sections, 11,500 people depended on a single physician for medical services, while throughout Kentucky in 1940, 13,000 farmers were required to haul water an average of more than four miles (Mezerik 1947, 40–41).

It was difficult for Wright to return to a segregated Louisville after fighting fascism and defending democracy overseas. He encountered discrimination immediately after getting out of the army. "(W)hen I caught a train to go home, there was a special

railroad car just for blacks,” according to Wright. Arriving back in Louisville in 1946, Wright states, “I fell right back into discrimination. . . . I couldn’t go to a hotel (for whites) in Louisville; I couldn’t cross 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Blacks could work beyond the line, but when work was done, they had to go home; they couldn’t live there” (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991).

Obtaining a job as a sweeper at the Louisville International Harvester factory in 1946, Wright immediately threw himself into organizing the plant for the FE. Established in 1902 when the McCormick Company merged with a number of harvesting and haying machines manufacturers, Harvester soon developed into one of the United States’ largest companies with twenty-eight manufacturing plants (as well as steel mills and iron mines) centered largely in Chicago and the Midwest. In addition to producing a complete line of agricultural implements, Harvester also manufactured trucks and earth-moving equipment; refrigeration equipment also was made until 1956 (Gilpin 1989, 45; Melcher 1964, 39–41).

Between 1902 and 1957, Harvester was the foremost U.S. agricultural equipment producer, although this line declined from 70 percent (in 1910) to approximately 33 percent (in 1955) of the corporation’s sales, primarily due to the astonishing growth of the motor-truck division. A meager 3 percent of Harvester’s sales came from motor truck in 1910 but by 1957; almost 50 percent was from this division (Melcher 1964, 41, 44). In 1946, Harvester started to manufacture earth-moving machinery, power units, and associated items. By 1957, the construction-equipment division made \$154 million, accounting for 13.2 percent of total sales. Therefore, the company’s stake in the construction-equipment market was almost as large as its share in agricultural implements, not including farm tractors (Melcher 1964, 44).

### ***Wright, FE Local 236, and civil rights unionism, 1946–1952***

Louisville’s new Harvester factory, which employed more than 6,000 workers made up primarily of white and African American World War II veterans, was Kentucky’s largest industrial plant and the city’s largest employer (Fosl 2002, 91). Characterized as “one



of the most left-wing of the CIO unions” in the immediate postwar era, FE Local 236 in Louisville’s Harvester facility vigorously engaged in interracial organizing during the unionization drive, while simultaneously dedicating itself to obtaining higher wages for workers. The issues of the *FE Cub*, Local 236’s newspaper, which Wright edited from 1946 to 1952, boasted of the union’s wage gains achieved for members and also continually discussed the need for racial unity (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 23 January 1991; Keeran 1980, 278).

In the first few issues of the *Cub* published in the fall of 1946, the local pointed out the contractual provision against discrimination, and remarked, “By this clause, every American is assured the right to a job in Harvester based upon ability—not prejudice. Determined support of such principles is the duty of every Union member. We won the strike because we stuck together” (“25,000,000 Victory, Best Contract, Won by IHC Workers,” *FE Cub*, 14 October 1946, 3). Furthermore, the *Cub* pointed out, in a direct appeal to the newly returned World War II veterans, that Southern employers played the races off against each other to retain lower wages and invoked the unity achieved during World War II to defeat fascism as an analogous strategy: “Both races are the losers. Only the unity of the United Nations defeated Hitler; only the unity of all workers in the Louisville plant, regardless of race, creed, or color, will bring your standards up to those in the other eleven IHC plants” (“FE Fights Wage Differentials,” *FE Cub*, 17 September 1946, 1).

The local’s dedication to civil rights was not limited to mere rhetoric. Even before the union’s representation election victory in July 1947, Local 236 successfully pressured Harvester to do away with the separate restrooms for Black and white workers in the main plant. After the local was certified, it began the fight to upgrade all workers in the plant, regardless of race, and achieved this principle for the first time in Louisville’s history (“Negro-White Unity Wins!” *FE Cub*, 9 August 1951, 2).

The union’s commitment to civil rights within the factory was indicated by its struggle for the elimination of the Southern Differential in the Louisville plant. Local 236 had fought to eradicate this disparity and to increase the lower wages at Louisville since the local achieved bargaining rights in 1947. That year, union

members participated in a forty-day strike that reduced the differential to only one-quarter of its former size. Negotiations between Local 236 and Harvester, which concluded in late spring 1950, did away with this differential entirely. With the raising of wages between one and five cents an hour for more than 1,000 production workers in the tractor works, this meant that they would be paid at the same rate as their counterparts in the other Harvester-FE plants outside of Chicago (“Southern Differential Wiped Out,” *FE Cub*, 7 June 1950, 1).

Not only did FE Local 236 fight to obtain formal civil rights for African American workers within the structure of the plant, but it also sought to eliminate antagonism between the races in the informal relations within the factory. As an attempt to undermine interracial unity, Harvester did nothing to discourage employees from socializing with their own racial groups on the job and at lunch. However, Wright claims that the union actively fought to desegregate the cafeteria. Wright states:

the blacks [were] over there sitting behind a wall, we couldn't see what was going on over there, and the white folks sitting on the other side. I said, I think I'll go over there. . . . So [in early 1948] I got the white guys in my department to march with me and sit on the white side. They fired me right off. Right flat off. Get out of this plant, don't come back here no more. But the workers walked out for me, they walked out, and said there ain't going to be no work, as long as he's fired there'll be no work. (Gilpin 1992, 493)

Although Wright was hired back, the plant's eating areas remained segregated. It was not until the end of April 1954 that the plant's cafeteria was integrated due to the continuing pressure of FE Local 236 (Gilpin 1992, 494).

In other efforts to improve race relations among the plant's workers, the union organized a number of group activities—social events, movies, picnics, and trips, integrated Christmas parties for the membership's children—among the white and African American workers after the end of the workday. Commenting on these activities, Wright stated, “We integrated white parks” in order to hold picnics. “We even had bus-riding classes on weekends.

Whites would go with blacks on the bus. The FE played a big role in ending bus segregation.” According to Wright, the purpose of these interracial activities was to send a broader message to the Louisville community, “We let the people in town *know* there was a group that met together interracially” (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 12 May 1992).

The park that Wright and his fellow Local 236 members chose as the battleground for integration was Cherokee Park, described as “peaceful rolling woodland ensconced in one of Louisville’s whitest and wealthiest neighborhoods.” In their first attempt to break the color bar, twenty-five African Americans and seven or eight white members visited the park in 1951. Only ten minutes after their arrival, Wright recalls a policeman challenging the interracial group by stating, “You know you can’t go in this park; I don’t know why you Communists would come out here.” Upon leaving the park, they were admonished not to return (Gilpin 1992, 521–22).

The union contingent’s second trip to the park was more eventful than the first. Wright thinks that the police were tipped off because twenty squad cars were waiting inside the park for the group as it arrived. This time the confrontation with the law enforcement officers turned violent as they physically attacked the trade unionists. “Those guys just unloaded on us,” Wright pointed out. “They beat us, knocked us on the head, knocked us on the ground, and had us running, everything. Drug me out to the edge of the park and dumped me on the sidewalk.” As parting advice, the officer who had laid Wright out told him, while displaying his gun, that “we could fix it so that you’ll never come back no more” (Gilpin 1992, 522–23).

The FE unionists decided to alter their tactics by reducing the size of the interracial group to only six workers (three Black and three white) before making a third outing to Cherokee Park. During this visit, which occurred on a Sunday when the park was filled with white picnickers, the group did not see any police officers, was able to purchase soft drinks and remained two hours before leaving on their own accord. In order to determine if they had successfully desegregated the park, however, a group of forty FE members, African American and white, with their wives journeyed once more to the park for a picnic (Gilpin 1992, 524).

Soon after their arrival, Wright was approached by the police officer who had decked Wright during an earlier confrontation. Because of the presence of the wives, Wright believes that the policeman was more civil this time informing him that the FE delegation was in violation of the law. Although he let Wright know that further integrated visits to the park would be greeted by harsher actions, he allowed the group to stay for one hour. When the time was up, the officer returned and accompanied them out of the park (Gilpin 1992, 524–525).

The commitment of FE Local 236 to interracial organizing galvanized Wright into becoming more active in union activities devoted to civil rights. He led the Louisville delegation to a national trade union conference on “Negro rights” while continuing to promote his views by writing for the *FE Cub*:

the bosses capitalize on the major issue of today, and that is the Negro and White unity question. They always welcome such splits as a means to exploit the workers and keep down their living standards. This is further advanced by acquiring shops in the Deep South where they can get cheap labor and continue to exploit the workers. (Wright 1952, 2)

Ann Braden, who went to work in public relations for the FE in Louisville in 1949, states that both Harvester and Local 236 claimed credit for the nondiscriminatory conditions in the plant. According to Braden:

Negroes were integrated into the union as well as the shop; some of them held major offices in the local; and it was a usual thing to see Negro and white members sitting together in the union hall discussing their common problems, informally as well as in formal meetings. The new pattern spilled over outside the union hall, and many of these same white men visited in the Negro unionists’ homes and the Negroes went to the white members’ homes. (Braden 1958, 47)

Braden claims that these relationships between the races developed in spite of the fact that both the white and African American workers grew up in a segregated Louisville where such conditions

were “unchallengeable” (47). She recounts the transformation that took place in the white workers once they got to know their African American counterparts through working with them at the plant. Quoting a white worker on this experience:

I always thought colored people were something to look down on. But when I went to work at Harvester I saw something different. The Negroes were some of the best leaders the union had; they were the ones you could depend on to stick up for you when you got into a fight with the company; they knew what to do and they weren't afraid. You can't help but respect them, and pretty soon you get to like them, and the first thing you know you almost forget they're colored and you think of them as just people like yourself. (Braden 1958, 47)

Besides fighting for civil rights within the sphere of employment relations from 1949 to 1952, Wright also actively struggled to desegregate other Louisville institutions beyond Harvester's plant gates. He was actively involved in the Louisville Committee to End Hospital Segregation, served on the Committee against Segregated Schools, and fought for the integration of the Earl Hotel and the Brown Hotel. Many of the planning sessions for these various groups' demonstrations took place at “coal house” meetings, so-called because they were sometimes conducted in coal sheds to avoid public scrutiny (Wright interviews with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991; 12 May 1992).

At the Earl Hotel, the integrated union delegation was continually thrown out after sitting in the hotel's lobby. These actions had a positive effect, because, according to Wright, the hotel management permitted African American FE members to sit in the hotel without being harassed and even “let blacks come and sleep in there, let one or two of us sleep in there overnight” (Gilpin 1992, 526).

Things did not go as smoothly in their attempts to integrate the Brown Hotel. At this establishment, these demonstrations often unfolded in the following manner. After attempting to check in, the civil rights activists would be “run out” of the hotel, “about twenty times,” according to Wright's estimate. The

protestors would then lock their hands before getting arrested. Wright recalled that the demonstrations would sometimes become violent and that the demonstrators were beaten up four times. In a November 1951 action, Wright was hit on the head during one of these protests. After this incident, Wright stated, "My wife cried, she begged me to stop that foolishness. She said, 'You ain't going to be able to walk and live with white people because they aren't going to allow it' " (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991).

Throughout the early 1950s, Wright's civil rights activities expanded to include active participation in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Negro Labor Council. In the latter group, Wright fought with the other organization's members to get General Electric to hire African Americans at its new plant in Louisville by marching and demonstrating in front of the homes of company officials. At this time, he also became involved with the Progressive Party (PP), which promoted racial integration, jobs for African Americans and women's rights, by organizing marches and holding meetings for the organization in his home (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 12 May 1992).

Perhaps the most controversial committee that Wright served on during this period was the Andrew Wade Committee, which was established to aid in the desegregation of a small white subdivision in Louisville. Wade, a PP member, approached his friend Carl Braden, also a fellow PP associate, and asked him whether he would buy a new house for him in a segregated area of the city and then transfer ownership to Wade, an African American. Braden, who worked for FE Local 236 in public relations along with his wife Anne, agreed (Braden 1958, 63–84).

After Wade acquired the property, threats, a cross-burning, and bombings occurred with the police moving in, although no arrests were made. In front of the Grand Jury, the government argued that the whole affair was a Communist plot to foment racial discord. The Bradens were questioned concerning their prior membership in the PP; a search of their home turned up their possession of left-wing books. Although rumors circulated that the police were aware of the bomber's identity, Carl Braden was arrested and

charged with violating a Kentucky sedition law. The case went forward without the police following up on the lead concerning the bomber. Braden was convicted, serving seven months in prison and was not freed until the U.S. Supreme Court overturned state sedition laws. This decision occurred after restrictive covenants (written color bars in housing) had been declared unconstitutional (Braden 1958, 63–84, 278, 285).

Wright's participation in such activities and groups did not come without a price. With the rise of McCarthyism in the early 1950s, beginning in 1951, he was "trailed" and "watched" by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for his alleged subversive activities. According to Wright, "The FBI came to talk with me. They followed me." In addition, at this time, the Local 236 union hall "was broken into by someone" who "tore apart our files." Because of the FE's ties to the CPUSA, the union and Wright "suspected the FBI" as the party involved in the break-in (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 14 March 1992).

Wright was fired by the company a second time for allegedly hurling a brick at a car driven by a strike breaker, during the FE's disastrous chain-wide strike against Harvester that began in August 1952. Although the jury ruled that Wright was innocent of the charges, after witnesses indicated that he was not present at the time of the incident, Harvester stated that it would not give Wright his job back but would make its own independent decision concerning the fracas ("It's a Company Law," *FE Cub*, 30 January 1953, 3). The union alleged that Harvester's motivation behind its decision was to deprive the local of one of its most militant leaders:

However, THE COMPANY REFUSED TO REINSTATE WRIGHT, because he is a leading member of the Union and a top fighter for real fighting unity of Negro and white workers in the plant. His record as a steward and as Publicity Director of Local 236 is the real reason he was framed and fired. ("It's a Company Law," *FE Cub*, 30 January 1953, 3)

Wright never returned to the Louisville plant, but then went to work as a full-time FE staff member (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 12 May 1992).

With the FE dramatically weakened by the 1952 strike defeat (Gilpin 1989); the UAW stepped up its raids at the FE-represented Harvester plants that it had begun back in 1949 at the time of the FE's expulsion from the CIO. Although the union easily defeated these attempts, a loss to the UAW in its raid at the East Moline plant in May 1954 indicated that the days were numbered for the FE (Devinatz 2008). Wright recalls the difficulty that the FE had at this time:

I gave up. I said, "Why keep leading these people in this direction. We have to change." Some FE leaders were mad at me. I got tired of fighting. We were alone, and we were losing. The UAW was picking off our little plants. Within a year, we would have been swallowed by the UAW. I fought the UAW from 1952 to 1955. (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 14 March 1992)

In summarizing his experience with the FE, Wright claimed, "We had a utopia in the union" (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 14 March 1992). "This FE was the best organization I have ever been in in my life" (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991). It is clear that Wright feels so positively about the union because of its stand and activities concerning civil rights:

It was set up for freedom. The whites in it helped me for living conditions. . . . We thought something had happened to the *earth*—how can *whites* do this? . . . (R)acial integration was one of their appeals. That was a *death* word then. (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991)

Wright claims that it was the FE that prepared him for engaging in antidiscrimination activity in Louisville because "they gave me the nerve. That was our base" (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 16 October 1991).

And while Wright and the FE were not the only parties fighting for civil rights within Louisville and Kentucky, their actions certainly contributed to the positive changes that were taking place within the state. For example, Lyman Johnson was the plaintiff in a federal court case that allowed African Americans to enroll in the University of Kentucky in 1949 (Hall 1988, 154). Along similar



lines, in 1950, the Kentucky legislature struck down a 1904 law that prohibited white and African American students from attending the same colleges and universities, and shortly thereafter both Berea College and the University of Louisville admitted African American students. In 1952, *The Defender*, Louisville's Black newspaper, noted that racial progress had been achieved in many areas including African Americans being allowed for the first time to visit all of the city's public libraries; City Hall began hiring African American secretaries; African Americans were assured admission to any licensed hospital in Kentucky and the Louisville municipal golf courses were desegregated (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, 8 September 1950, sec. I, 10 (editorial); 12 September 1950, sec. II, 1; *Louisville Defender*, 31 December 1952, 1; 9 April 1952, 6).

It was not only FE Local 236, but the FE in its entirety that was committed to achieving racial egalitarianism within the workplace. For example, in the union's struggle to upgrade Blacks to more skilled positions at the McCormick Works in Chicago, where whites constituted 80 percent of the plant's workforce, and most African Americans engaged in foundry work, FE Local 108 attained the right for Blacks to work as assemblers, inspectors, welders, and polishers by 1949. Moreover, African Americans were well represented in local leadership, serving in roles from departmental shop steward to executive board member. Finally, in the 1949 elections, four of the eleven members on the executive board and three of the seven grievance-men elected were Black (Gilpin 1992, 345, 363).

### ***CPUSA-led unions as vanguard of civil rights unionism***

Wright argues that during this era the other CPUSA-led unions as well as the FE helped break down the color barrier in U.S. trade unions:

The key is to have a labor union that is progressive, and will fight for equal rights of people. Instead of one that is status quo. If it is status quo, you might as well not have a union at all. The programs that the progressive unions had were the most important programs since the U.S. Constitution was

written. It got us integration in most of the unions. (Wright interview with Mark Wyman, 12 May 1992)

Empirical evidence shows that other CPUSA-led unions, besides the FE, vigorously promoted civil rights within the factory gates and the outside community as the FE had done in Louisville. In an essay on the CIO unions' advocacy of racial egalitarianism during the 1930s and 1940s, Goldfield points out that the CPUSA-led industrial unions and unions where the Party exerted significant influence often had the best records in fighting for civil rights (1993). In the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers of America (Mine Mill), for example, not only did Mine Mill members pursue racial equality in the workplace, but they promoted it in the larger community as a whole through their participation in voter-registration drives and campaigns against the poll tax and lynching (Goldfield 1993, 14). The National Maritime Union (NMU) fought for the equal rights of African American workers on the ships, and its Inland Boat division, which had a completely white membership as did Mine Mill, battled against the poll tax and lynching (Goldfield 1993, 21). And the United Packinghouse Workers of America, which was not CPUSA-led but in which Communists played a major role, utilized tactics at the point of production to desegregate lily-white departments, obtained contractual provisions that the percentage of African American workers hired would be at least proportionate to their percentage in Chicago's population, integrated all of the union's social activities, and desegregated the whites-only bars in Chicago's meatpacking district, among other things (Goldfield 1993, 19).

Certainly the union that was the most similar to the FE with regard to the promotion of racial egalitarianism both inside and outside the workplace was the CPUSA-led Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers (FTA), with the union's leading local union and base, Local 22, located in the R. J. Reynolds cigarette plants in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. A member of the CIO, the FTA came out of the Tobacco Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC) in 1942 when TWOC began to recruit Reynolds employees in the Winston-Salem cigarette factories. The 17 June 1943 sit-down strike in Plant 65 initiated by two hundred

African American female tobacco stemmers, and led by TWOC members, which called for wage equalization and the eradication of the unbearable working conditions and excessive workloads, was the decisive incident that resulted in TWOC's National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) certification election victory in December 1943. Signing their first contract with the union in the middle of April 1944, R. J. Reynolds employees achieved historic gains with the implementation of a four-step grievance procedure and the use of departmental seniority in deciding layoffs, recalls, and promotions (Korstad 2003, 17–29, 167–78, 202–11).

Local 22, however, was not just interested in attaining collective-bargaining agreements and constructing a system of industrial jurisprudence for the superexploited predominantly African American tobacco workers, but in confronting the extant industrial relations regimes in the South. For example, in the second series of contract negotiations with Reynolds, which commenced in the middle of May 1946, the FTA called for reducing “the racial inequalities in the wage structure” (Korstad 2003, 281), although the union's most contentious proposal was for the implementation of a company-wide seniority system to eliminate the sexual and racial division of labor at the company. Even though this last demand was not attained, the second agreement was far better than the first, with the Local 22 workers obtaining wage increases and the creation of a system for ranking manufacturing jobs so that supervisors would be unable to play workers off against each other through arbitrary pay increases (281–82).

Besides its collective-bargaining achievements, Local 22 constructed a highly democratic and activist shop-steward system that operated most successfully in the African American sections of the plants in which the union garnered the most support. Furthermore, the local initiated an extensive workers' education program intended to eradicate the workers' widespread illiteracy, while providing numerous courses in union leadership training, labor and Black history, as well as political and current events (Korstad 2003, 226–40).

As with the FE from 1952 to 1955, the FTA came under attack by other unions ultimately due to FTA officials refusing to sign

the non-Communist affidavits required by the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. As a result, the union lost NLRB protection and became vulnerable when Reynolds refused to bargain with the FTA upon its contract expiration in 1948. Although FTA leaders signed the affidavits in August 1949 and the union was eligible to compete in the upcoming NLRB election with its AFL rival, the Tobacco Workers International Union and the CIO's small United Transport Service Employees that had filed petitions, a clear majority was not obtained in the 8 March 1950 certification election, resulting in a 23 March 1950 run-off election between the FTA and "No Union," which the FTA lost by 66 votes out of the more than 8,900 votes cast. This loss contributed to the eventual demise of the FTA at the national level (Korstad 2003, 351–52, 393–413).

Although a number of CPUSA-led unions played an active role in the struggle to achieve racial egalitarianism, not every Party-led union actively fought for racial justice on the shop floor at all times. For example, according to Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (2003, 224–25), although the CPUSA-led United Electrical Workers (UE) at the national level was in favor of racial equality, the union leaders failed to make it a priority because the union was "already embroiled in a sharp struggle against electrical employers for pay equity and job protection for women." Nonetheless, Feurer (2006) presents compelling evidence that UE District 8 was not only ideologically committed to racial egalitarianism, but vigorously struggled for the rights of African American workers both inside and outside of the workplace particularly during World War II, while McCulloch (1992, 194) points out that the UE had obtained united seniority lists that were, for the most part, inclusive of all workers regardless of race, ethnicity and gender by 1949. Furthermore, it should be noted that, as in the FTA's case, CPUSA-led unions were not always successful in their fights to overturn racial inequality. An example is the failure of left-led unions in Memphis to eradicate racial discrimination in pay and job classifications (Honey 1993).

Finally, one should recognize that non-left-led CIO unions also fought at times in various ways to eliminate discrimination in the workplace or in society as a whole, occasionally achieving

some success. For example, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in Birmingham abolished racial disparities in wages and job classifications. And, as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the early 1960s, the UAW and the USWA supplied the crucial bail money for the Birmingham demonstrations conducted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1963 (Stein 1993, 54).

It is hard to know how many other African American trade unionists were inspired by the CPUSA-led unions to become leaders and to take part in civil rights struggles, not only in their workplaces but within their communities as a whole. The lessons from the story of James Wright and the FE indicate that such activists and CPUSA-led unions served as a bridge to what most people think of as the Civil Rights Movement that swept the United States beginning in the early 1960s. Their contributions toward preparing the foundations for the major gains in civil rights that were obtained in the following decades deserve to be widely acknowledged.

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# **Identity of Comparative Psychology: Its Status and Advances in Evolutionary Theory and Genetics**

**Ethel Tobach**

In this paper, I suggest that there are three reasons for the need to consider a redefinition of comparative psychology: first, the identity of comparative psychology is marginalized; second, advances in evolutionary theory and genetics may affect the theory and practices of comparative psychology; third, the activities of the human species are of significance to all sciences today, and especially to comparative psychologists who work with the relationship between humans, nonhuman organisms, and the environment. Comparative psychology could make a special contribution to the development of policies designed to ensure the welfare of the planet and its inhabitants. Comparative psychology can make history by addressing these issues, as they are inherent to its identity. This third reason requires considerable discussion and is offered here as a possible stimulus for further work.

The following provisional definition is proposed for consideration of that possible redefinition of its identity: comparative psychology is the science of the elucidation of similarities and differences in the evolution and development of the activity of all species to illumine the processes by which their activity contributes to the beneficence of their relationship to the abiotic and biotic aspects of the environment.

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Usually the term “study” rather than “science” is used in the definition of comparative psychology. It is proposed that science is the more useful term, emphasizing different methods of investigation relating to the integration of all the processes that are relevant to the evolution and development of all activity in all species.

It is suggested that “activity” theory can contribute to the theoretical base of comparative psychology as it emphasizes the agency of the organism as it changes internally and externally in its relationship to the abiotic and biotic environment in which it acts and which it changes by its activity (Waddington 1959). The history of the concept of “behavior” is limiting, for example, as it became behaviorism. Activity theory (Leontiev 1978; Luria 1979; Vygotsky 1927/1997) could be important to the theory of the science of comparative psychology (see Gottlieb 2002; Gottlieb and Lickliter 2004; Kuo 1967); although these authors did not cite activity theory, their emphasis on the activity of the organism as an important process in development and evolution is noteworthy.

Consideration of these rationales for the provisional definition of comparative psychology as a prelude to a redefinition of comparative psychology is organized as follows: I. The marginalization of the identity of comparative psychology: comparative psychology as an academic discipline; II. contemporary thinking in evolutionary biology; III. advances in genomic theory; IV. developmental theory; V. some alternatives towards redefining comparative psychology.

### ***Marginalization of the identity of comparative psychology***

The identity of a science is dependent on its ideological recognition by the scientific community, by the academy, and by society. When the status of comparative psychology is compared with related disciplines, the possible need for a redefinition of comparative psychology is clear (Greenberg, Partridge, Weiss, and Pisula 2004; Lickliter 2004).

#### *Status of comparative psychology in the academy*

One method for signifying the academic attraction of relevant disciplines for students who wish to understand the relationship



of humans and other animals is the use of a popular search engine (e.g., Google) to find where a person might enroll to obtain a higher degree in the subject. Searching for comparative psychology, ethology, sociobiology, or evolutionary psychology degree-granting institutions made it evident that although it is older than ethology, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology, comparative psychology does not enjoy their visibility. For comparative psychology, there are 6,980 entries; for ethology, there are 75,400 entries; for sociobiology, there are 78,100 entries; for evolutionary psychology, there are 59,700 entries. The listings are not very accurate and the searcher has to cull appropriate information. Lists of places to earn an advanced degree in evolutionary psychology were compiled by the Human Behavior and Evolution Society and Steven Kaplan of the University of Michigan; no such listing was given for the other disciplines.

*Marginalization of the identity of comparative psychology in the psychological community*

The lack of visibility is somewhat similar in the psychological community as seen in the *Annual Review of Psychology*. This series of review volumes in psychology, started in 1950, is prestigious although not an official publication of the American Psychological Association (APA). The chapters on comparative psychology were variously combined with physiological psychology, ethology, animal behavior, and ecology; sometimes they featured behavioral patterns such as learning, cognition, and foraging. The last chapter on comparative psychology as such appeared in 1964; in 2001 there was a chapter on evolutionary psychology.

To what societal, scientific, or academic processes are these patterns related? The interests of the writers of the chapters certainly played a role in the subject matter of the chapters and their titles. The editors of the *Annual Review of Psychology* carefully select authors who are experts in the field of the evolution of behavior. Perhaps the authors may have reflected the thinking of the psychological community, as well as the public. As far as the public is concerned, comparative psychology is frequently identified as animal behavior or ethology ("a scientific study of

animal behavior” (*Webster’s New Third International Dictionary*, 1965, 781), and sociobiology and evolutionary psychology help to understand human behavior. Popular literature, nature, and health television programs, daily media and cinema regularly and frequently feature the ideology of ethology, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology, by discipline name and by citations of researchers who are known to be proponents of those disciplines. Comparative psychology may not have an iconized writer or scientist in the public arena who is regularly and frequently quoted as to human and nonhuman behavior.

As the informative article by Jaynes (1969) clearly related, the disciplinary origins of comparative psychology are rather old. It was established as the science of the study of the mind (see Flourens in Jaynes); Darwin was eager to establish the study with George Romanes, who is frequently seen as the father of comparative psychology. Because of the association with Darwin, the relationship of evolutionary theory to comparative psychology was clear, and the comparative method of studying behavior (emotion, intelligence, learning) was within the mode of comparative anatomy. The weakening of the relationship between evolutionary theory and comparative psychology is well known.

Some more recent history may be informative. In 1967, Scott, a psychologist, wrote a chapter on “Comparative psychology and ethology” in the *Annual Review of Psychology*. Scott wrote that there was great interest in “animal behavior” and “ethology.” Ethology, studying behavioral evolution as the unfolding of innate, instinctive patterns, became well known in the United States after 1950 when Lorenz returned from prisoner-of-war camp in the USSR and headed the Institute of Comparative Ethology at Altenberg (1949 to 1951; see also Lerner 1992). In 1950 he established a comparative ethology department in the Max Planck Institute of Westphalia. Scott wrote: “This new wave has not yet reached its full height nor is it likely that it will ebb as suddenly as did that of the old comparative psychology” (65). In that chapter, Scott included a section called “Ethology (Evolutionary Psychology),” in which he reviewed the ethological study of behavioral evolution to determine the social organization of species. Scott was also

active in the Ecological Society of America and led the establishment of a Division of Animal Behavior in that Society. In one of his talks to that division, he called for the study of the biological basis of social behavior and used the term “sociobiology” to describe that study.

In the *Annual Review of Psychology* chapter, Scott noted that the Division of Physiological and Comparative Psychology merged with the Division on Experimental Psychology in 1947. In 1963, I urged Hans Leukas Teuber and Sidney Weinstein to convince the APA to reinstitute the Division of Physiological and Comparative Psychology in the Association, which occurred. Today that Division is called Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology.

*Marginalization of comparative psychology  
in scientific, refereed journals*

Today, there are several disciplines under which the evolution of behavior may be studied, with a view towards a doctorate, publications, and a job. This is reflected in two reports relating the publications of the research in these fields and in many disciplines. In 1989, Crawford wrote an article about the value of the theory of evolution to psychology in which the phrase “comparative psychology” does not appear in the bibliography. The only nonethological, nonsociobiological, nonevolutionary psychological reference are Gould’s *The Panda’s Thumb* (1981), Kitcher’s *Vaulting Ambition* (1987), and some biological writings that were produced before the influence of ethology became widespread. The ethological, sociobiological, and evolutionary psychological approaches to the relationship between evolutionary theory and psychology rest on the Darwinian assumptions of natural selection, adaptation, ultimate and proximate basis of behavior (without giving Tinbergen [1963] any credit for this distinction), and above all, the centrality of reproductive activity to secure the species and the genes. Evolution is the unfolding of the innate, instinctive patterns that are useful in this way of seeing behavior.

A more recent paper by Ord et al. (2005, 1401) analyzed publications on the study of animal behavior.

We provide the first quantitative overview of animal behaviour research covering 42,836 documents published in the last three decades, across 25 journals. . . . Profound historical distinctions between early ethology and comparative psychology have been recently bridged by shared interest in communication and social behaviour, and research from physiology and applied areas. . . . Although we reiterate the rise of sexual selection and mating behaviour as prominent areas of research, we also show that interest in . . . development has proven . . . resilient.

*Comparative psychology: Is it really different?*

Two ideologies have been present throughout the known human history of thinking about the nature of being human and animal: (1) the concept that there is a superordinate force that directs and organizes all life (intelligent design; creationism; instinct; preformed; all changes in the organism are managed by genes, needs, drives); and (2) that this force can only be modified to some extent by the experience of the organism, by the material basis of its existence. This dichotimization persists today in the ideologies of ethology, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology.

Comparative psychology has not exposed these fallacies efficiently. In many ways, psychologists have attempted to make comparative psychology more "scientific," more positivistic, more operational, and more mechanistic by incorporating biological technologies in its theory and practice. It may be said that the discipline of comparative psychology has not gained an identity that distinguishes it from other disciplines. Comparative psychology reflects the history of science and society in general and in particular (Allen 1992; Allen and MacLeod 2001).

***Contemporary thinking in evolutionary biology and the scientific theory and practice of comparative psychology: May these affect the identity of comparative psychology?***

Increased knowledge about genetic and protein processes has emphasized the need to understand the interconnectedness of open

complex systems of inanimate and animate entities. This new knowledge has also emphasized the relationship of the organism as it develops to the inanimate and animate entities and processes of the setting in which it develops. Some evolutionary biologists are now turning to the effects of the environment on the ways in which the genes and proteins function (Jablonka, Lachmann and Lamb 1992; Jablonka and Lamb 1995 and 2005). Others are aware that the developmental processes of gene and protein function are important for evolutionary change (Ho 1987; Prum and Brush 2002; Sawyer et al. 2005). Most troubling and least reconciled are the discussions about the process of speciation: how do different species arise? Two of the most stimulating concepts about how speciation may have occurred are punctuated equilibrium (Eldredge 1971; Eldredge and Gould 1972) and exaptation (Gould and Vrba 1982). For comparative psychology these concepts are critical for understanding how the changing activity of the individual organism in changing environments plays a critical role in evolution. These processes also involve the developmental changes brought about by the agency of the organism (Gottlieb 2002a, 2002b; Lickliter 2000).

The writers (Eldredge, Gould, Vrba) on these two concepts put genetic processes into the context of the organisms' relationships to the environments in which they lived and how such factors may have played a role in the activity of the organism which then affected the process of speciation. A brief statement of the two ideas suggests how this issue may be elaborated by comparative psychology: the science of the relationship between the individual's activity within the community of species, and the speciation that results from some changes in all integrative levels (earlier and later levels of organization and function, that is, as related to the development of the organism) within the individual.

#### *Punctuated equilibrium*

Punctuated equilibrium deals with the original problem that critiques of Darwin emphasized: if evolution meant descent and relationships among species with the (unexplained) occurrence

of new species, how does one explain the lack of intermediate species? Eldredge and Gould (Eldredge 1971; Eldredge and Gould 1972) proposed the following when they proposed an alternative to phyletic gradualism (accumulation of small changes leading to a new species): "The history of life is more adequately represented by a picture of 'punctuated equilibria,' disturbed only 'rarely' (i.e., rather often in the fullness of time) by rapid and episodic events of speciation" (Eldredge and Gould 1972, 84).

They postulated that the rapid and episodic events of speciation were related to the fact that

importance of peripheral isolates lies in their small size and the alien environment beyond the species border that they inhabit for only here are selective pressures strong enough and inertia of large numbers sufficiently reduced to produce the "genetic resolution" (Mayr 1963, 533) that overcomes homeostasis. (Eldredge and Gould 1972, 114)

Mayr was using the concept of homeostasis within the individual as self-regulation and responsible for the stability of species within a particular area where speciation does not take place. The concept of punctuated equilibrium stimulated critical discussions (Somit and Peterson 1989). For those who are interested in the sociology of science, the following may be informative. This is what Somit and Peterson (1989, 48) write: "we sought to weigh the scientific implications of punctuated equilibrium." As has been the case with many other theories, ideological issues have become intertwined with scientific ones in the debate over punctuated equilibrium. There have been allegations that the proponents of punctuated equilibrium were influenced, if not motivated, by Marxian ideological considerations, an allegation not discouraged by Gould's active involvement in the Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People and that group's ideological criticism of Edward O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*. On the other side of the scientific fence, some have noted that punctuated theory may provide at least metaphoric support for advocacy of revolutionary change (Peterson and Somit 1983). Combine this with Gould's candid comment about learning Marxism at his father's knee and one can understand the ideological suspicion the theory

has elicited. “The formulation of punctuated equilibrium also coincided with the rise of sociobiology” (Somit and Peterson 1989, 2).

Eldredge, an invertebrate paleontologist, did his dissertation in 1969, which became the basis for the paper in 1971 in which he proposed that instead of a “gradualist” approach to speciation, saltation was more likely the relevant process by which new species arose. In 1972, Eldredge and Gould published their first paper on punctuated equilibrium. E. O. Wilson published *Sociobiology* in 1975.

The concept of punctuated equilibrium is noteworthy for comparative psychology because it raises questions about the ways in which the activity of the individuals and the group bring about the small isolate populations: What is the agency that leads to these allopatric speciations? Is it a response to environmental changes? Is it changes in the food eaten? Is it changes in predator-prey relations? As Venable said, “The behaviour of . . . individuals or groups . . . within their physical and historical environments, change . . . these environments and themselves” (1966, 3).

Knowledge of the developmental and activity processes in evolution is necessary, and comparative psychology can play a role in the gathering of this knowledge. Evolutionary biologists have focused traditionally on the gene as the central factor in development and activity; today researchers find that other structures in the living organism’s cells, such as proteins, chromatin, and cytoplasm, play significant roles. This requires a change in approaches to evolution that are solely genecentric (Burian 2000; Colot and Rossignol 1999; Cullis 1986; El-Hani and Emmenche 2000; Gottlieb 2002; Jablonka et al. 1992; Lutsenko and Bhagwat 1999; Orton 1955; Pennisi 2001; van Speybroeck 2000; Waterland and Jirtle 2003; Wolffe 1994; Xu and Deng 2002). This new knowledge has also emphasized the relationship of the organism as it develops to the setting in which it develops: the inanimate and animate entities and processes.

Nonetheless, many evolutionary biologists are still guided by the idea that all the changes that take place in evolution are determined by the need for the individuals to reproduce organisms that are very similar to them, and that they are thus behavior-

ally bound by genetic processes. Geneticists work at molecular and other early levels of structure and function (that is, levels that are early in development, such as genetic, protein, and hormonal that cascade, as for example, in sexual determination). Geneticists then frequently turn to later levels of organismic structure and function, such as activity/behavior (that is, levels that appear later in development in which the total organism is involved) (Gilbert, 1997). However, they are still guided by the necessity of genetic survival. When comparative psychologists, working at later levels of organismic structure and function (later development of the activity of the entire organism) turn to earlier organismic levels, such as genes, proteins, hormones, neurotransmitters, they frequently focus on genetic processes thought to have emerged in evolution to reproduce similar organisms (Dawkins 1989).

### *Exaptation*

The second concept, exaptation, developed by Gould and Vrba (1982), offers an alternative process by which change in individuals and species takes place. Together with the paleontological findings that dinosaurs were not only reptilian in their descendants but ornithological as well, the concept of exaptation has come to integrate molecular and activity processes within developmental processes.

Citing the many definitions and usages of the word "adaptation," Gould and Vrba (1982) proposed that a new word was needed to clarify relevant processes: *exaptation*. They described a process (cooptation) in which a character (structural; but could also be behavioral, or an activity) that was previously shaped by natural selection for a particular function is coopted for another, current use as elaborated by the environment. The origin of this character cannot be ascribed to the direct action of natural selection (a nonadaptation). The example they give is of the evolution of feathers. Originally, the structures were protuberances of the skin which were related to thermal regulation. As the environmental pressures brought about a modification of jumping to flying, these protuberances maintained their thermal regulatory pattern and developed into feathers, which made flying possible.



*Biological evolutionary aspects.* As indicated above, the paleontological findings of the ancestry of birds stimulated a good deal of research and discussion about the evolutionary origin of feathers (Maderson and Homberger 2000; see also Prum and Brush 2005). Although these discussions are all related to exaptation theory, which featured feathers prominently in the article by Gould and Vrba (1982), the work of Gould and Vrba is not cited. The discussion clearly emphasizes developmental processes on all levels—molecular and total organismic activity—but there are no papers relating to research on bird flight and how factors related to bird flight may have played a role in the development and evolution of feathers as flight organs.

*Comparative psychological aspects.* In the discussions of the evolution and development of feathers, the psychological agency of the organisms as a factor in evolution and development is not discussed. What brought about the change in activity from jumping to flying: responses to environmental changes, or perhaps responses to changes in predator-prey relationships? These two possibilities would require an integration of the levels of biochemical, muscular, and neural structure and functions that were involved (Gottlieb 2002).

Although exaptation stimulated a great deal of critical and supportive discussion (Gould 1991a), as was the case of punctuated equilibrium, its relation to psychology, or activity (behavior) is relatively slow to develop. A check of publications that discussed or used the concept showed interest among a variety of scientists: geneticists; biologists concerned with evolution, speciation, proteins, bipedalism, and hormonal function; professionals working with mental disorder and cognition. In addition, there were papers by animal behaviorists (Delius and Siemann 1998; Jones, Blum, and Pavlik 2005; Withgott 1996). Not all researchers found the concept useful, but all considered it worthy of examination. The animal behavior papers are particularly of interest to comparative psychologists.

Gould (1991a) wrote on exaptation and psychology and suggested that exaptation would be of use to psychology, but dealt with evolutionary psychology particularly. The reactions of socio-

biologists and evolutionary psychologists were published in the *American Psychologist* (1998, 1999). Despite their criticisms, the concept is of great potential significance for comparative psychology.

Most of the papers that appeared in the *American Psychologist* were criticisms of Gould's paper and how he viewed evolutionary psychology. One paper addressed the theory itself (Beauchaine 1999). Beauchaine titled his contribution "Definitions and Levels of Analysis." He pointed out that the criticism made by evolutionary psychologists did not recognize the fact that language, religion, principles of commerce, warfare, reading, writing, and the fine arts are all complex psychological phenomena. Beauchaine formulated his criticism in terms of biological phenomena (brain size, structure, and function); he did not refer to the appropriate levels of analysis of these phenomena, that is, the psychological/societal level. Gould also ignored the level of these *psychological* phenomena and placed them into a "biological" level, which does not lead to an understanding of exaptation. The concept of levels of integration is relevant to the process of exaptation.

*Concept of integrative levels.* Although neither Gould and Vrba (1982) nor any of the other authors viewed their work in terms of levels of structure and function (or even hierarchy), the concept of exaptation can be seen to be an example of integrative levels of structure and function. According to the concept of integrative levels, each level can be categorized as to what is its proper method of study or enquiry (Tobach 1995). The psychological level is a complex level, involving many categories within the level. An investigation of language is exemplary of the concept of integrative levels. To study language, the category level within which language develops needs to be specified. Not only does the category need to be specified (for example, one category might be: comparative anatomy of speech morphological structures; another might be a comparative study of respiratory structures and their functions; another might be syntax and other language aspects of speech). In addition, the historical and developmental stage of the level (whether the category is morphological or physiological) is important. It is necessary to indicate at which stage of

evolutionary history and individual development the category is to be studied. For example, if the category is morphological, the evolutionary history of the morphology involved in sound production would have to be known. If the category is physiological, the developmental stage of the organism would have to be known. Is it embryonic? Is it neonatal?

The listing of language, religion, principles of commerce, warfare, reading, writing, and the fine arts as the result of exaptation without specification of the category to which these belong and at which historical stage both for species (evolutionary history) and for individual organisms (developmental stage) makes it difficult to understand how exaptation is working in the regard to such societal, social processes that yield language, religion, warfare, reading, writing, and the fine arts. They are not similar in terms of their categorization as psychological activities. Religion, commerce, warfare, and the fine arts may be related societal products, depending on the question being asked, but their histories are complex and different from each other. Language, reading, and writing, all human activities, may also be related to each other, but the questions to be asked about them require specification as to category, history, and developmental stage. However, each of them integrates levels that could be shown to have been processed as exaptations of structures and relevant functions. As the evolutionary biologists working on the origin of feathers have shown, there are exaptative processes in molecular, hormonal, structural, and physiological functions.

For comparative psychologists a question arises: if the new species differs from earlier entities not only in its molar characteristics (body shape, color, activity) but in its genome, in its molecular levels of structure and function (genes, proteins, biochemicals—hormones, transmitters, receptors, etc.), how did these changes take place? Were all changes dependent first on some change in a nucleotide or a group of nucleotides? Or did the agency of the individuals play a significant role in the ways in which these changes could take place? The activities of the organisms in the setting in which they functioned not only changed the setting, but the relationship of the individual to the setting as

well. Did the organism internalize those changes to bring about a change in the structure and function of all levels, or of specifically significant levels, such as the genomic level? (See Gottlieb 2002a, 2002b; Honeycutt 2006; Lickliter and Schneider 2006.) It is interesting to note that one of the developers of the exaptation concept worked together with the developer of a particular process focused on the genome: Brosius worked with retrotransposons (Brosius and Gould 1992).

### *Advances in genomic theory retrotransposons*

The third concept of significance to comparative psychology (Brosius 1991, 1999, 2005; Brosius and Gould 1992; Makalowski 2003, 2000) is that of the retrotransposon (also called a retroposon) as a significant factor in evolution. The classic definition of a retrotransposon is, “transposable element that utilizes reverse transcriptase to transpose via an RNA intermediate” (Griffiths et al. 1996, 875). The significance of RNA in genetic function is well described and the transcription process (the synthesis of RNA using a DNA template) involves transcriptase, a polymerase (naturally occurring compound consisting of large molecules made up of a linked series of repeated simple monomers, that is, a molecule that can combine with others to form a polymer). This polymerase catalyzes the formation of RNA from a DNA template in the process of transcription. The retrotransposon reverses the process so that a nucleotide can be inserted in a new place via RNA.

A persistent genomic question concerns the high number of repeated nucleotides that seem to be functionless; these are called “junk DNA.” Brosius (2005) has made a significant contribution by suggesting that a transposition of DNA sequences that does not occur in DNA itself, but happens rather when mRNA is transcribed back into the genomic DNA (retrotransposon process). This does not necessarily result in degenerate functions but can create new nucleotide configurations that lead to new functions (Brosius 1999). Makalowski (2000, 2003) is an active researcher in such reversals that have taken place and has published the results of his findings, many of them in humans.

*Integration of concepts of exaptation and retrotransposons.*

The evident relationship between exaptation and retrotransposons is discussed in the paper by Brosius and Gould (1992; see also Brandt et al. 2005). They propose new terms in regard to the use of the term “gene.” The main point they are making is of significance to comparative psychology: “since their current names reflect the prevalent view that they constitute dispensable genomic noise (trash), rather than a vast repertoire of sequences with the capacity to shape an organism during evolution” (abstract, 10706). It is possible that the retrotransposon can integrate the activity of the organism and the changes that result on all levels—the molecular and its integration into the succeeding levels leading to psychological processes.

These advances in evolutionary biological theory deal mostly with the genetic process, but they are suggestive as to the relationship among the integrated levels of structure and function within the organism and in all categories of interest to comparative psychologists: social activity, problem solving, individual adjustment, and species adaptation to changes in the environment, etc. Although some of the writers on evolutionary biology recognize that development is an important aspect of the integration of levels bringing about the changes in the organism and the species, there is not enough collaboration between the evolutionary biologist who looks at punctuated equilibrium, exaptation, and retrotransposons and the scientist who studies developmental processes that demonstrate the changes in the individual and the species—the integration of development and evolution. A consideration of the discussions in developmental psychological theory and practice suggests possible ways in which this integration may take place.

***Developmental theory***

As indicated above, evolutionary biology and genomics/proteomics have seriously attempted to take developmental processes into account. Yet genetics rather than developmental processes is still a dominant focus in evolutionary explanations. Despite serious criticism of the genetic emphasis in ethology, sociobiology, and

evolutionary psychology (Lickliter and Honeycutt 2003a, 2003b; Levins and Lewontin 1985; Tobach and Rosoff 1978–1994), the acceptance of genetic determinist views of total organismic activity (behavior) continues (see also Kalikow 1983). The persistence of genetic determinist (cf. creationism, intelligent design, instinctivism) explanations for human activity, mental and otherwise, is a matter for further analysis and discussion of societal processes possibly responsible for their popularity (Allen 1992; Allen and MacLeod 2001).

Two approaches in developmental theory address these issues. Lickliter and Honeycutt proposed developmental dynamics as the biological challenge to the theory of evolutionary psychology (2003a, 2003b); evolutionary psychology is unable to meet and overcome that challenge. Probabilistic epigenesis based on developmental processes is another important alternate approach to the genetic determinism of ethology, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology.

In addition, for comparative psychologists interested in evolution and development, Schneirla's thinking is appropriate: To understand developmental processes, the evolutionary processes need to be understood; to understand evolution, the developmental processes need to be understood (Schneirla 1957).

*Developmental dynamics (human development  
as a dynamic system*

Developmental dynamics, as elaborated primarily by Thelen and Smith (Smith and Thelen 2003; Thelen 1989; Thelen and Smith 1994), present a concept that is pertinent to all levels (for example, molecular to psychological) for both individuals and species. "Dynamic" is defined variously (e.g., in Webster's Dictionary 1965) and the following definitions seem most appropriate: characterized by continuous change, activity . . . an interactive system or process, especially one involving competing or conflicting forces; marked by continuous, usually productive activity or change. In dictionary definitions, two concepts appear that are particularly relevant to our discussion: continuous change and conflicting forces.

For Thelen and Smith, the concept of change in their elaboration of dynamic systems rests primarily on multicausality. The equivalence of multiple factors requires some consideration. Smith and Thelen (2003, 343–44) discussed “the two major tenets of dynamic systems theory as it applies to the self-organization of human development”: multicausality and nested time scales (343–44). The two major tenets are elaborated as assumptions. Multicausality is an assumption of the dynamic approach:

Developing organisms are complex systems composed of very many individual elements embedded within, and open to, a complex environment . . . [which] can exhibit coherent behaviour . . . the parts are coordinated . . . [and] produce the organized pattern . . . the coherence is generated solely by the relationships between the organic components and the constraints and opportunities of the environment. This self-organization means that no single element has causal priority . . . Development can be envisioned, then, as a sense of evolving and dissolving patterns of varying dynamic stability. (343)

By assuming that “no single element has causal priority” it may be inferred that the genetic level of change is presumed to be equal to other levels of change. System theory requires precision of the definition and function of parts of the system to understand their priorities in the system. The way in which those priorities are defined is a fundamental theoretical issue.

Nested time scales are developed from the idea that behavioral change occurs over different time scales. The coherence of time and levels of the complex system mean that the dynamics of one time scale (e.g., neural activity) must be continuous with and nested within the dynamics of all other time scales (e.g., growth, learning, and development).

Time and space are characteristics of matter in motion (dialectical materialism; see Engels 1954; Plekhanov 1961) and all matter is always in motion, and always changing. The different time scales may be studied according to the categories that define the phenomena that are being investigated. As all matter is interconnected, time scales and spatial relationships are

interdependent on the multicausality that Smith and Thelen (2003) saw as an important aspect of the characteristics of change in all living systems.

The issue that needs further research and discussion is the processes that bring about the changes. The dictionary definition gives the role of conflicting or competing forces as part of the meaning of dynamic. The changes are the resolution of the conflict, or competing, or contradiction (Bitsakis 2002, 275–77) that exists in all levels of structure and function. One such contradiction is that between the structures and functions within the cell, the tissue, the organ, the individual organism, among its conspecifics (social processes) and heterospecifics, within its inanimate setting (climate, other planetary changes). It is the contradiction between structure and function in all levels which develops as the organism lives and maintains its integrity.

Structures and functions are continuously changing. Each is changing in a process that involves their inner contradictions (the structures are metabolically active and are either maintaining their integrity, if they are getting the proper inputs of energy needed for that; or they are losing their integrity (or, are dying; compare apoptosis and its significant role in development). The external contradictions brought about by the functions they are performing (becoming stronger and more integrated with other systems; or becoming deformed because their functions are in contradiction, or competing, or conflict, with the inner contradictions brought about by metabolic processes—in other words, their structures are being negatively affected by the functions being performed). Thus the contradictions of structure and function are sharpened by the ways in which the structure and functions are changing, or are being resolved by the changes that are brought about by internal or external contradictions (Marquit 1981).

The time scales that are significant in the dynamic system of development are also related to the levels of structure and function. Each level has its time scale based on its structure and function, as well as its relationship to other levels (Tobach 1987). For example, the time characteristics of change within a cell are dependent on the time characteristics of receptor change at the cellular membrane



as well as the receptors within the cell. The substances that are within spatial relationships to the receptors in turn are dependent on the time scale of the change in the motion of the matter that produced them.

Thelen and her colleagues have applied this approach to behavioral development at many levels (for example, organismic, social); they have demonstrated how the dynamic developmental approach can answer questions about behavioral development. They discuss the evolutionary significance of the approach, but this is not as thoroughly discussed as the developmental aspect.

*Probabilistic epigenesis of development (Gottlieb 2003)*

In an integration of the theoretical approaches of Kuo, Schneirla, and Lehrman, Gottlieb offered an important definition of development that goes far in the elucidation of the false dichotomies of nature and nurture or genes and environment: “[I]ndividual development is characterized by an increase of complexity of organization—i.e., the emergence of new structural and functional properties and competencies at all levels of analysis (*molecular, subcellular, cellular, organismic*) as a consequence of horizontal and vertical coactions among its parts, including organism, environment coactions” (1993, 36). Three significant words appear in that definition that stimulate further discussion in that elucidation: epigenesis, level, coaction.

*Epigenesis.* There is no emphasis on the genetic process in Gottlieb’s use of the term “epigenesisist” in his new definition (1993). However, the term, like “adaptation,” is used in many disciplines with a multitude of historically based meanings, and it may be that it is difficult at this time to produce consensus (Goodwin and Saunders 1989).

The beginnings of epigenetic conceptualization can be seen as antivitalistic, materialist—Needham (1934) and Glass (1959) called the conceptualization of epigenesis mechanist—and developmental. It stressed that explanations for speciation and evolution can be obtained from observation and experimentation. However, contemporary definitions of epigenesis express a dependence on genetic function that may be seen as vitalistic:

Epigenetics: the study of mitotically and/or meiotically heritable changes in gene function that cannot be explained by changes in DNA sequence. (Rusos, Martinssen, and Riggs 1996, 1)

Epigenetic inheritance: Processes by which heritable modifications in gene function occur but that are not due to changes in the base sequence of the DNA of the organism. (Griffiths et al. 1996, 864)

The emphasis on the DNA sequence is clear; epigenesis is about how genes function (Jaenisch and Bird 2003).

Epigenesis, an old word, reflects a persistent argument (Needham 1934) that is important in comparative psychology: preformationism versus development, or as it became formulated later, gene versus environment. Aristotle is said to have been the first to note the antithesis between preformationism and “fresh development” which Needham equates with epigenesis (Needham 1934, 22, 37, 129). The argument about preformationism and epigenesis continued throughout recorded scientific history (Waddington 1966). However, the concept of epigenesis was elaborated in new, rather developmental, ways. Needham quoted from Harvey (1653, 223–24): “The perfect animals, which have blood, are made by epigenesis, or superaddition of parts and do grow. . . . An animal produced by epigenesis attracts, prepares, concocts, and applies, the matter at the same time, and is at the same time formed” (Needham 1934, 118–19).

Preformationism was deemed an inherent component of evolutionary thinking, and the argument against preformationism was couched in antievolutionary frames. An important proponent of antipreformationism, but within an evolutionary approach, was Maupertuis (1698–1759) whom Glass (1959) described as a forerunner of Darwinian theory. Glass wrote that Maupertuis projected concepts such as mutation, natural selection, and geographic isolation; despite his brilliance, Maupertuis is not well known. Glass wrote that despite the fact that the “theory of preformation prevailed almost universally,” Maupertuis formulated the concept of epigenesis as “the view that the parts of the embryo are formed in succession out of unorganized material” (1958, 61–62).

Hertig (1892, 24) credited Caspar Friedrich Wolff as the “founder of the doctrine of epigenesis.” Although Wolff opposed preformationism, in his doctoral dissertation in 1759, he “opposed the dogma of the evolution theory,” and casting aside preformationism, said, “the germ is nothing else than an unorganized material eliminated from . . . the parent . . . which gradually becomes organized, but only during the process of development” (Hertig 1892, 24). The concept of epigenesis was firmly based on the developmental process.

However, today epigenesis is about how genes function; the emphasis on the DNA sequence is clear. The definitions of the term epigenetic inheritance, or epigenesis, demonstrate the core of the term: the DNA structure. In all that is being said about epigenetics, the understanding is that the nucleotide configuration of adenine, cytosine, guanine, thymine, and uracil will not change. The lack of possible explanation by genetic function is interpreted as an attribution to the role of environmental, or nongenetic factors. Geneticists and evolutionary biologists are discussing the inheritance of nongenomic effects on the phenotype which do not change the genotype. This formulation supports dichotomous thinking.

Some evolutionary biologists and geneticists are discussing how the genes might be changing, given the interdependence of all the factors in the history of the species and the organism (Brosius and Gould 1992; Ho 1984, 1986, 1987; Jablonka and Lamb 1995; Makalowski 2000; see also Graur 1993; Waddington 1942a, 1942b). Those who are concerned with the stability of species recognize that the function of the gene changes, and that these functional changes might be inherited. Others recognize that change in function is the primary criterion of the process of development and evolution.

*Formulation of levels.* The concept of integrative levels is core to the integration of developmental and evolutionary processes. The term “hierarchical” is used interchangeably with “level” (Brannan et al. 2005; Gottlieb 2003; Reuter et al. 2005). The difference between the two terms sharpens the issue of genetic determinism. In genetic deterministic ideologies, the gene is seen as the most important factor, the dominant factor. This is supported by the concept of

hierarchy, a term that is based on the concept of ranking or placing some entity as higher, better or more powerful than another. The concept of integrative levels rests on the definition of "level" as an even plane with no elevations or depressions. Thelen and Smith (1994) did not find this designation of the gene acceptable and they spoke of the equality of all factors in multicausality.

The notion that all levels are equivalent needs to be supported by research investigation. Some contradictory levels may be "eu" (good; as in euphoria) and contradictories of "dys" (bad, as in dysfunctional). For example, a dysfunctional protein that is effective in all cells would be an "opposite," or a contradictory to a properly functional protein. The ubiquity of the dysfunctional protein would thus be very significant, and place the biochemical level as the most important level. The dysfunctional protein leads to disintegration of the individual (for example, a breakdown in a metabolic process because of a toxin that becomes a part of every cell in the body).

To designate a level as the positive opposite or contradictory to another level as the negative, it is necessary to define the contradictions internal to that level and to investigate how the resolution of the contradictions would lead to an earlier level (e.g., turning a cell into its chemical components, an earlier level of matter, because of a metabolic contradiction that is not resolved, as in the case of the protein above). After resolution (in the Hegelian sense, [Marquit 1981]) of the earlier contradictions, the next, later, level of organization and function would be definable. Such a resolution would be one in which the dysfunctional protein becomes subordinate to the functional form of the protein, and the functional protein reproduces itself with a receptor that destroys the dysfunctional form of the protein; this process could take place in a successful fight against a disease, and take place at a later level, describing a change in the protein. Levels would not be seen as lower or higher, but rather earlier (contradiction between the two proteins) and later (resolution of the contradiction between the two) in a developmental sense.

The key to a levels approach is the recognition of the need to define the contradictions, their opposition, and their resolution to

produce another level—either to an earlier level or a later level that represents a unity of the two opposites in total organismic activity; it is difficult to define the contradictories. The two contradictories are not equivalent, and their character changes.

*Coaction.* These resolutions of contradiction and the resultant unity of opposites that are part of the level being acted on are not coactions only. The changes may appear in time and space to be coactions but they are the result of the resolution of contradictions and the unification of the opposites. It is knowing the nature of the contradictions and their resolution that makes possible the understanding of the changes, past, present, and future by appropriate investigation (each level needs its own instruments, etc. [Tobach. 1995]).

***Some alternatives toward redefining the identity of comparative psychology***

*Levels, evolution, and development*

The primary argument today is between some form of vitalism and materialism; between some form of static stability and dialectical change. The history of the concept of epigenesis is a good example of the persistence of the useless dichotomy of an idealist force (preformation; instinct) and materialist development. In 1960, Schneirla referred to the “hardest-headed epigeneticists” who may be impressed by the “genic-behavior” correspondences described by the behavior geneticists, but he added the following: “[A]lthough such evidence may not do much more than emphasize the problems of ontogeny without solving them . . . that question of instinctive behavior must be investigated along other lines” (1960, 305).

The process of development (ontogeny) was Schneirla’s brilliant resolution of the conflict. On one side of the conflict were the vitalists, instinctivists, ethologists, and others of the persuasion that evolution and individual behavior are based on inborn, innate, predetermined (performed) structures and functions. On the other side were mechanists, logical positivists, scientific materialists, and operationalists who believed they were the contrary of the instinctivist persuasion; they said that all was learned, trained, or the result of the environment.

The process of development as formulated by Schneirla (1960) was founded on several concepts: a materialist base to all organismic activity, function, and structure; integrative levels of matter (Tobach and Greenberg 1984); approach/withdrawal processes; adjustment of the individual to the setting in which activity takes place in the process of internal and external changes (individual experiential development and environmental processes); and integrity (fusion) of internal and external processes. Two aspects of his writing on the concept of development (e.g., Schneirla 1957) are worthy of notice. First, he clearly stated that to understand comparative psychology it is necessary to remember the concept of integrative levels: "The concept of levels has great potential significance for comparative psychology, as a comprehensive basis for the analysis and synthesis of evidence concerning similarities and differences among the varied adaptive patterns of major phyletic types" (Schneirla 1960, 308). In his article in 1951 (in Aronson, Tobach, Rosenblatt, and Lehrman 1972) on the "levels" concept in the study of social organization in animals, he discussed the ways in which the integration of levels in the individual are related to the activity of the individual in groups, in social situations.

Second, he stressed the need to study the development of behavior in order to understand the evolution of the organisms that evidence the behavior:

[T]he concept of psychological levels is advanced to express the phyletic range of behavioral organization and psychological capacities, and the concept of functional orders is advanced to express the ontogenetic range on any one level. . . . The term development with respect to individual behavior stresses progressive changes in organized adaptive function through ontogeny. Behavioral development on any phyletic level is not so much a retracing through the stages and levels of successive ancestral forms as a new composite leading to a new pattern distinctive of the level. (Schneirla 1957, 287)

In the history of epigenesis, and in the discussion by Schneirla (1960) about comparative psychology, the relationship between the two processes of change, evolution and development, is

very clear: they are interdependent, interrelated, and interconnected; as all matter changes all the time, this relationship is very complex. What scientific method and theory can deal with this complexity?

*Dialectical and historical materialism*

Although Schneirla rejected identification with dialectical materialism (personal communication), like all accurate scientists who study natural phenomena, he was a dialectical materialist in his research and in his theory. It may be that the dialectical-materialist approach to life processes (Somerville 2005) on all levels, within the individual, in the individual's social (in the human, societal) activities, and within the planetary, climatic contradictions that are threatening our survival daily, could be helpful. Perhaps developmental comparative psychology based on historical materialist concepts (the history of the species, the history of the individual) would be a good way to go. Comparative psychology is needed to bring about a resolution of the persistent conflict between vitalism and materialism and the dialectical-materialist approach may help.

*Epilogue*

The theoretical advances by Gottlieb, Thelen, Smith, Lickliter, and Honeycutt are important. The expert scientist reflects the reality of the natural processes that are studied. Their conceptualizations involve materialist analyses of the matter of the organism, of its structure, of its function, of the setting in which it lives. They reflect an acknowledgement of the law that matter is continually changing; they see this as a challenge to the scientist who seeks to understand the activity of organisms. They indicate that the activity of the organism is essential to the changes within and the changes in its relationship to the external setting. They have chosen development as the process that is key to understanding those changes, and have indicated that there are levels of organization and function within the organism that need to be considered. A review of each, taking into account their similarities and their differences, suggests

that dialectical and historical materialism is a fundamental philosophical consideration that may be useful to the further elaboration of their theoretical approaches.

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## Urban Agriculture in Cuba: Of, by, and for the *Barrio*

Sinan Koont

The definition of *urban agriculture* [*agricultura urbana*, hereafter abbreviated as “AU”] in the Cuban context has two components: geographical and technological. First, in terms of geography, urban agriculture refers to agriculture carried out in or near urban settlements. Agricultural production is considered urban if it meets the following criteria: it takes place within the boundaries of the province of Ciudad de la Habana or within ten, five, or two kilometers of provincial capitals, municipal seats, or smaller towns with more than one thousand inhabitants, respectively. Also included in the “urban” category is family self-sufficiency production in “backyards” in all settlements with more than fifteen houses. The category thus defined encompasses quite a bit of land including some suburban environments that actually appear quite rural. In all, about 15 percent of all agricultural land in Cuba is classified as “urban” (Companioni 2007, slide 6). Second, in terms of technology, essentially all of this production is “agroecological” or “organic” and avoids the use of petrochemicals.

In this urban agriculture effort, organized in twenty-eight subprograms—(twelve in crops, seven in animal raising, and nine in support areas such as organic manures, seeds, irrigation and drainage, marketing, and technical education) (GNAU 2007b, 3), Cuba has achieved considerable success, making progress in all and spectacular progress in some. The most spectacular success has

come in the subprogram for vegetables and fresh condiments: by 2006 Cuba was producing over 1 kg of vegetables per capita per day (compared with the FAO guideline of 0.3 kg per capita daily consumption) (Rodriguez Nodals, Companioni, and Gonzales 2007, slide 22). As a result, urban populations and institutions such as schools and hospitals have access not only to healthy, organic fresh produce but also to an impressive variety of it, as the following partial list of available produce indicates: eggplants, carrots, beets, okra, Swiss chard, cabbage, cauliflower, green peppers, beans, and onions, as well as parsley and cilantro, in addition to the traditional lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

This success perhaps could not have been anticipated in 1991, but the necessity for Cuba to turn to this type of urban agriculture starting in the early 1990s is both well known and understood. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of trade with COMECON (the latter gave Cuba favorable terms) meant the end of the Soviet-style, large-scale and industrial agriculture that Cuba had adopted over the preceding thirty years. Diesel fuel and gasoline for transportation, trucks and agricultural machinery, spare parts, petrochemical fertilizers, and pesticides all became very scarce almost overnight. In the face of this severe crisis in food production in Cuba, a shift to urban agriculture seemed an obvious and necessary solution: urban production minimized transportation costs while small-scale production minimized the use of machinery. And agroecological production, which avoided the use of no-longer-available toxic petrochemical-based fertilizers and pesticides, was necessitated by the fact that production sites were near the living areas of large concentrations of people.

Less well known, but perhaps equally important, are the reasons of prudence and national security that had been pushing Cuba in this direction since the 1970s. Cuba had been, as it still is, under a partial blockade by the United States. Even more threatening and ever-present is the possibility of a total blockade of the island. Early on, scientific institutions started doing research on input substitution in production, including agricultural production, that would make the island less dependent on imported goods (Diaz and Garcia 2006; Garcia and Garcia 2006). At the



same time, within the Ministry of Defense (and not the Ministry of Agriculture, which was committed to industrial, high-input agriculture) and institutions such as INRE (see Glossary of Acronyms), programs were started to study the possible Cuban responses to, for instance, a complete cut-off of petroleum imports. It was during a visit to HORTIFAR on 27 December 1987 that Raul Castro, as Minister of Defense, encouraged the introduction of a technology later widely employed in urban agriculture.

This visit was recounted by the head of INRE, General Moisés Sio Wong, to Raul Castro during another visit ten years later: an agricultural engineer, referred to by Sio Wong simply as “Ingeniera Anita,” had carried out some successful experiments growing vegetables in a “pregerminator of banana plants” without using petrochemicals. Castro suggested the desirability of generalizing this method of cultivation (Castro Ruz 1997). Beginning in December 1987, four years earlier than the demise of the Soviet Union, installation of so-called *organoponicos*—collections of roughly 30 meters by 1 meter rectangular walled constructions (*canteros*) containing raised beds of a mixture of soil and organic material—was begun in Armed Forces facilities.

It was, however, not until the end of 1991 that the first “civilian” *organoponico* in Havana, INRE-1, was put into operation in a two-acre empty lot across the street from the INRE headquarters in Miramar. Since then, the *organoponico* has become one of the mainstays of vegetable cultivation in Cuban urban agriculture (Sio Wong 2006).

Thus, by the time the crisis made the shift of agricultural production to cities a necessity, at least some parts of the Cuban institutional structure were able to respond with technologies, policies, and practices that had been in precautionary development for a lengthy period preceding the crisis.

The construction of the basic institutional and legal framework of this response began in the early 1990s. By 1994, a National Commission had been established (at the First National Plenary of *Organoponicos* held in the city of Santa Clara) to oversee the systematic introduction of *organoponicos* (and intensive gardens—defined below) into urban agriculture. In 1997 the Commission

was converted into the *Movimiento Nacional de Agricultura Urbana*, which was led by the interdisciplinary and interinstitutional *Grupo Nacional de Agricultura Urbana* (GNAU) with headquarters at INIFAT in Havana (Rodriguez Nodals 2006, 26).

At the same time, the conditions of access to land underwent considerable change. Before the crisis, land was either privately held and worked by owners, or it was state-owned and worked by employees. Now, land was also distributed in permanent usufruct to individuals (as *parcelas*, with the individuals being called *parceleros*) and cooperatives as indicated in table 1 (Fuster Chepe 2006, 6).

Table 1. Land tenancy in urban agriculture

CCS, CCS-F [Cooperativa de Creditos y Servicios—Fortalecida]	Mixed collective/ individual	Mixed private/ usufruct
UBPC [Unidad Basica de Produccion Cooperativa]	Collective	Usufruct
Urban state farms	State	State ownership
Parcela — plot	Individual	Usufruct
Patio — backyard	Individual	Private

On the basis of this new institutional framework, the *organopónico* technology introduced in 1987 became generalized in Havana and the rest of Cuba, typically in units between one half and several hectares in size. The so-called *intensive gardens* [*huertos intensivos*] are identical to *organopónicos* except for the fact that the raised beds do not have walls, and the soil is typically good enough to be mixed directly with additional organic material. In backyards (*patios*) and *parcelas*, traditional farming practices predominate, with the partial introduction of some of the techniques used in *organopónicos*.

In this organized system of production, led by GNAU, which came into existence in 1994 and assumed its more or less final

form in 1997, Cuba has achieved results that would have sounded quite implausible if forecast, say, in 1991. And in the subprogram for vegetables and fresh condiments, arguably the most successful (as mentioned before), it has done so by leaps and bounds, as can be seen in the accompanying table 2 (Rodriguez Nodals, Companioni, and Gonzales 2007, slide 22; Pages 2006).

Table 2. Vegetable and fresh condiment production in urban agriculture

1994	0.0042
1995	0.0160
1996	0.0580
1997	0.1400
1998	0.4800
1999	0.8760
2000	1.6800
2001	2.3601
2002	3.3450
2003	3.9312
2004	4.1948
2005	4.0745
2006	4.2134

The roughly thousand-fold increase from 4,000 tons to 4.2 million tons between 1994 and 2005 corresponds to an annual growth rate of about 78 percent. This kind of growth obviously implies an extensive increase in the surface area being cultivated—reaching 70,000 hectares by 2006 (Rodriguez Nodals and Companioni 2006, 4), but yields per square meter also went up impressively (in *organoponicos*, for example, from 1.5 kg/square meter in 1994 to 25.8 kg/square meter in 2001 (Rodriguez Castellon 2003, 85). This is a seventeen-fold increase.

Furthermore, in terms of both land area in use and production, urban agriculture is spread fairly evenly across the island, with the city of Havana something of a laggard in per capita production. In 2001, the top-producing provinces in the vegetables and fresh condiments subprogram of urban agriculture were, in descending order: Holguin, Pinar del Rio, La Habana (not the city), and

Cienfuegos. The ratio of the highest-to-lowest level of provincial production was only 1.35, with the City of Havana bringing up the rear (Rodriguez Castellon 2003, 86). A similar, fairly even distribution can be expected to hold at the subprovincial level, as a more microlevel example from 2007 shows: among the twelve remaining *municipios* of Matanzas (excluding swampy Ciénaga de Zapata, the huge but sparsely populated home of the same named Biosphere Reserve and the famous Playa Giron, and the small tourist heaven beach municipio of Varadero), the top producing municipio was Jaguey (over 10,000 tons of vegetables in the first three months of 2007), the bottom was Marti (over 3,000 tons), with the municipio Matanzas, the provincial capital and biggest city, coming in at about 7,500 tons (Grupo Provincial de Agricultura Urbana de Matanzas 2007).

The most important principle underlying this spectacular success is organizational: strong, disciplined, coherent central direction, guidance, and policy are combined with decentralized action in input provision, marketing, and production. The ruling motto has been “We must decentralize only up to a point where control is not lost, and centralize only up to a point where initiative is not killed” (Fuster Chepe 2006, 6; my translation, SK). The GNAU, based at INIFAT, has a membership of over thirty persons, all qualified to act in a leadership position, with permanent representatives from six ministries (Agriculture, Sugar, Education, Higher Education, Armed Forces, and Interior) and eighteen institutions with training, research, and infrastructural responsibilities. It has overall responsibility for guiding, supervising, and evaluating all urban agricultural activity in Cuba. It publishes guidelines that provide indicative planning at the provincial level in each of the twenty-eight subprograms, and the evaluation procedures to be employed in assessing the performance of productive units at the base. The 2007 edition, entitled *Lineamientos para los Subprogramas de la Agricultura Urbana para 2008-2010 y Sistema Evaluativo*, takes a full 105 pages to accomplish its task (GNAU 2007a).

The GNAU is complemented by corresponding *Grupos Provinciales and Municipales*. Led by the MINAG and GNAU, their task is to set policy guidelines, mobilize the grassroots,

give “*stimulus y impulse*” to all activity in AU, and to supervise and guide all local efforts. They, however, have no administrative functions. These are undertaken by state enterprises called *granjas urbanas* (roughly one per municipality, with some big municipalities having more than one, and each attached to a strong *Empresa* [Enterprise] of MINAG in the municipio). These are the institutions that oversee and participate in the AU activities—training, input provision, marketing, etc.—in an administrative, operational, and executive sense (Rodríguez Nodals, Companioni, and Herreria 2006, 7–9).

On a further decentralized level, a key central state role is played by the *Representante de la Agricultura Urbana*, a representative of MINAG in each *Consejo Popular*, an administrative subunit in the territorial organization of Cuba, of which there are 1452, i.e., an average of eight or nine per municipio. This representative’s tasks include discussing production plans with each producing unit, promoting new technologies, overseeing networks of input provision, and marketing, as well as schooling and training in AU techniques, and gathering data, making sure of its quality and veracity. In short, he/she is a very important “last man on the totem pole” of the central state, whose function and role cannot be overestimated (8).

Table 3. Organizational Chart for Urban Agriculture

Nation	Grupo Nacional de Agricultura Urbana – GNAU – over 30 members	MINAG –Ministry of Agriculture
Province (14 total)	GPAU	
Municipality (169 total)	GMAU	Granja urbana
Consejo Popular (1452 total)	Representante de la Agricultura Urbana	

The organizational framework outlined above and in table 3, however, is an empty shell. It needs to be populated with real policies and practices before it can be properly assessed in terms of its efficacy in promoting urban agriculture in Cuba. Following are

four crucial areas of such policies and practices, briefly stated, each of which could easily be the subject of a separate monograph.

### **Research and development**

Revolutionary Cuba has always placed a heavy emphasis on scientific education, research, and development. Before the onset of the crisis in the early nineties, Cuba had already achieved the top ranking in Latin America in both the Index of Creation of Scientific and Technological Capacities, developed by the RAND Corporation, and the number of scientists and engineers engaged in research and development per million inhabitants, with a plurality of these professionals (34 percent) working in nineteen agricultural research institutes (CIEM 2004, 51 and 139). Prominent among these institutes are: INIFAT, INCA (*Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Agrícolas*), INIVIT (*Instituto Nacional de Investigación de Viandas Tropicales*), CENSA (*Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuario*), INISAV (*Instituto de Investigaciones en Sanidad Vegetal*), and IIHLD (*Instituto de Investigaciones Hortícola Liliانا Dimítrova*) (CIEM 2004, 6–18; Companioni Concepción 2007, slides 10 and 11).

In addition, several universities, including UNAH (*Universidad Agraria de la Habana*) in the province of La Habana, provide opportunities for academic and field research leading to doctoral degrees. With the economic crisis of the nineties, these efforts took a decidedly agroecological turn. In 1995, the *Centro de Estudios de Agricultura Sostenible* (CEAS) was established within UNAH with the goal of contributing both to research and education in this area. It offers short courses as well as undergraduate and master's degrees in agroecology and sustainable agriculture and a Doctor of Agricultural Sciences degree with specialization in Agroecology. Already by 1999, thousands of students had gone through these programs, and over two hundred master's degrees had been granted (García, Pérez, and Freyre 1999, 15).

By 2002, as asserted by the Ministry for Science, Technology, and the Environment (CITMA), hundreds of projects in dozens of institutions were investigating aspects of sustainable, organic

agriculture in three national research programs: Food Production for the Population by Sustainable Methods (with sixty-three projects in forty scientific institutions and universities), Production of Animal Feed by Biotechnological and Sustainable Means (with thirty-five projects in ten institutions), and Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas (with sixty projects in thirty-eight institutions) (Pérez Consuegra 2002, 11).

### ***Training and education***

By the early nineties, Cuba had an urban population with a high level of education. The average years of schooling had reached nine years (Pan American Health Organization 1999, 5), and the schooling life expectancy even higher. This population, perhaps with little knowledge in agroecology, was, nonetheless, capable of learning quickly. On the other hand, there were many scientists who had been doing agricultural research increasingly focused on agroecological techniques, as well as many peasants with traditional agroecological knowledge. This perhaps unique combination of qualified teachers and teachable students allowed for the rapid spread of agroecological know-how when coupled with a serious, organized, and concerted participatory extension effort by research institutes (such as INIFAT and INISAV), by universities (such as UNAH), and by organizations such as GNAU, ACTAF (*Asociación Cubana de Tecnicos Agricolas y Forestales*) and ANAP (*Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños*).

Besides offering courses and seminars at INIFAT and directly introducing new research findings from the institutes to extension agents, to *granjas urbanas*, and to certain producers, GNAU carries out two additional tasks. First, it publishes a detailed *Manual Tecnico de Organoponicos y Huertos Intensivos*, 178 pages long in its 2007 edition, that gives instructions on how to construct an *organoponico*, discusses all possible crop varieties that can be grown in them and gives advice on biological pest-control techniques and irrigation systems (GNAU 2007b); second, it conducts quarterly inspection, evaluation, and extension-training tours that reach production units in every *consejo popular* [people's

council]. Production units qualified as *de referencia* because of their outstanding performance and success not only receive special treatment in the allocation of scarce resources by MINAG, but also become centers of demonstration and extension for other units in the area.

ACTAF is a professional association dedicated to organic, sustainable agriculture, with about 20,000 individual and over 1500 institutional members in 2006. Its members volunteer their time and services in extension work, participating in GNAU's inspection tours and holding workshops and giving presentations on agroecological topics in production units (ACTAF 2006a, 24). For its part, the "Niceto Perez" National School of ANAP has brought agroecological education to small farmers both through courses at its main campus and through distance education at over twenty model cooperatives across the country (ANAP 1999, 33).

One can cite as further examples of *capacitación*: a) the over 130 IPAs (*Instituto Politécnico Agropecuario*), where more than 40,000 15- to 19-year-olds are being educated in agroecology, while at the same time producing and experimenting (Santa Cruz and Mercedes 1999); b) *faros agroecológicos* [agricultural beacons]—demonstration farms sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (Martin 1999); c) the *de campesino-a-campesino* [peasant-to-peasant] program (Mejias Osorio 2007), in which knowledge is generated and disseminated among agriculturalists in a participatory manner.

Finally, *círculos de interés* [circles of interest] in elementary schools, over three thousand of them in Cuba, are preparing the next generation of urban agriculturalists. This is a program in which schools establish ties with production units, so that interested students can receive theoretical and practical education in the field (Rodríguez Nodals and Companioni 2006, 5).

### ***Provisioning of inputs***

Municipal seed production farms, CTAs (*Consultorios—Tiendas de Agricultor*) and CREEs (*Centros de Reproducción de Entomofagos y Entomopatogenes*), more than two hundred each, produce and/or sell to urban agriculturalists seeds certified by



Sanidad Vegetal, organic fertilizers, biological pest-control preparations, technical services, advice, etc. (Hernández Pérez 2006, 13). These are spread quite evenly over the entire island, and allow local and timely production, especially of seeds selected through the experience of local farmers and well suited to the local conditions. More than seven thousand Organic Material Centers and Microcenters produce compost and worm humus, of which the production levels in 2005 reached 9.8 and 2.7 million tons respectively (Rodríguez Nodals, Companioni, and Gonzáles, 2006, slides 32 and 37; Fresneda 2006, 36–37). Water for irrigation comes from piped municipal urban supplies, as well as from wells, rivers, and reservoirs. Available water amounts are maximized by improvements in the capture of rainwater, as well as by efficient water-saving techniques of irrigation, notably in *organopónicos* and *huertos intensivos* (GNAU 2007a, 80–106).

### ***Material and moral incentives***

The structure of prices that producers receive, some of which are free-market determined and some fixed by governmental authorities or by contracts at various levels, is such that productive units are expected to be profitable. These profits become the basis for incentive payments, which typically lead to incomes in urban agriculture well above nationwide averages for state employees, as was found in several recent case studies done by scholars in FLACSO-Cuba (Cuba 2002; Gonzales Hernandez 2005; O'Reilly Morris 2006), as well as in visits by the author to production units in Havana, Matanzas, and Pinar del Rio provinces in the spring of 2007. In addition, various “moral” incentives exist for urban agriculturalists. On an individual level, they are offered ample opportunities for further formal education and a healthy, supportive, and dignified work environment. On a societal level, an effort is made to dignify urban agricultural work and workers. This work is increasingly seen as having high levels of scientific and technical content. The image of “peasants” as the most backward component of society no longer holds much sway. The productive units themselves are honored as *de referencia nacional*, *provincial* or *municipal* or, at the highest level, as *de Excelencia*, according

to strict criteria that continue to be verified during inspection visits by GNAU. The inclusion of a unit in one of these categories is not only an honor—there are only eighty-two centers of excellence in the entire country—but also allows these outstanding performers to serve as focal points for the introduction and propagation of new technologies (GNAU 2007a).

The practices and policies outlined above have indeed led to prodigious increases in vegetable production. But urban agriculture is not just about economics, i. e., about producing food sustainably, or even just about producing food sustainably and creating employment (350,000 well-paid urban jobs by 2006) (Rodríguez Nodals and Companioni 2006, 5). It is also seriously about community development and preserving and improving the environment, bringing a healthier and saner way of life to the cities, up to and including urban reforestation efforts through participation in the ACTAF program *Mi Programa Verde* (ACTAF 2000b). In fact, when, at some point during one hundred hours of interviews in 2005, the editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique* asked Fidel Castro what measures he could cite that Cuba had taken to help preserve the environment, Castro's response first and foremost referred to urban agriculture (Castro Ruz and Ramonet 2007, ch. 19, p. 15).

Even with given resource and input constraints, and even if these are made all the more binding due to the blockade imposed on the island by the government of the United States, Cuba has every prospect of extending its success in urban agriculture with the help of innovations and improvements in basic knowledge, technology, and social organization. The basic ingredients of such success were (and are) already present in Cuba: an educated population; a socially concerned and committed, people-oriented central government giving support and organizational backbone to the effort; and ample stimulation of decentralized initiative and decision making by producers at the base, encouraging local solutions to local problems.

Urban agriculture in Cuba is a model of urban self-sufficiency worthy of emulation by others. But a caveat is in order: it may not be so easy to assemble at any given place all of the factors

that made success possible in Cuba. These factors, however, are created by the people, and therefore, given time and effort, are within the plausible reach of all.

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**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

	Spanish	English
ACTAF	Asociación Cubana de Técnicos Agrícolas y Forestales	Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forest Technicians
ANAP	Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños	National Association of Small Farmers
CCS, CCS–F	Cooperativa de Créditos y Servicios—Fortalecida	Credit and Services Cooperative—Fortified
CEAS	Centro de Estudios de Agricultura Sostenible	Center of Sustainable Agricultural Studies
CENSA	Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuario	National Center for Plant and Animal Health
CIEM	Centro de Investigaciones de Economía Mundial	Center for the Study of the World Economy
CITMA	Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
CREE	Centro de Reproducción de Entomófagos y Entomopatogenes	Center of Reproduction of Insect Eaters and Insect Pathogens
CTA	Consultorio-Tienda del Agricultor	Farmers’ Supply Store and Consultancy
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales	Latin American Social Sciences Faculty
GMAU	Grupo Municipal de Agricultura Urbana	Municipal Urban Agriculture Group
GNAU	Grupo Nacional de Agricultura Urbana	National Urban Agriculture Group

GPAU	Grupo Provincial de Agricultura Urbana	Provincial Urban Agriculture Group
IIHLD	Instituto de Investigaciones Hortícola Liliana Dimitrova	Liliana Dimitrova Horticultural Research Institute
INCA	Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Agrícolas	National Institute of Agricultural Sciences
INIFAT	Instituto de Investigaciones Fundamentales en Agricultura	Institute of Fundamental Research in Tropical Agriculture
INISAV	Instituto de Investigaciones en Sanidad Vegetal	Plant Health Research Institute
INIVIT	Instituto Nacional de Investigación de Viandas Tropicales	Nacional Research Institute for Tropical Root Crops
INRE	Instituto Nacional de Reserva Estatal	Nacional Institute of State Reserves
PNUD	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo	United Nations Development Program
UBPC	Unidad Basica de Producción Cooperativa	Basic Unit of Cooperative Production
UNAH	Universidad Agraria de la Habana	Havana Agrarian University

**NOTE**

FLACSO are international, intergovernmental units of a regional and independent character, created in 1957 by fourteen Latin American and Caribbean countries to promote education and research in the social sciences.

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# **Virtual Value of Natural Resources: A Marxist Explanation**

**Yan Ma**

## ***Natural resources are natural substances combined with productive labor power***

According to Marx, productive activity consists of combining natural resources with labor power. In his economics, “productive activity” and “productivity” belong to the same economic category,<sup>1</sup> but the two terms actually denote different aspects of the same economic activity. Economic theory often defines productive activity as the human activity of mastering, using, and improving nature in order to produce material goods, whereas productivity is defined as the efficiency of labor employed in production. Productivity takes two forms: 1) the quantity of commodities produced within a unit of time and 2) the necessary labor time for producing a unit of product. Marx holds that productive power has reference only to labor in some useful concrete form (1996, 56); that is to say, without living labor and the concrete labor process that produces new value, the basis for labor productivity is lost. Therefore, when Marx discusses productive activity he usually has labor productivity in mind.

Clearly, productive activity and productivity have important differences. For example, although productivity is an aspect of the productive activity of labor, they are not one and the same. The concept of productive activity stresses an integral view of

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production that includes the use of implements of labor upon objects of labor, whereas the concept of productivity quantifies actual labor capacity and its results.<sup>2</sup>

Marx explained in *Capital* that labor productivity is determined by many conditions, including “the average amount of skill of the workman, the state of science, the degree of its practical application, the social organisation of production, the extent and capabilities of the means of production and the physical conditions” (1996, 50). Marx divided the factors influencing labor capacity into the following categories:

1. The subjective conditions of labor, which have two aspects: first, individual labor ability (the workers’ average skill) and second, the combination of individual labor productivity and social labor productivity (the social organization of production).

2. The objective conditions of labor, in particular the scale and efficiency of capital goods (instruments of production).

3. Physical conditions such as the forces of nature and the properties of natural objects.

4. Science and technology as applied to production.

Accordingly, resources that fall under the category of subjective conditions of labor can be called human resources; resources applied to the objective conditions of labor are resources for production; science and technology are scientific, technological, and information resources; and natural powers and properties are natural resources.

***Natural resources possess virtual social value by virtue of their real use values***

In *Capital* Marx considers natural resources from the standpoints of use value and exchange value. First, Marx holds that natural resources, as a kind of natural use value, play an important role in social production and can be used to create more material goods. He points out that the “specific development of labor productivity is based on the natural richness of natural sources (land and water) of possessions, which vary in different nations” (*Theories of Surplus Value*). He stresses that the “worker can create nothing without nature, without the *sensuous external world*.”



It is the material on which his labour is realised, in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces” (1975, 273). Marx also points out that “the productivity of agricultural labour is dependent on natural conditions, and, the same quantity of labour is represented by more or fewer products, use values, in accordance with such productivity” (1998, 804). For example, “As the earth is [the laborer’s] original larder, so too it is his original tool house (1996, 189). “We can also say that productivity of industrial labor depends on natural materials and their properties” (*Theories of Surplus Value*).

In considering the question of value in relation to natural resources, Marx points out that natural resources, as productive elements, do not enter production as commodities. Natural resources do not possess value and do not transfer value, nor do they create value. Marx explained that “a thing can be a use value, without having value. This is the case whenever its utility to man is not due to labour. Such are air, virgin soil, natural meadows, &c.” (1996, 50). Thus various free natural powers enter production with greater or lesser efficiency (1997, 353).

Marx also held that large-scale production—large-scale concentration of machinery applied to production—has first put natural power, that is, wind, water, steam, and electricity directly into production, thus changing them into elements of social production. Due to the lack of value of these natural elements, they can only enter the labor process, not the valorization process (the process of forming value). They give labor higher productive power, but do not increase its value, nor do they increase the commodity’s value (1988, 321–22). Obviously, the natural resources that Marx analyzed are mainly natural powers. He also recognized that the products of natural powers (such as uncultivated lands, virgin forests, mineral deposits, etc.) sometimes enter production as the productive elements of commodities. In such instances, although natural resources do not have exchange values, they indeed exhibit some features of them. In *Capital*, Marx defined this kind of value as imaginary (or virtual) value.

For example, in volume 3 of *Capital*, Marx developed the concept of the virtual price form by using the example of land—a

natural resource. Here, he points out that “an object may have a price without having value. The price in that case is imaginary, like certain quantities in mathematics. On the other hand, the imaginary price-form may sometimes conceal either a direct or indirect real value-relation; for instance, the price of uncultivated land, which is without value, because no human labour has been incorporated in it” (1996, 112). Although Marx did not refer to the concept of virtual value, he did refer to the concept of the virtual price form. Following Marx’s logic, I believe that the concept of virtual value is reasonable, too, because the basis of the virtual price form must be virtual value. It can be shown that Marx’s later explanations of fictitious (or virtual) capital and land prices must have as their basis a concept of virtual value.

In volume 3 of *Capital*, Marx analyzed fictitious (or virtual) capital. He held that the creation of virtual capital is based on money capital: “The form of interest-bearing capital is responsible for the fact that every definite and regular money REVENUE appears as interest on some capital, whether it arises from some capital or not. The money income is first converted into interest, and from the interest one can determine the capital from which it arises” (1998, 462). Here commodities are not sold for money, but rather for written promises to pay for them at a certain date. These interest-bearing certificates, which can bring a certain profit, are examples of virtual capital. Therefore, Marx thinks that virtual capital in the form of promissory notes, stocks, etc. can only be regarded as imagined or virtual values. Obviously, Marx regarded virtual capital as a kind of virtual value.

Marx also pointed out that “this imaginary wealth expands . . . in the course of capitalist production in accordance with the expressed value for each of its aliquot parts of specific original nominal value” (476). In my opinion, Marx conducted research on the value of natural resources such as land, etc. on the basis of the proposed concept of virtual value.

Marx carried out this research first by analyzing ground rent. He noted that capitalist landowners not only get revenue by renting lands, they also gain by selling land. Uncultivated land is itself a natural object, not a product of labor, so it does not have value.

But under universal commodification, everything is commercialized, and land can be bought and sold. Under such conditions, land has a price. What does this price represent? Marx did not think that the price of land represents the capitalization of its value, for it does not have value, rather the price of land is an expression of the capitalization of ground rent. Marx said, “The purchase price of land is calculated in so many YEARS PURCHASE, which is merely another way of expressing the capitalization of ground rent. It is in fact the purchase price—not of the land, but of the ground rent yielded by it—calculated in accordance with the usual interest rate” (617). That is to say, the price is based on the annual ground rent calculated according to the average rate of interest. Concretely speaking, the selling price equals this capitalized value; if this amount were deposited in a bank, the yearly interest would equal the annual ground rent.

It can be seen from Marx’s explanation of land prices that if future ground rent is regarded as the profit due, then the price of land and the price of virtual capital are both based on capitalization of future earnings. So it can be said that the price of land reflects virtual characteristics. Because land prices are determined by the method of calculating future profit, the price represents an equal quantity of virtual capital, and this quantity reflects the price of natural objects without value. Thus the land’s “value” is obviously a type of virtual value.

From this discussion of Marx’s indirect commitment to a concept of virtual value, we can draw the following conclusion: under certain forms of exchange, anything lacking value can be endowed with a definite value that is virtual rather than real. It follows that it can have a price even though it does not have value; the price is a virtual one, reflecting a virtual value endowed by human beings.

In chapter 39 of volume 3 of *Capital*, furthermore, Marx explicitly proposed a concept of *virtual social value*, which serves as the basis for my discussion of the virtual value of natural resources. He indicated that differential rent is usually determined as the integral price by which market value exceeds the total price of production of the total quantity of products—this determination creates a virtual social value (1998, 653–54).

Marx held that a monopoly exists within capitalist agriculture due to the finitude of land resources. Capital cannot be transferred freely, so the market value of agricultural products is not determined by moderate productive conditions, but by poor conditions. So the total social value of agricultural products exceeds their total individual value, thus forming a “virtual social value.”

The virtual values of natural resources have the same features: they include natural powers and resources. As soon as they enter commodity exchange, natural resources will have virtual values which are revealed by their prices. When natural resources are used in production and their virtual values are added to commodities, the commodity’s value exceeds its real value—that is, the value composition of the commodity includes a virtual value. This is not only shown by price; it is realized by price as well. For example, when a commodity manufacturer purchases a commercialized natural resource for use in production, the manufacturer must get back this part of the cost of production when selling the commodity.

The virtual value of natural resources is not identical to what Marx called “false social value,” but it is similar to the nominal value which Marx explained in volume 3 of *Capital* when he discussed commercial circulation fees that are added to commodity prices. Although this added part is necessary for realization of the commodity’s value, it cannot increase the commodity’s real value, which is determined by the socially necessary labor time embodied in the commodity itself. Therefore, this additional virtual value can only be realized by increasing the price.

***The price-determination model of the virtual value of natural resources and its present significance***

In modern society, natural resources are becoming more and more commercialized; this includes not only the products of nature such as uncultivated lands, virgin forests, mineral deposits, etc., but also natural powers such as wind, water, electricity, and atomic power.

The procedure for determining the price of the virtual value of natural resources should obey Marx’s principle of land pricing, which is not a real price, but just a price in theory. Therefore, I

adhere to Marx's theory in explaining the price determination of the virtual value of natural resources.

First, I suggest that the formula for determining the price of the virtual value of natural resources is:

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \frac{D_i}{(1+r)^i} = \frac{D_1}{(1+r)} + \frac{D_2}{(1+r)^2} + \dots,$$

where  $P$  represents the virtual value of natural resources;  $D_i$  represents profits from natural resources in future years; and  $r$  represents the discount rate, which is usually replaced by the market interest rate. If profits from natural resources in future years are the same, the above formula can be simplified as  $D/r$ .

This formula is for the price of the virtual value of natural resources that have no time limit. Prices for those having time limits are determined by the following formula:

$$V = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{R \times F}{(1+i)^i} + \frac{F}{(1+i)^n},$$

where  $V$  represents natural resources with time limits, and  $R$  is the rate of profit.  $F$  represents the price of the natural resource;  $i$  represents the discount rate; and  $n$  represents the time limit of the natural resource.

It can be seen that the virtual value of natural resources is a theoretical price. In modern economic activities, the virtual value of natural resources ought to be shown by price. But the price of natural resources, after being reflected by currency in the form of the virtual value of natural resources, varies from the virtual value because virtual value and price counteract each other in several respects, thus forming some deviations.

The economic category of the virtual value of natural resources is significant theoretically and practically, for it helps us to use natural resources effectively.

Our theory has been restricted by Marx's labor theory of value for a long time, and it has regarded natural resources as free

resources. Therefore, in practice, the reasonable use and improved distribution of natural resources is influenced by the theory of virtual value.

Ever since reform and opening-up, China has begun to emphasize the harmony of humankind and nature together with the goal of sustainable economic development. However, the problem of determining the value of natural resources has not been solved. We have yet to develop the theory and quantitative standards necessary for regulating the use and distribution of natural resources, levying fines for damage to natural resources, and supplementing our natural resources.

If we calculate and evaluate natural resources according to the theory of the virtual value of natural resources, the matter becomes clearer.

First, it provides a value basis for the exchange of a natural resource, such as a tract of virgin forest. The basis of its exchange value is:

$$P_a = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \frac{D_i}{(1+r)^i} + \frac{D_1}{(1+r)} + \frac{D_2}{(1+r)^2} + \dots$$

or  $\frac{D_a}{r}$ ,

where  $P_a$  is the virtual value of the virgin forest.  $D_a$  is the yearly profit for this forest after it enters production in future years, and  $r$  is the market interest rate. Thus, the theory of virtual value provides a basis for pricing natural resources.

The theory also provides a theoretical basis for calculating the costs of human pollution and degradation of the natural environment.

According to the formula above, the cost of human damage to a tract of virgin forest is the capitalization of the profit that would be acquired by using the forest as a productive resource.

If this forest can provide a profit of 2 million RMB after it enters production, and the interest rate is 5 percent, then the monetary value of the forest is:

$$P_a = \frac{D_a}{r} = \frac{200}{5\%} = 40 \text{ million RMB .}$$

Therefore, according to Marxian economic theories of natural resources, further development of the “value” and price theory of natural resources is vitally important for achieving sustainable economic development.

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## NOTES

1. On this matter, most economists hold that productive activity and productivity are the same concept. They usually quote the words in Marx’s *Capital*: “Productive power has reference, of course, only to labour of some useful concrete form, the efficiency of any special productive activity during a given time being dependent on its productiveness” (Marx 1996, 56).

2. Professor Hu Jun thinks that productive activity and productivity are two different concepts, and that textbooks and dictionaries have mistakenly conflated them due to problems of translation. He points out that productivity or material productivity, together with social productivity, is a collective noun, indicating the group of laborers and implements of labor. But productivity indicates the worker’s actual ability, including labor’s social productivity, and natural productivity (2001).

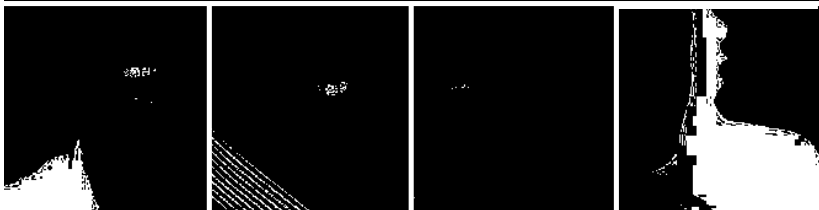
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**The Socialist Market Economy and Other  
Theoretical Issues—*NST* Symposium  
June 2007. Part 3**

The past two issues of *Nature, Society, and Thought* included papers presented at the conference “The Socialist Market Economy and Other Theoretical Issues” cosponsored by *Nature, Society, and Thought*, the Academy of Marxism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Central Translation and Compilation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Beijing, 2–3 June 2007.

In this section of the journal, we complete publication of those presentations for which we had access to paper or electronic copies. After the journal layout had been fixed, the author of one paper requested that it be withdrawn. We have replaced it with a thematically appropriate paper by Kathleen Densmore that she presented at an *NST* cosponsored conference, “Marxism and Scientific Sustainable Development” held in Langfang, China, 24–25 May 2008. Publication of a collection of papers from this conference is being considered by the Marxist Educational Press under its imprint MEP Publications.

# **Antagonism of Capitalist and Socialist Market Economies**

**Armen Baghdoyan**

Evolution reveals the dynamic nature of not only material conditions, but the organization of human society as well. In its five hundred years of self-transformation, although capitalism has undergone many periods of crises, it has proved its sustainability with remarkable resilience. It has expanded its reach through colonialism, imperialism, and, in the current era, neoliberal globalization. As society has witnessed the seeming consolidation of capitalism, however, it has also experienced the simultaneous and inevitable emergence of a superior social order in the very essence of capitalism. The superior order is what we call socialism.

## ***The market***

Capitalism did not create the market. It simply expanded it to regional dimensions and then, through colonialism and imperialism, constructed a global economic system with sovereign states at the core and dependent countries at the periphery.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, rapidly expanding capitalist transnational corporations, with the immense power of international financial institutions controlled by them, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, acquired the ability to subdue the power of nation-states in economic decision-making, paving the way to capitalist globalization.

As neoliberal globalization made waves throughout the globe, however, a contrasting current of globalization began to display a demonstrable rise. This development was driven by two principal factors: 1) unacceptability of unequal trade relations under neoliberal free market norms; 2) rise of opportunities for underdeveloped countries to join regional or global institutions committed to a more equitable production and distribution of wealth.

***Exploitative nature of the capitalist market economy***

Capitalism is by nature an exploitative system and is incapable of a fair distribution of the products of labor. In a situation of free trade under unfettered capitalism, wealth flows persistently from the periphery to the core. Underdeveloped countries remain locked in a state of developmental paralysis. Paradoxically, the exacerbation of this polarization has contributed significantly to the widespread economic stagnation that has engulfed the developed world itself for the last three to four decades.

In a capitalist global market, stronger economies use institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and even the World Trade Organization (WTO) to acquire not only the wealth, but also the means of production of weaker economies. Many methods—financial speculation, outright buyouts of indigenous industries (often at fire-sale prices), productive and financial capital exports, repatriation of profits, core-favorable regional and bilateral trade agreements—are designed to expand monopolistic power and control of global market operations. The marketplace serves as a medium where players of unequal power interact to generate more power to the powerful.

The main carrier of the capitalist market economy, the United States, perceives the marketplace as a battlefield for the pursuit of its ultimate aim of global economic and political domination

The speed with which the neoconservative ideologues within the Bush administration have raced to the war option in recent years to resolve international issues of their own creation provides ample proof of the total failure of their expansionist goals. It has become abundantly evident that war is a desperate attempt by these imperialist ideologues to salvage the impending collapse of their insatiable ambition to establish control over major global resources.

***Cooperative nature of the socialist market economy***

In a socialist order, the goal is to bring different countries together to create a platform of cooperation for the common benefit of all. The rules of the game in the socialist marketplace are diametrically different from those of the capitalist marketplace. Colonialism, imperialist exploitation, a policy of deliberate obstruction of the development of the inferior country—hallmarks of capitalist market relations—are superseded by policies of mutually beneficial contractual agreements among players of equal rights

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao clearly enunciated the socialist market economic norms in a press conference in Cairo in 2006. On the first leg of his seven-country African tour, the premier emphasized the strengthening of “normal, transparent” relations between African countries and China—that is, relations that are cooperative and mutually beneficial.

***Different postures in the WTO***

There are fundamentally different postures within the WTO between capitalist market economies and socialist market economies. The game plan of the former is to procure maximum profits; that of the latter is to strive to build a cooperative and mutual development. The perpetuation of the trap of underdevelopment under capitalist international relations is the main reason why many socialist economists advocate delinking from the developed world as a solution to the development problems of the third world.

***The Chinese model of development***

China adopted a new developmental strategy when Deng Xiaoping gradually emerged as the de facto leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC) following Chairman Mao Zedong’s death in 1976. The chief architect of China’s new economic model, Deng summed up his proposed reforms as four modernizations in the areas of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense. The socialist market economy would be the vehicle for the implementation of the new developmental strategy.

Deng argued that since China was in the primary stage of socialism, the requirements of the global power relationships imposed a

strategic shift in economic policy for China to embark on the road to an accelerated growth rate. Sensing new opportunities offered by the global political context of the time, he sought to moderate ideological rigidities, and instituted policies that advocated two parallel paths for the Chinese economy: unleashing of the human potential through encouragement of individual entrepreneurship and increasing the exposure of the Chinese economy to foreign capital investments. The two wings of the economic growth strategy would maintain China's adherence to its socialist ideology. The strengthening of the productive forces, however, would take priority over strict adherence to socialist production relations. Introduction of capitalistic modes of production alongside state control of the strategic enterprises would gradually create optimal conditions for building "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

While increased importance would be given to the market forces over central planning, there would be no diversion from absolute loyalty to "Four Cardinal Principles": 1) Socialist road; 2) Dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) Political leadership of the CPC; 4) Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

Earlier, Zhou Enlai, the prime minister of China from the victory of Communism in 1949 until his death in 1976, was an ardent protagonist of the enhancement of the power and quality of the productive forces, especially in science and technology. Zhou Enlai was an ardent supporter of Deng Xiaoping.

### ***Problems of integration in the global economy***

Over the past three decades, as the Chinese economy has made enormous strides, a growing number of the more powerful transnational firms have penetrated the Chinese market by merging with Chinese enterprises, even acquiring sole ownership of existing enterprises with foreign direct investments (FDIs). The pros and cons of these mergers and acquisitions have aroused heated debate within the Chinese leadership circles.

### ***Economic considerations***

As its economic power grows, China is able to negotiate more favorable terms for co-ownership with foreign investors to assure

further development of its technological and managerial expertise. In this process, the most important consideration is to maintain strict adherence to the socialist ideology lest the Chinese economy become an unsuspecting captive to the intrusion of foreign capital and finance, reminiscent of so many other developing countries in the days of unbridled imperialism.

### ***Political overtones***

One should not underestimate the political overtones of the international economic relations either. In the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference in Hanoi, 18–19 November 2006, President Bush resorted to coercive maneuvers in desperate attempts to inflame conflict and confrontation, while the Asian countries strived for the creation of cooperative engagement. Bush pressed for sanctions against North Korea and attempted to set up Vietnam against China, with the aim of creating a counterforce to the Chinese influence in the APEC region. He was rebuffed on both counts. Let us keep in mind that China and the United States are commercial partners by economic dictates on both sides, but they will remain strategic rivals for a long time to come, independent of the predominant social and economic order in China.

### ***Prospects for a socialist path***

Major socialist countries, notably China and Vietnam, have in the last thirty years reevaluated their development strategies and have adopted models of mixed ownership of the means of production to stimulate the rate of their economic growth. An instant proclamation cannot achieve socialism; neither can a total victory of a proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie. Socialism is a historical process with dimensions of economy, society, and culture that will evolve gradually, perpetually, and not necessarily linearly.

A system of mixed economy, whereby one part operates in a capitalist mode of production and the other in a socialist mode of production, is necessarily an evolving condition. The major factor for the introduction of capitalist methods in a yet under developed socialist economy is the global dominance of the

capitalist system. A period of coexistence between the capitalist sphere and the socialist sphere is a historical phase in the development of a socialist world, just as it is within a socialist country. A socialist state does not mean a socialist order. A socialist order, with people in full control of the means of production by the exercise of political power through genuine democracy, is the ultimate goal that requires unswerving dedication to socialist ideals and constant endeavor toward their actualization.

The movement toward a more private market economy in China has alarmed many in the socialist community because of its perhaps unavoidable disruptions in the production as well as distribution sectors. Unemployment, dismantlement of collective farms, income polarization, uneven regional development, widespread corruption even within the ranks of the Party apparatus may be the price China has to pay during the transition period of developing its productive forces.

Nevertheless, private economic power and socialist political power are fundamentally incompatible. A contradiction between the infrastructure and the superstructure is bound to generate social conflicts. As the Chinese economy and society make strides, China may have to confront a decisive watershed: either the economic infrastructure will evolve in the direction of people's control, or the political superstructure will yield to capitalist takeover. One must note with profound optimism, though, that the CPC is highly sensitive to the problems facing China. It is determined to pursue adequate solutions as evidenced in the report on the 2006 plan and the 2007 draft plan for the national economic and social development presented to the fifth session of the Tenth Chinese National People's Congress, 5 March 2007.

China is on its way to achieving the status of an economic powerhouse despite all efforts by the United States to leave it behind. The victories of the Chinese and the Vietnamese people, along with the struggle of many developing countries, especially in Latin America, open up new vistas for the advance of the socialist cause around the globe.

*Boston*

# **Public Nature of Enterprises, Their Efficiency, and Economic Development**

**Wang Zhongbao**

I will discuss here some questions concerning equity for labor in the public sector, including equity in decision-making, in the division of labor, and the status of labor. Its essence in the present stage is the quality of distribution, which is distribution according to labor performed, and, in the future communist society, distribution according to need. Therefore, distribution according to labor performed is the ultimate objective for collective appropriation of the means of production; the latter is the prerequisite of the former.

Under the condition of collective appropriation of the means of production, laborers obtain income not according to capital but according to the labor they perform. Distribution according to labor, however, cannot be realized automatically under collective appropriation of the means of production. For example, before the Chinese economic reform, distribution was not completely based on the labor performed. The tendency in publicly owned enterprises was to level out the distribution.

Although today no distribution according to capital takes place in publicly owned enterprises, the degree of realization of distribution according to labor varies. On the other hand, in privately owned enterprises, distribution according to capital



makes it impossible to carry out fully distribution according to labor, but a level of distribution according to quantity and quality of labor exists in fact. In my opinion, degree of realization of distribution according to labor could be the standard for judging the level of the public nature of an enterprise. The more closely the workers' income approaches the value they create in their work, the higher the degree of distribution according to labor and the higher the public nature of the enterprise. The public nature of publicly owned enterprises is higher than that of privately owned enterprises.

Why are the degrees of realization of distribution according to labor in publicly owned enterprises different? Because collective ownership of the means of production is only a prerequisite to distribution according to labor. The problem is that it is difficult to measure the value that the workers create when distribution is according to the labor performed. If it is easy to measure the value that the workers create, the income the workers get is easy to match to the value they create. Publicly owned enterprises will be most efficient if their workers get what they create—the best incentive for all workers. Some scholars attribute the low efficiency of publicly owned enterprises in relation to the large privately owned multinational corporations—despite their many layers of subsidiaries and branches and decentralized equity—to the lack of clear property rights, excessive management structure, asymmetry of information, and free-ride attitudes in the publicly owned enterprises. In my opinion, the fundamental reason is that the workers' incomes do not match their contribution in labor.

If we want to enhance the efficiency of publicly owned enterprises, we should improve the degree of realization of distribution according to labor. But the key to doing so is to measure accurately the value that every worker creates. The traditional approach is to calculate the value by measuring labor time and labor intensity. It is easy to measure labor time, but labor intensity is difficult to measure. We measure labor intensity by such methods as work record, skill, diploma, professional rank, title, and so on. No doubt these methods have both merit and demerit.

These methods do not completely represent the real intensity of the labor process. Certainly, in some special enterprises, effective methods are used to match income with the value created—for example, piece work.

A direction of reform in Chinese publicly owned enterprises is to try to match income with the value created by the workers. The Chinese market-economy reform provides a relatively effective method. Through the free flow of workers and effective competition among enterprises in the market, the workers' income can come increasingly close to the value they create in their work. This partly explains why China continually engages in the reform of the market economy

In the end, the higher the public nature of the enterprises, the more rapidly will the economy develop. A high public nature of enterprises means a high degree of realization of distribution according to labor. In this situation, the gap between the rich and the poor will narrow, insufficient effective demand will not occur, and the common prosperity of the whole society can be realized. With fiscal and revenue regulation, sufficient effective demand ensures continuous and rapid development of the national economy. During the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s, John Maynard Keynes thought that insufficient demand was the reason for the crisis, and that the low demand was due to three psychological laws. So he gave the advice that the government should borrow to purchase and invest if the private sector did not consume enough and invest. Surely governmental intervention saved dying capitalism, and the capitalist economy continued to develop rapidly during 1950s and 60s—the so-called Golden Age. Stagflation of the capitalist economy followed, however, beginning in the 1970s. Keynes could not give effective advice again. He had not found the real reason for low demand. The real reason is private ownership and its consequences—polarization between the rich and the poor. “I want to consume but I have no money; I have money but I can't consume so much.” Social polarization results from distribution according to capital, which is the result of private ownership.

In conclusion, in order to realize distribution according to labor, public ownership should be established. To solve insufficient demand, distribution according to labor is necessary. To guarantee continuous and rapid development of the economy, adequate demand has to be created.

*Academy of Marxism of the Chinese  
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# **A Modern History of Sino-Canadian Relations**

**Phyllis Bailey**

Canada's diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China began in 1970, two years before Nixon's historic visit. Prior to 1970, there had been much support for recognition. As early as November 1949, the Canadian cabinet recommended recognition, but it took twenty-one years and the initiative of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau before this goal was achieved.

In 1949, Canada had no particular economic interest in China but shared with Great Britain and other nations a growing distaste for the Chiang Kai-shek regime. Mao's victory in the civil war was considered inevitable; it seemed realistic to support the winning side. There was also a desire to keep China from aligning with the Soviet Union.

A key figure in urging recognition was Chester Ronning, the son of Canadian missionaries to China. He was born in China and his first language was Chinese. After returning to Canada, his family maintained ties with the Lutheran mission in China. Ronning was a missionary between 1922 and 1927, and he continued to cultivate his fluency in Chinese, including classical Chinese and Mandarin.

He entered the Department of External Affairs in 1945 and was posted to the Canadian Embassy in Chungking to serve as counselor. His first boss was Ambassador Victor Odlum, a staunch supporter of the Nationalists, as was Ronning. That changed; Ronning

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began to support the Communists and opposed the American view that China should be isolated. This earned him the disapproval of Dean Rusk and John Foster Dulles, intent on crushing the spread of communism in Asia (Evans 1991).

When China entered the Korean War in 1950, Ronning was recalled from Nanking but continued to urge recognition. When he retired in 1964, Canada was prone to accept Ronning's view, the motivation fueled by an increase in trade with China and concern over U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

In 1966, he was sent on special peace missions to Vietnam, and in 1971 was invited to China by Premier Chou En-lai. The visit was widely publicized by his son-in-law Seymour Topping, a *New York Times* reporter, and his daughter Audrey, also a journalist, who recorded the impressions of the "old China hand" (160).

Ronning was regarded as the only person able to bridge the communication gap between North America and China (Ronning 1983). It is unfortunate that Ronning's push for recognition did not yield the desired result in 1949; he exerted valiant efforts to correct what he regarded as "wrong-headed" China policies (Evans 1991, 164).

The Canadian missionary James Gareth Endicott also campaigned for recognition. He was social advisor to Chiang Kai-shek and served as liaison between the American military and the Chinese Communist forces fighting against the Japanese in World War II. His disillusionment with Kuomintang corruption led him to rally to the Communist cause. He was an avowed socialist and influenced people like Chester Ronning, but because of his early association with the Nationalists, he was not always taken seriously.

When I was a child, my parents, who were Marxists, took me to Toronto to attend a Peace Rally. In those days, "peace" was a synonym for communism. I was excited not only because this was the longest journey I had ever taken (500 km) but also because it was a daring adventure, since there were constables of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police watching the proceedings. I was impressed by Jim Endicott, his sincerity and passion evident even to my immature ears.

In 1968, the newly elected prime minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, was determined to recognize the People's Republic of China. Trudeau knew China firsthand. He had made two trips, the first in 1949 amid the upheaval of the civil war, and the second in 1960. This resulted in *Two Innocents in Red China*, coauthored with Jacques Hébert (1968). After each visit, Trudeau advocated recognition.

In 1966, Trudeau served in the Canadian delegation seeking membership of China in the United Nations; this endeavor failed. After he became prime minister, a major item on Trudeau's political agenda was to change Canadian foreign policy; the relationship with China topped the list.

Trudeau believed that isolating one quarter of the world's population was unrealistic and inappropriate. For economic, political, and practical reasons, mainland China had to be recognized. The sticking point was the possibility that the People's Republic of China would refuse if Canada did not break off relations with Taiwan, an untenable move for Canada.

On 29 May 1968, Trudeau stated that many major world issues "will not be resolved completely or in any lasting way unless and until an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation." He maintained that Canada, with its primary focus on Atlantic and European affairs, often forgot Canada was also a Pacific Rim nation.

"Our aim will be to recognize the People's Republic of China government as soon as possible and enable that government to occupy a seat in the UN, taking into account that there is a separate government in Taiwan" (quoted in Frolic, 1991, 192).

Easier said than done. A number of questions were raised. First, did China want to be recognized by Canada? Second, what would be the economic and political consequences? Third, would recognition provoke anger and possibly economic sanctions against Canada by the United States? Fourth, would having a Chinese embassy in Ottawa create security problems and a potential for espionage? Fifth, how would the Canadian Chinese community, noted for supporting Chiang Kai-shek, react? Above all, what was meant by "taking into account there is a separate government in Taiwan?" (Frolic 1991, 193).

Was this initiative merely a way for Canada to distance itself from U.S. policy—that is, for Trudeau to thumb his nose at the United States? Given Trudeau’s tendency to be flamboyant and sometimes immature, it is possible we are looking at a classic Oedipal situation, a rebellion against not one but two fathers, the United States government and his predecessor, Prime Minister Lester Pearson. As Secretary of State for External Affairs, Pearson wavered between supporting recognition and taking a cautious “wait and see” attitude; as prime minister, he remained indecisive in his China policy.

Trudeau’s directives were not supported by Canada’s Department of External Affairs, which would have the responsibility of implementing them. The official U.S. position was one of concern that recognition of China would increase Beijing’s influence in the Vietnam negotiations in Paris and would also have an adverse effect on other Asian nations, notably Japan (195).

In February 1969, the Canadian ambassador to Sweden met with his Chinese counterpart to discuss the matter. China insisted that Canada sever all relationships with “the Chiang Kai-shek gang.”

Twenty months and eighteen meetings later, on 13 October 1970, the two countries announced the establishment of diplomatic relations. Canada noted the Chinese government’s territorial claim to Taiwan, without either “challenging it or endorsing it.” The Canadian formula became the model for most Western nations establishing diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China in the 1970s (203).

The Canadian Chinese community, mostly pro-Nationalist, did a *volte face* after recognition. Members of the community felt bound as Canadian citizens to support Canadian foreign policy. They developed pride that China had become a superpower, a major player on the international scene (Lum 1991, 236–37).

Since 1970, Canada and China have enjoyed a positive relationship, sometimes floundering on the contentious human rights issue. In 2005, in a speech at the National Press Club, celebrating thirty-five years of Canada-China diplomatic relations, Shumin Lu, the Chinese ambassador to Canada, extolled the positive relationship between the two countries. He attributed this, in large

part, to the frequency of visits by the leaders of both nations. He mentioned that the former prime minister, Jean Chrétien, met with Chinese leaders more than a dozen times.

The economic advantages for both nations have been particularly salient; widely publicized Team Canada delegations to China were instrumental in increasing trade. Ambassador Shumin commented that two-way trade increased a hundredfold from US\$150 million in the early days of diplomatic relations to over US\$15 billion in 2004. In addition, cooperation in the areas of science, education, and culture has increased.

This discussion would not be complete without reference to Dr. Norman Bethune, a household name in China, and Two-Gun Cohen, a colorful, flamboyant figure and contributor to the cordial entente between China and Canada.

Norman Bethune (1890–1939), like Endicott, was the son of Christian missionaries. He was a physician and medical innovator, a member of the Communist Party of Canada. (In China, he is known as Bai Qui-en.)

He graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto and moved to Montreal, where he taught thoracic surgery at McGill University. From 1936 to 1937, he was a thoracic surgeon for Spanish Civil War Loyalist troops. There, he developed mobile medical units that served as the model for MASH units.

In 1938, he traveled to China, working with the Communists on the battlefields, where he developed the first practical method for transporting blood. On 12 November 1939, Bethune died of blood poisoning from a cut he received performing surgery while with the Eighth Route Army in the midst of the second Sino-Japanese War.

Mao Zedong published an essay entitled “In Memory of Norman Bethune,” which became required reading for all Chinese. Bethune was a great humanitarian and left his mark on medical practice with his invention of several surgical instruments as well as his breakthrough developments in battlefield surgery.

Canadian travelers still report that when they visit China, they are received with particular warmth because of Bethune and his legacy. Norman Bethune is buried in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province. He is the only Westerner to have a statue in Communist China and also has a hospital and medical school named in his honor.



Last, but not least, we turn to Morris Cohen, the gun-toting Jew from Saskatchewan. He started his career as a pickpocket in East London, and was sentenced to a Home for Wayward Jewish Lads, after which he was shipped off to Western Canada in the hope that the frontier spirit of the young nation would cause him to mend his evil ways. He became friendly with Chinese railroad workers and once rescued a Chinese restaurant owner from a thief.

After serving in World War I, he journeyed to China, where he trained Dr. Sun Yat-sen's army in boxing and shooting. He became Dr. Sun's protector and armed bodyguard. When Cohen was nicked by a bullet in battle he took to carrying a second gun and became known as Two-Gun Cohen. He was made an honorary army general, and after Pearl Harbor placed Mme. Sun and her sister on one of the last planes out of Hong Kong. He stayed behind to fight; he was captured by the Japanese and thrown into a prison camp. After the victory of the Communists in 1949, Two-Gun was one of the few people able to move freely between Mainland China and Taiwan. He died in 1970 and was buried in Manchester, England.

He has been immortalized in the Canadian Embassy in Beijing by my friend Fred Bild, former Canadian ambassador to China, who named the embassy's bar the *Two-Gun Cohen Saloon*.

*Montreal, Canada*

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# China's Socialist Market Economy and Its Difference from Neoliberalism

Zhuang Junju

The nature of China's market economy is socialist; it is closely connected with China's economic, political, and cultural system, and it has the bright and sound nature of socialism. The unification of the market economy with socialism and the nearly thirty-year practice of reform and opening up is a great creative achievement of the Chinese people. The successful transition of China from a traditional society to a modern society has been an important experience. China's socialist market economy is distinctly different from neoliberalism. The essence of China's socialist market economy is not a capitalist market economy, nor can it move toward neoliberalism in any way.

## *How to understand neoliberalism*

### *The definition of neoliberalism*

Inheriting the core contents of classical economic liberalism, the main characteristics of neoliberalism are formed through its critique of Keynesian welfare economics. Neoliberalism is a set of theoretical concepts, an ideological system, and policy proposals for the transformation from state monopoly capitalism to international monopoly capitalism. Neoliberalism is both related to and differentiated from classic liberalism. It has achieved its worldwide fame through its reaction to the Keynesian revolution.

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The formation and practice of the “Washington Consensus” is the main symbol of neoliberalism—an academic theory elevated to the economic paradigm and the political guiding principle of international monopoly capitalism.

*The main contents of neoliberalism*

In its economic aspect, neoliberalism has inherited some concepts from the bourgeois economic theory of classical liberalism, such as free management, free trade, and so on. What makes it different from all the other liberal economic theories is its continuous and vigorous advocating of extreme measures of liberalization, privatization, and marketization. In its political aspect, neoliberalism is strongly critical of public ownership and socialism. From the neoliberalists’ viewpoint, socialism means limitation and denial of freedom and it will inevitably lead to totalitarianism. Neoliberalism also strongly criticizes state intervention; it argues that any form of state intervention will create the loss of economic efficiency. In its cultural aspect, the culture theory of neoliberalism is the essentially the culture of imperialism. The formation of the global media market during the past five years is a consequence of neoliberal practice.

*The difference between the theory of a socialist market economy and neoliberalism*

The theory of the socialist market economy and neoliberalism share some common content, for example, the theory of market mechanism, government innovation, and monetary policy. But neoliberalism, as the theoretical system of international monopoly capital, serves the interests of private ownership and the capitalist system, opposing the system of public ownership and socialism. The theory of the socialist market economy is thus sharply distinguished from neoliberalism in the following ways.

The theory of the socialist market economy firmly opposes and resists the Washington Consensus, which wants to propagate neoliberalism as national ideology serving the expansion of international monopoly capital.

The theory of the socialist market economy advocates a carefully managed liberalization, opposing liberalization absolutely; that is, it opposes the simultaneous liberalization of finance, trade, and investment. Neoliberalism thus tends to weaken the economic sovereignty of countries that are already in disadvantageous positions. In this regard, the Chinese government must observe the WTO rules and try its best to grasp the opportunity to participate in the international competition. Cooperating with other economies positively, it will on the one hand guard against the risky actions and implement financial liberalization with great care, especially in financial fields, while having its own regulatory capability to supervise and manage the maintenance of national economic independence and security on the other hand,

The theory of socialist market economy adheres to an ownership system composed mainly of public ownership while allowing the existence of other kinds of ownership, but opposing comprehensive privatization. Comprehensive privatization is not appropriate even in a capitalist society, because it does not conform to the intrinsic requirements for the development of the productive forces. The more that public goods are needed for the society, the higher the level of economic development. The production and delivery of public goods are not possible on the basis of purely private ownership. Some must be established on the foundation of the public ownership system. The development of China's socialist market economy must reject overall privatization and make sure that public ownership system is its main content.

The theory of the socialist market economy advocates positive governmental intervention, opposing the comprehensive marketization, contrary to the practice of neoliberalism. Actual experience proves that a capitalist economy cannot operate on the basis of comprehensive marketization without governmental intervention. A socialist market economy requires the government to carry out economic regulation of financial and fiscal means, as well as guiding developmental plans for a macromanagement of the market.

The theory of the socialist market economy does not oppose globalization, but opposes a one-sided global integration. Neoliberalism does not promote a general global integration, but one that is led by superpowers. More concretely, it is a sort of conforming globalization that will lead to global capitalism, economically, politically, and culturally. The socialist market economy theory proposes a world of “one earth, two systems” over a comparatively long period, with the struggle, cooperation, and mutual interaction of the capitalist and socialist systems. During this period, capitalism still will maintain its superior position. In this background, we must be highly vigilant against indiscriminate capitalization, avoiding falling into the trap of global integration, while participating in the course of economic globalization.

*Some questions to ponder*

1. We must distinguish neoliberalism of traditional bourgeois economic theory from the neoliberalism that is symbolized by the Washington Consensus and transformed into the state ideology and mainstream values of the United States.

Liberalism is a historical category. It has a different connotation in each phase of capitalist development, and it also plays different roles. One cannot say that liberalism, which opposed feudalism in the initial period of bourgeois revolution, is the same as the neoliberalism of today. Some policies and thoughts of the Washington Consensus are certainly rationally based, such as strengthening of financial discipline, reduction of financial deficits, lowering the inflation rate, stabilizing the macroeconomic situation, and so on. On the whole, however, its policies on the promotion of privatization of state-owned enterprises, trade liberalization, financial liberalization, the interest rate market, and relaxation of foreign capital supervision lay undue stress on the market mechanism. As a result, the Washington Consensus represents the interests of international monopoly capital, which is expanding throughout the world. Furthermore, the United States is forcing the developing countries to implement the Washington Consensus through supplemental conditions for economic aid,

loans, and so on. Neoliberalism has thus become the state ideology, politics, and paradigm of U.S. authority. Therefore, the developing countries must be highly vigilant in regard to the Washington Consensus, otherwise state economic sovereignty will be seriously undermined, and national economic security and even national security itself will be facing great danger.

For this reason, we should not confuse the theory and the academic origin of neoliberalism with neoliberalism as the mainstream ideology of contemporary capitalism. We also should not consider neoliberalism as a kind of purely academic, nonideological theory. We must always remember that neoliberalism is not a theory of economic reform to be used by capitalism to promote the beneficial and abolish the harmful, such as, for example, to abolish the so-called welfare trap.

2. The socialist market economy theory has absorbed the achievements civilization produced by Western capitalism, including some of the beneficial ingredients of bourgeoisie economic theories. In certain aspects, the theory of China's socialist market economy is similar to neoliberalism, but this is only in the similarities of the external form; they are different in essence..

China's socialist market economy is the result of China's unique political, economic, and cultural system, and it is also the result of reviewing the past experiences independently by the Chinese people. Many principles embodied in the theory of China's socialist market economy could be regarded as the denial and correction of neoliberalism. For instance, the core values of socialism that are embodied in the theory of the socialist market economy are the correction to the principles of neoliberalism—individualism, egotistic values, and so on. The socialist core values emphasize “putting the people first” as the basic value; “common enrichment” is the goal of development, and “fair and just” is the core.

3. It is inevitable that a series of social problems will be produced in the practice of the socialist market economy in this great Eastern nation, which is quite backward economically and culturally.

Unlike the Western developed capitalist countries, China must construct its socialist market economy in a comparatively backward economy and culture. At the founding of New China, the level of productive forces in our country was low. Only after passing through a long-term process of development can we enhance the productive forces to roughly the same level as the Western developed countries, and only then can we build the socialist society skillfully and completely. This was the basis for putting forward the theory of the primary stage of socialism, and it is inevitable that we will experience repeatedly a series of winding, frustrating, and even serious failures. Deng Xiaoping, the chief designer of China's reform and opening-up policy, had realized that China would have a nebulous socialism if we did not accelerate the development of the productive forces, change our own backwardness, and raise people's living standards. This was a reasonable conclusion after summarizing innumerable lessons. China needs the reform and opening-up policy, and should maintain a healthy attitude to take feasible and flexible measures to absorb "all the positive achievements of capitalist system." On the one hand, China's socialist development will inevitably learn from the experiences of capitalist development; on the other hand, the development will cause some problems that are similar with those brought by capitalist development in early times.

Until now, the Chinese government is trying its best to erase people's misery and labor pain; certainly, a long time is needed for the Chinese government to erase them completely. The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government not only have the willingness, but also the determination and ability to do so.

4. The birth of the theories of constructing a harmonious society and the scientific outlook on development show that China continues to go forward on the path of gradually improving and perfecting the system of China's socialist market economy.

Already during the first half of 2004, overseas media and academic circles focused on the "China Model"—the "Beijing Consensus" that was proposed at that time. These discussions



have comprehensively summarized the successful experiences of China's development. Simultaneously, they also pointed to a series of problems in China that are influencing socialist development. These problems include the unfair access to education, the worsening of the environment, the shortcomings of the social security system, polarization of the rich and the poor, the growing disparity between urban and rural areas. Therefore, the Communist Party of China and the government proposed pursuit of a scientific outlook on development and the construction of a harmonious society in the new historical period. This is precisely the answer to the problems that have arisen in the process of development of the socialist market economy.

The Chinese government and people will relentlessly continue to improve and perfect the socialist market economy. In doing so, they will absorb and profit from the successful experiences of other countries and regions. We deeply believe that China will certainly keep its economy developing continuously, that the people will benefit from their common enrichment, and that the relations between humankind and nature will gradually be harmonized. Only after China has accomplished these tasks as a great nation can it be said that China has established its own unique developmental model and has made a great contribution to the humanity.

*Institute of World Socialism, Central Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*

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# The European Union Crisis Continues

Anthony Coughlan

## *An EU state in the making?*

The politics of the European Union are currently dominated by the attempt to revive the proposed EU Constitution, which eighteen of the EU's twenty-seven Member States had ratified by 2007 but which was rejected by the voters of France and the Netherlands in referendums in 2005.

That rejection has caused a profound crisis in the attempt to turn most of the nation-states of Europe into a supranational federation, an international actor and world power in its own right, which has been ongoing now for nearly sixty years.

The Schuman Declaration of 1950, which the Euro-federalists commemorate each year on 9 May as "Europe Day," proposed the setting up of a supranational High Authority for the European Coal and Steel Community "as a first step in the federation of Europe"—a federation being of course a state.

While the European Union does not yet have *all* the features of a fully fledged federation, it does have many such features. Like such classical federal states as the USA, Australia, Canada, and nineteenth-century Germany, it has gradually acquired more state features over a longish period of time, just as they did. It has done this in a succession of treaties, each of which has shifted further policy-making powers from the national to the supranational level: the Rome Treaty (1957), the Single European Act (1987),

the Maastricht Treaty (1993), the Amsterdam Treaty (1998), and the Nice Treaty (2002).

Thus today's European Union has acquired a quasi-governmental executive in the EU Commission. It has a legislature, the Council of Ministers and European Parliament, which now makes two-thirds of all the laws for its twenty-seven Members. These laws override national laws in any case of conflict and are directly binding on the Member States and their citizens. The EU has a supreme court, the European Court of Justice, which interprets the treaties and whose decisions are enforceable on both states and citizens by hefty penal fines. It has its own currency, the euro. It has the monopoly of commercial treaty-making power with (other) states. Its laws enforce classical laissez-faire, the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor throughout its territory, as fundamental constitutional principles. It has its own flag, anthem, and annual official holiday.

The two main features of statehood which the EU lacks to date are the power to impose its own taxes and to force its Member States to go to war against their will, although some members may consent to others going to war on behalf of the EU as a whole, while they "constructively abstain," to use the Treaty jargon.

### ***Giving the EU the constitutional form of a state***

The proposed EU Constitution was envisaged as the keystone of the long-developing federalist edifice. It is embodied in the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, which was signed in October 2004 by the leaders of the EU member countries.

The most important thing this treaty-cum-constitution seeks to do is to give the European Union the constitutional form of a state for the first time—in five logical legal steps:

1. ABOLISHING THE EXISTING EUROPEAN UNION: Art. IV-437 would repeal all the existing European treaties and thereby abolish the present European Union and Community.

2. CREATING A NEW EUROPEAN UNION BASED ON ITS OWN STATE CONSTITUTION: Art. I-1 would replace the existing EU with a new Union that was founded like any state upon its own constitution: "*This Constitution establishes the European Union.*" In legal terms this would be a different EU from the

one that currently exists, although it would have the same name. Simultaneously Art. IV-438 would transfer the existing supranational laws and institutions from the present EU to the new one.

3. GIVING THE NEW EU FEDERAL STATE POWERS:

Art. I-6 would assert the primacy of this new EU's constitution and laws over the national constitutions and laws of its Member States: "*The Constitution and law adopted by the institutions of the Union in exercising competences conferred on it shall have primacy over the law of the Member States.*"

4. GIVING THE NEW EU LEGAL PERSONALITY LIKE OTHER STATES: Art. I-7 provides: "*The Union shall have legal personality.*" This would enable the constitutionally new EU to conduct itself as a state and speak with one voice in the international community, sign treaties with other states, have a president, foreign minister, diplomatic corps, public prosecutor, etc., all provided in the constitution.

5. MAKING THE CITIZENS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES INTO REAL CITIZENS OF THIS NEW EU FEDERATION: Art. I-10 provides that: "*Every national of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights and be subject to the duties provided for in the Constitution.*" This would be real citizenship, not a nominal or honorary EU citizenship as at present. One can of course only be a citizen of a state. The present EU does not have real citizens, for it does not have the constitutional form of statehood, or even its own legal personality. A postconstitution EU, however, would have both. Citizens would owe this constitutionally new Union the prime duties of citizenship, namely, obedience to its laws and allegiance to its authority.

The proposed Constitution would also increase the powers of the EU in many new policy areas. It would change the weighted majority voting system for making European laws by giving more voting weight on the EU legislature, the Council of Ministers, to the larger Member States, especially Germany, at the expense of the small and medium-sized members.

Any substitute new Treaty for the proposed Constitution is likely to retain the above key features.

***The Eu's insoluble democratic problem***

While the development of the EU has often been compared to that of such classical federations as the USA, Canada, Australia, and nineteenth-century Germany, where state powers were gradually shifted over time from a lower provincial or regional level to a superior central federal authority, the EU is different in one vital respect. The political units that came together to form America, Canada, Australia, and Germany belonged wholly or mainly to one nation or people, possessing a common language, culture, and history, and the social solidarity stemming from these once their populations had settled.

That gave these federal states a popular democratic basis, and with it natural legitimacy and authority. It contrasts with the EU constitution's ambition to establish "a new country called Europe" organized in a supranational federation, despite the real Europe consisting of many different nations and peoples, speaking different languages, who desire to make their own laws, chose their own rulers, and decide their own international relations.

Democracy means rule by the *demos*, the people. Lincoln classically defined it as "government of the people, by the people, for the people." There is however no European or EU people or *demos* whose support and approval can confer legitimacy and right authority on the EU institutions, Nor can a European people be created artificially, despite the attempts of the Euro-integrationists to pretend otherwise. What exists in the EU today is an assemblage of many nations and peoples, whose political allegiance is overwhelmingly to their own nation states, but whose national democracy and independence have been fundamentally subverted by the EU as it arrogates ever more powers and functions to itself. This is done for the benefit of the powerful political, economic, bureaucratic, and ideological elites who run the EU and who champion the integration project.

Political democracy is like health. Often people appreciate it only when they have lost it, and then they may have to struggle for a long time to get it back. Eroding national democracy as it does, the European integration project is historically out-of-date. It is a relic of a particular conjuncture of post-World War II

circumstances, expressive of an in-turned, Eurocentric world view that is quite inappropriate for democratic states in the modern world. People are rejecting it all over Europe today.

***The impending crisis of the euro***

Apart from the crisis over its constitution, it is probable that the future of the EU will be determined by what happens to the euro-currency.

The euro-currency was essentially a political project aimed at reconciling France to German reunification after 1989, using economic means quite inappropriate for that purpose. For the champions of EU integration, however, the euro was seen as a giant step toward the federal superstate of their dreams. As EU Commission President Romano Prodi put it: "The two pillars of the Nation State are the sword and the currency, and we have changed that."

A monetary union cannot survive without being also a fiscal union, that is, a political union with common taxes and public services prevailing throughout its territory. Such taxes and social transfers bind the different regions and social classes of a state together and compensate to some extent the poorer, less developed regions within that state for their inability to balance their payments by varying their currency exchange rates. The EU can never become a fiscal and political union like traditional nation-states, however, because it lacks the social and civic solidarity necessary to underpin that. As Otmar Issing, director of the European Central Bank, remarked: "There is no example in history of a lasting monetary union that was not also part of one State." And there are of course many examples of states which were monetary unions for long periods of time but which have collapsed and disappeared from history because they lacked the social solidarity among their erstwhile citizens that would hold them together. Where now is the USSR ruble, the Czech crown, the Yugoslav dinar, or the Austro-Hungarian thaler?

In early 2006, Professor Paul de Grauwe of Belgium, a world authority on monetary unions, who is economic adviser to EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and who was himself a supporter of the euro at its inception, foretold the inevitable demise of the euro because of the inability of the EU, with its

many diverse nations and languages and the consequent lack of solidarity among its members, to develop from a monetary union into a genuine fiscal and political union—into a stable state, in other words. This is the fundamental flaw of the entire European integration project. The crisis over the EU Constitution is but a symptom of it. If the American dollar should fall significantly during the coming period, and the euro currency rise correspondingly, it will put heavy pressures on some eurozone countries, perhaps Italy or Spain, to abandon the euro and restore their national currencies.

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# China's New Rural Cooperative Medical Service System

Huang Xiaowu

Along with the realization of economic structural reform, China has achieved great economic development in the last thirty years. The development of its economic base leads accordingly to transformations in the Chinese superstructure. Since some outdated social systems can neither adapt to the economic development nor satisfy the needs of people in the new situation, they must be speedily adjusted. The same is true of the old Chinese rural cooperative medical service system. Since the 1980s, it has lost the possibility of providing essential medical service to most people in extensive rural areas because of the changes in the broad economic system on which it relies. Without effective medical security, peasants who have recently become rich quickly turn impoverished once contracting serious illness. Such phenomena are appearing so frequently that the Chinese government has made great efforts to reconstruct the medical service security system in rural areas in order to protect the peasants' interests. Experiments since 2003 with the new rural cooperative medical service system is one of these efforts. Compared to all kinds of medical service reforms since the 1980s, the new one has won much more approval. The Chinese government is promoting this system in the entire country at present. What is "new" to the new rural cooperative medical service system is contrasted in this paper with the old one established in 1956.

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***China's old rural cooperative medical service system***

Based on the collective economy, the old rural cooperative medical service system in China was maintained mainly by the peasants' funds. Both this and the county, town, and village three-level medical service system composed the basic medical security structure in the countryside. In the poorer economic condition, these systems successfully solved the medical-care problem of the people at a basic level. The average life span of Chinese people has increased to sixty-eight years, which approaches the level in the developed countries, even though our medical and health expenditure was a hundred times lower than theirs.

A report released in 1980 by the World Health Organization and the World Bank states, "The cooperative medical service system practiced in the Chinese country is the only model to resolve the health security problem in the developing countries." It concludes that "the proposal of primary health care is mainly inspired by China. China has developed a successful essential health-care system in its country, whose population covers 80 percent of its total. This system has provided cheap and favorable professional medical service to the peasants and thus can satisfy the essential medical care needs of the majority, which is well appropriate to the developing countries."

As a result of the economic structure reform since the 1980s, however, the original collective economy in the country gradually collapsed. This directly helped lead to the decline of the cooperative medical service system. Meanwhile, because of the marketing of medical care and the transformation of state policy, the coverage of rural cooperative medical service sharply dropped from the highest point of 90 percent in the 1970s to less than 10 percent in the 1980s, and sometimes to the lowest point of 5 percent. This immediately led to the unavailability of medical service to the peasants, especially to those peasants contracting serious illness, who would fall into poverty again because they could not afford rather expensive medical care without effective social security. Since the reform and opening-up period, medical care, education, and housing have become the new "Three Mountains" to ordinary Chinese people, while the situation became more severe for the peasants.

***China's new rural cooperative medical service system***

On a base of a developed economy, the new system aims to reconstruct the rural medical security network in order to make medical service available to the peasants and settle the poverty issue caused by illness. But what is the new system? It is a fundraising system subsidized by the government, paid by the individual, supported by the collective, and managed by the counties. Mainly organized and promoted by the government and with overall consideration for serious patients, its focus lies in settling the poverty issue caused by serious illness. Although it raises money from various channels, it can obtain special support from the central and local financial departments annually. In the past, the financial departments at different levels took no responsibility for raising money for the cooperative medical service, whose main resources are individual contribution and collective subsidies from villages. But now, the exact proportion of new system is 1:1:1. When the new system was experimented with in 2003, the central financial government, the local government, and the individual peasant each had to contribute 10 yuan. But in the following years, both the central and local governments enhanced their subsidies. From 2006, the contribution of the central government for each participant has been increased to 20 yuan, and the inputs of local governments have also been raised according to their own financial conditions.

In contrast to the past, the central and local governments play a leading role both in contributing cooperative medical service funds and in managing and regulating funds. The new rural cooperative medical service is a peasants' mutual-aid system organized, guided, and supported by the government, while the old one was merely organized by the rural communities themselves. The new system is organized and managed by separate counties, which have the right to adjust it to their own specific conditions, and thereby the local governments have some autonomy in the operation. We can take Jiangyin, a county in Jiangsu province, as an example. In 2007, the total funds of 230 yuan per participant consisted of 20 yuan subsidized by the central government, 150 yuan by the county and town governments, and 60 yuan contributed by the individual. The peasants' hospitalization and medical-treatment expenses can be

reimbursed with 300 yuan as its starting point. As the reimbursement rates increase as the expenses rise: 75 percent for expenses between 301 and 5,000 yuan, 80 percent for 5,001 to 10,000 yuan, 85 percent for 10,001 to 30,000 yuan, and 90 percent for expenses above 30,000 yuan. Ordinarily, the annual reimbursement cannot exceed 80,000 yuan for each case. In addition, every family in Jianguyin owns a medical-care card used for seeing a doctor in the prescribed hospital of this county and for obtaining prescribed drugs from any pharmacy there. Aided by its rapidly developed economy, the government of Jianguyin can put a large amount of funds into the rural medical service reconstruction, so that its practice of the new medical service system is taking a leading position in China.

### ***The problem and the prospect***

On 22–23 January 2007, a national conference on new rural cooperative medical service work was held in Xi'an, Shanxi province. Wu Yi, the vice premier of the Chinese State Council in charge of the new medical service system, declared that Chinese economy has developed to such a new period that its industry can repay the agricultural economy and the city can support the countryside. She regarded the system as an organic part of the reconstruction of the new Chinese countryside and the rebuilding of the essential medical security system indicates that the Chinese government is playing an increasingly important role in the new countryside's development. She expected that China will popularize this system throughout the country in 2007 and help it cover more than 80 percent of the areas in 2010.

The new system has in a way relieved the medical-care pressure on the peasants, especially the tension of poverty caused by serious illness, but it cannot completely solve various problems in the rural medical service. As we know, even a minor disease such as a cold may cost several hundred yuan, while the peasants' lower income cannot match the increasing cost of medical expenses. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of providing cheap and good medical service to the ordinary people, China still has a long way to go.

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# The Formation of Socialist Consciousness

**Kathleen Densmore**

Sustainable development, particularly for Marxists, connotes complex relationships between social and environmental issues. The ability to deal with these issues requires an exploration of the role and importance of socialist consciousness in sustaining the environment under a given socioeconomic system.

The human race is the most important treasure in the world. And yet historically, most of humanity has developed under conditions of antagonistic social classes, under social relations based on exploitation. These conditions have encouraged human qualities that are less than propitious for building and strengthening socialism: heightened individualism, hyperconsumerism, egotism, apathy, alienation, greed, and cynicism. Many bourgeois thinkers and counterrevolutionaries argue that such traits are innate, that we cannot and should not expect anything more from people. This however is a belief, not a conclusion based on science. It is similar to the belief that “ability” and “intelligence” are discrete, quantifiable, genetically based individual traits that have little to do with differences in history, culture, and environment. Yet to the contrary, there is much scientific evidence that disputes the notion that individuals have a fixed, immutable, essence. Human beings are subject to changes, including changes related to social context. Human potential is thus largely an unknown, as is the potential of the social environment to condition behavior.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the precise impact of the environment on human development, and acknowledging the

importance of numerous contextual specificities, the important point for understanding why individuals think and act the way they do, as Marx, Lenin, and others—for example, Che and Freire—have demonstrated, is that individual thought and experience are best understood by using an objective economic analysis and historical materialist view of consciousness that does not separate the individual from social context.

The current complex and contradictory context in many developing countries reflects a fierce ideological struggle between two fundamentally different worldviews: Marxist-Leninist and bourgeois. These two opposing frameworks compete to influence the consciousness of the majority, their ideas, habits, and points of view, for example about what the main problems are today and how best to resolve them, even criteria for being “happy.” Powerful imperialist forces are dedicated to producing and distributing propaganda promoting selfishness, insatiable desires for material goods, etc. Many of these pressures are sophisticated: promoting ideas that, on the surface, appear progressive, but instead are reframed so as to be reactionary. Dominant contemporary notions of “human rights,” “free” assembly, individual “initiative,” understanding of why certain countries remain poor while others remain rich serve as examples. In China, greater economic prosperity, while lifting many out of poverty and improving the living conditions for increasing numbers of Chinese, has at the same time diversified social interests and produced class contradictions, two phenomena that can easily encourage careerism, opportunism, a lack of solidarity, and weak commitment to building socialism. For example, many urban professionals, making good money, maintain lifestyles that isolate them from the concerns of those who are less privileged, e.g., factory and rural workers, stay-at-home parents, pensioners. Just as it would be a mistake to underestimate the power of capital and its ability to expand—no matter who is in control—it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the negative effects, including ideological, of accelerating economic development.

In order for socialism to be constructed and maintained, individuals who understand the value of cooperation for universal aims, who demonstrate genuine concern for the common good (including

clean air and water, sanitation, and an equitable allocation of natural resources), and solidarity with working people throughout the world are essential. At the same time, the transformation of society into a mature socialist society requires individuals with these perspectives. Revolutionary consciousness is both required and created under socialism. Marx, Engels, and later Lenin demonstrated the relationship between change in social conditions and change in people themselves—through socialist education and socialist practice, guided by scientific socialist theory. Still, it is not uncommon to hear socialists and Marxists argue that ever-expanding economic development will, by itself, result in the establishment of socialist relations of production and therefore socialism. The achievement of socialism is, from this perspective, largely a technical issue. From this viewpoint, revolutionary consciousness, if considered at all, is presumed to result once a certain level of economic development has been attained. The assumption is that if the proper political party is in power, thereby guiding the building of a socialist society, then the destructive contradictions of bourgeois society will be overcome. This perspective also typically maintains that (a) developing consciousness is secondary to expanding the forces of production, and (b) mobilizing people in support of State policies is sufficient for developing socialist consciousness.

History has demonstrated, however, that economic development can continue to evolve and expand, using highly advanced science and technology, without either the establishment of socialist relations of production or socialist consciousness. Even as the material foundation for socialism exists in the United States, for example, socialist ideological development is far from prevalent. It is true that social life creates consciousness and not the reverse. It is also true that we cannot *will* social relations of production into being. The notion that socialist consciousness automatically results from advances in production, however, is mistaken. New relations of production create only the possibility, not the inevitability, of socialist consciousness.

A transition from capitalism to socialism occurs intentionally, that is, by people who understand what they are creating and why. People with particular perspectives, habits, customs, beliefs,

criteria, attitudes, relationships with others—in addition to specific abilities and knowledge—are critical in order for socialism to advance. In *What Is to Be Done*, Lenin addressed how the working class becomes conscious as a class, for itself. Such understanding was necessary for him in order to argue and develop revolutionary strategy. Lenin argued that the widespread development of revolutionary, scientific consciousness was necessary in order to transform the existing socioeconomic system into one that functioned in the interests of the majority of the population, enabling individuals to fully realize their human potential. While attaining socialist consciousness is a long-term process, postponing systematic attention to this process until a certain level of economic development has been attained undermines the ability of the masses to (learn to) plan and manage society in all its aspects. It also fails to increase the number of individuals who identify with socialist aims. Thus while developing the economy is essential to building socialism, those who treat economic growth as the sole objective of socialism via developing productive forces fail to grasp the essential role of ideology in the class struggle and its critical importance during all stages of economic development and social transformation.

Socialist transformation implies not only a society where political power rests in the hands of working people but also the maintenance and constant strengthening of socialist gains. Securing socialist gains and continuing to realize further gains can only be a difficult, lengthy, contradictory, and often dangerous effort. History has demonstrated as much. New policies, laws, institutions, and organizations are continually subjected to the influences of new (and old) bourgeois, revisionist, and other opposing forces. This effort requires the dictatorship of the working people, meaning that social, economic, and political systems ensure that the interests of the vast majority of a population are setting and guiding policies.

While the Communist Party aims to represent the interests of the working class and to be the primary vehicle that enables and supports the working class to fulfill its political functions, at the same time, the workers' dictatorship is not something that can be carried out by any group other than the working class itself. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a dynamic process effectively exercised by



the working class. Indeed, a Marxist view of democracy is when the vast majority of the population exercises state power of itself and for itself, assuming its role and rights in directing and managing society. Structuring broad popular participation into political, economic, cultural, and social decision-making at local, regional, and national levels of society is essential to ensure that the State indeed functions in the interests of the majority of ordinary people. State power therefore poses the question of participation. Popular struggles around concrete issues, especially when guided by Communists and their allies, also help ensure that the interests of the majority are leading by confronting abuses of power and by demanding justice. Grassroots self-organization, promoting the interests of the working classes, where leaders are held accountable to those common aims, help raise consciousness, may result in real victories, and can help lay the groundwork for broader, long-lasting changes. The issue is also how to get ever closer to the popular masses, in order to understand their issues, their dreams, their forms of resistance, and to work with them towards common goals. The ideological battle is won in practical work, not at the level of ideas.

The learning that takes place in our day-to-day lives through practical struggles, for example, against corruption or against discrimination, develops social consciousness that advances the workers' dictatorship. Revolutionary ideological development often best begins on the basis of people's resistance to injustices. It is important to acknowledge that injustices can and do occur during the transitional period, despite the State's attempts to eliminate them. Clearly, it is important to distinguish between those who exploit existing problems in order to mobilize criticism against the State (counterrevolutionaries) and ordinary people with legitimate grievances. The content and form of the latter can, when informed by Marxist methodology, serve as a means of learning from experience while simultaneously learning to make criticism conscious and constructive, thereby minimizing destructive social unrest and engaging people in decision-making processes pertinent to those issues that affect their lives.

Creating mechanisms and forums through which people can discuss and debate issues implicit in the problems they are currently

experiencing as well as involving them in the determination of resolutions to their problems encourages conscious participation rather than sheer criticism. This also stands in contrast to forums or mechanisms during times of dispute where the goal is solely to generate participation in the implementation of a predetermined program.

It is important for people to contribute to socialist ideology and the corresponding policies and programs and not simply “receive” them. At the same time, the better people understand existing conditions, the more effectively they can confront the diverse array of problems that do and will exist. In this way people can come to better understand the dimensions of any particular problem that go beyond direct experience. The goal is to continually deepen and broaden peoples’ knowledge, imagination, and skills. Thus, in order for the dictatorship of the working class to be a reality, the masses must be able to lead and rule. This means using Marxism-Leninism in a practical and systematic way, not spontaneously or erratically. The application of Marxist methodology must become part of day-to-day practice in appraising and addressing social phenomena.

As Lenin explained,

The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events, to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population (V. I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done*; in vol. 5 of *Collected Works* [Moscow: Progress Press, 1973], 412).

Clearly, a purposeful, systematic, and ongoing process of education, broadly defined, is necessary in order to achieve advanced ideological development. Thus the role of the subjective, of consciousness, of motivations, of initiative, of ideology, of explicitly communist education, is of prime importance in the class struggle and in progressing towards socialism.

The realities of the present moment suggest that there is a pressing need for not only party members but also people generally, and

in particular the new generations, to understand Marx's method as a mode of concrete social and historical explanation, as opposed, for example, to reducing Marxism to a historically oriented social theory. Marx's concept of the free development of every single individual depends upon individuals being able to ask serious questions, to apply theory and to contrast competing explanations for contemporary problems.

The study of theory without learning how best to apply it will not build socialism. Being able to quote or recite passages from classic works does not mean that one can apply Marxist methodology, or content, to contemporary problems. "Having faith that the classics hold answers to contemporary problems does not further Marxism, socialism, or scientific development." Individuals, organizations, and institutions must be able to *use* theory, creatively, to understand and reconstruct the world. Scientific development itself implies (and demands) the application of theory.

Younger generations must be politically and ideologically prepared for the many situations in which they find themselves, including their work and their workplace, viewing films, listening to music, reading literature, their relationships with others, including nonsocialists. The challenges of the twenty-first century require that young and old understand the nature of the problems they are facing, the roots of the problems they are encountering. Party leaders and intellectuals at all levels must deepen their understanding of opportunism and revisionism and understand the importance of the analysis of everyday life. In their day-to-day life, ordinary people must see that the common goal is for the wealth they create to be used primarily to satisfy human needs, not to profit others. Ideology is a concrete thing. Its power resides in the fact that it is contained within our everyday activities.

Education in any and all societies intends to influence both thinking and social behavior; it cannot be a neutral endeavor. Education aims to imbue others with particular qualities and instill a particular world outlook, even guidelines for human conduct. Progressive pedagogues have long understood that new knowledge is best taught by connecting it to knowledge or experience that students already possess. Similarly, socioeconomic development

requires building strategically on current conditions. The same holds true for ideological work. In a society with a preponderance of capitalist relations of production, socialist consciousness must be acquired in the midst of an opposing mentality. It has to transform an existing ideological structure and further, be accomplished by people who may be products of another kind of society or, who, for other reasons, possess many of those traits. Ideological limits therefore typically exist among teachers and leaders as well within pupils. For these as well as other reasons, a process of education, reeducation and self-education will be a long-term undertaking. The customs and habits people have acquired over time are not easily changed. Marx once said, "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (*The Eighteenth Braumaire of Louis Bonaparte*; in vol. 11 of MECW [New York: International Publishers, 1979]. 103).

***Development for the people means development  
for the environment***

Marxists understand that the achievement of mature socialist relations of production is a basic condition for pursuing and securing the maximum satisfaction of individual and society's needs. Environmental and health-related issues have not, however, typically been incorporated into our understandings of socialist relations of production. Yet by "constructing" socialism we mean development that will not undermine its possibilities to continue. The transition to an ongoing, revolutionary socialist transformation of society in the twenty-first century, therefore requires development that does not harm the environment. The most severe impacts of climate change, of environmental disasters, and of waste primarily affect the most vulnerable and threaten the quality of life and possibilities for economic development for all people everywhere.

Some Marxists seem to have lost sight of the fact that the aim of socialist relations of production for Marx and Engels was not the unlimited expansion of production. Rather, the aim was to produce goods and services to satisfy human needs, giving people free time to develop their potentialities *and* to discuss, organize, and manage social and economic life. Raising living standards to meet the basic

needs of all people is necessary, but this is not the goal of socialism; states of any character must, to some extent, improve living conditions in order to maintain legitimacy among the populace. While remaining open to different possible forms of transition to socialism, we must be clear on the fundamental goal of transformation: that working people become the collective owners of the means of production; that labor becomes a natural need of human beings, not simply a means to buy and sell goods, and that the entire production system be transformed as well as the political and educational system so that the whole of society is informed and participating democratically (the meaning of which I discussed above) in the rational organization of economic, environmental, and social life.

Notably, the issue of energy itself (e.g., arguments for replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources) is forcing many people to rethink current productive methods and their congruence with existing social institutions, environmental “rights,” how related decisions are and should be made, what should and should not be produced, how much should be invested in social services such as public transportation, and what are the best uses of particular parcels of land.

In China, economic development has been aimed at modernizing its productive forces as quickly as possible with the expectation that the Chinese people will acquire the technology and the technical skills to place them on par with the advanced capitalist countries. This has been not only an understandable but admirable pursuit. Since China launched its economic reforms in the late 1970s, it has witnessed remarkable improvements in its industrial competitiveness. Yet while there is near universal recognition that China’s spectacular economic growth in recent decades has lifted many out of poverty, it has also brought growing social inequality and dangerous environmental problems such as air, water, and soil pollution; water scarcity; and land degradation. Further, it is commonly reported that Chinese people at the local level experience difficulties in addressing their environmentally related grievances. If such reports are accurate, current “development” appears, at least in some areas, to be jeopardizing the basic needs and health of both the Chinese people and the environment.

China, of course, is not the only country in the world at a critical juncture facing the tension between imperatives for upgraded economic growth and development on the one hand and ecological sustainability on the other. When Communists are working towards socialism, this juncture becomes even more complicated. The issues involved are both conceptual and political. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that under capitalism there is much discussion about and steps being taken towards developing alternative energy sources, some of which may be cleaner than fossil fuels. Further, one of the most difficult yet important tasks for socialism in the twenty-first century is to challenge the artificially cultivated consumerist “needs” that people have been manipulated into perceiving as real. This both wastes resources and deters us from identifying and pursuing our full development as individual human beings and as a society.

Given the nexus of political, social, and environmental issues, diverse political interests are involved in proposing reforms and solutions. We need solutions informed by socialist consciousness. Because we should not assume that this consciousness always predominates, discussion and debate on such matters are critical. At the same time, this discussion develops peoples’ decision-making capabilities, knowledge, and experience in collective struggle and participatory praxis. Concomitantly, as new political capacities are being developed at all levels of society, new political forms for facilitating truly collective production and investment decision-making must be explored. Priority must be given to developing the sophistication of revolutionary consciousness so that the working masses become the agents of change in the socialist transformation. Last, but perhaps most important, the idea is for each society, as a whole, to decide what specifically all this means, in very specific contexts, and how to achieve it. A socialist state’s power is effective to the degree that it depends on the deep organization and conscious popular participation of the people.

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*San Francisco*

# The Marxian Transformation Problem Revisited

Peter Fleissner

## *Introduction*

Many Marxists understand the transformation problem as the transformation of labor values into prices of production, but more appropriately and by contemporary scholars it is understood as the transformation of one system of relative prices into another where profit rates are equal in all industries of the economy.<sup>1</sup>

My point of view is a more comprehensive one. While I am in accordance with the position that the transformation done by Marx is dealing with two systems of relative prices, I still would like to link it to the realm of value. In my understanding, one could start from a *Gedankenexperiment*, where we create ideal types (Max Weber) of economies controlled by different rules and try to compare them. But to be able to compare different systems, we need a level of comparison where the same entity or indicator is used, and at the same moment there must be some difference between the systems. In the particular case of the transformation problem, the difference can be found in the rules governing the behavior of the enterprises in the economy.

In my opinion, two different types of economies are to be compared. The first one could be imagined as an economy of small commodity producers applying nothing more than their labor power to produce commodities for the market. Their system of relative prices

is such that the individual producers receive a certain amount of currency units proportional to labor time they have spent directly and indirectly to produce the product. If they would receive more revenue from the market, other producers would enter the market and offer additional products for a cheaper price. Only if the prices of products are proportional to the labor time is this economy assumed to be in equilibrium.

The term *proportional* is a crucial one. It allows us to change the units of measurement and to establish a system of relative prices (measured in currency units) instead of labor values (measured in labor time). While in the labor theory of value (volume 1 of *Capital*), the universal unit is abstract labor time spent in the production process (more precisely socially necessary labor time needed for the production of a unit of output on the average), on the observable surface of the economy money represents labor values by a certain amount of currency units proportional to labor spent. If we assume the proportionality of labor values and prices, we are able to apply the Marxian concept of exploitation and profit as appropriation of labor time without compensation (beyond reproduction cost of labor).

The second type of the economy is an ideal type of capitalist economy under perfect competition. The Marxian assumption for such an economy is that the system of relative prices allows the capitalists to gain equal profits relative to the capital they have advanced. Marx believed that there will no longer be any migration capital from one sector to the other because everywhere in the economy the profitability would be the same. He called the prices under this condition “prices of production” (*Produktionspreise*).

### ***Marx’s and Bortkiewicz’s solutions***

Marx solved the transformation problem by starting with an economy of small commodity producers. Their output is priced proportional to the content of labor spent. To approximate a capitalistic price system, he determined first the overall surplus value of the economy, second the value of total capital advanced. The quotient of the two is the average rate of profit of the economy. To end up with capitalist mark-up pricing, he defined the price of one



unit of output by adding the average rate of profit per unit of capital advanced to the cost price of one unit of output. The problem with his solution is that the prices of the inputs of the commodities are different from the prices of the output. In my opinion, this does not create a big difficulty, because if one iterates the Marxian procedure by using output prices in a second round as input prices, determining the rate of profit resulting from the second iteration, fixing the new output prices in the same way as before, after some iterations one ends up at a solution where the prices and the rates of profit of the sectors will remain invariant. In a Leontief type of economy with input-output matrices, one can show that these prices represent the eigenvectors of certain matrices describing the economy, and the possible rate of accumulation is a function of the eigenvalue associated with the eigenvector of relative prices. This solution is identical with the solution found by Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz,<sup>2</sup> who criticized Marx for his “error,” exactly 100 years ago. In my understanding, one can easily correct the Marxian solution of the transformation problem by applying his own method iteratively.

In the social sciences—unlike in the natural sciences—it is not possible in practice in most cases to get rid of the side conditions of economies or specific societies. Therefore the only possibility available to us is to carry out abstraction on the level of thought. Marx has taught us that abstract human labor is the essence of the value of commodities. Volume 1 of *Capital* is full of arguments about that. But reality consists of more than essence only. It shows us a surface—the level of appearance—that we can investigate empirically. The full research process is not completed by understanding the essence. It needs a step-by-step enrichment of the abstract essence up to the surface of observable appearance. Essence is only a skeleton, while the visible surface is carrying flesh and skin. Theory allows us to look through the surface and to identify main governing principles behind it, but to understand observable phenomena thoroughly, we have to add nonessential but necessary features.

What has this excursion to do with the transformation problem? In my understanding, Marxian analysis is located on the level of the essence, and rightly so. But if we want to apply it to actually existing economies empirically, we also have to add some nonessentials.

And here we can include marginalist theories of supply and demand, frequently connected with the notions of utility and marginal utility. This enrichment of the essence is necessary to end up on a level closer to empirical reality. Nevertheless, even with this extension we are far away from the surface we actually can see. In this paper we still do not include financial markets; we neglect the function of credits; we do not cover monopolistic power, etc. Much additional work can be done to enrich the essence for a more comprehensive reconstruction of the surface and by that to complete the cycle from surface down to essence and back to surface again.

In an extended version of this paper I present only one additional feature to Marx's essence of labor values by example: changes in the demand of physical goods caused by price variations. Before the transformation, the system of relative prices is proportional to labor values. After the transformation, the relative prices represent a competitive price system in which profit rates are equalized, and simultaneously effects on the demand of consumer goods will be determined. It is interesting to note that in the case of the "more concrete" problem not only one but two solutions of the transformation problem exist. Both can be reached also by iterative processes starting from prices proportionate to labor values.

### ***Final remarks***

In my perspective, the above proposal allows for more flexibility and widens the scope of solutions of the transformation problem traditionally covered. Although starting from a position of equilibrium, it gives room for the variation not only of prices but simultaneously also of volumes of commodities produced. Realistically, it accepts explicitly the influence of supply and demand—although the theoretical background of utility theory is not necessarily needed.

It keeps up the Marxian axiom that market prices are nothing else than modified labor values. One can still identify surplus value as source for profits, and necessary labor time corresponding to wages. The concept of exploitation can be still applied in the realm of competitive prices.

What is different from the Marxian approach then? Although theoretically clearly described by Marx (see, for example, chapter 3 of volume 1 of *Capital*) that a commodity has to do a somersault

(Purzelbaum) to the market and that labor value needs the market to transform itself from individual into social labor, he did not include the effects of supply and demand in his numerical examples. In my opinion, the reason for this was that he wanted to bring to the attention of the reader more basic and essential features of the capitalist economy than mechanisms of the surface.

But if we allow for the simultaneous determination of volumes and prices, we are able to create a more realistic model of observable processes. A second effect comes to the fore: We have shown that more than one solution of the “more concrete” transformation problem is possible. If we assume that transformation was an actual process in history, in my understanding this property is very much in agreement with another philosophical postulate, that the historical process is an open one and is not completely predetermined.

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#### NOTES

1. For a recent review of the transformation problem, see Ormazaba 2004; for multilevel analysis, see Fleissner 1993.

2. Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz has a three-part paper on this issue (1906–1907). For an English translation, see Bortkiewicz 1949.

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# Can a Socialist Enterprise Survive in a Market Economy?

**Richard Fletcher**

This paper first summarizes the growth of the principles governing socialist enterprises within the traditional market economy. It then reviews the application of the market mechanism in determining prices in capitalist and planned economies and finally suggests guidelines for the development of the socialist market economy with the socialist enterprise as its basic unit.

The word *socialist* first appeared in England (perhaps some two years earlier in France) in the literature of the followers of Robert Owen, in about 1833 (Podmore 1923).

Owen (b. Newtown, Wales, 1771) came from a family of small farmers and tradesmen.<sup>1</sup> He left school at the age of ten and at nineteen he took a job with a cotton mill in Manchester, England, where he immediately showed such natural technical and organizing ability that by the age of twenty-three he had been appointed manager and partner in what became one of the most advanced and successful mills of his age.

In 1800 he took over management of the much larger New Lanark mills near Glasgow, Scotland, owned by David Dale—whose daughter he married—and other partners, who were impressed by Owen's record at Manchester. Here he began to give effect to the educational and philanthropic ideas for which he later became famous throughout Europe. He voluntarily operated a ten-hour day, paid above average wages, and kept up such payments

when the works were forced to close for several months. He provided free medical attention for workers and their families, free education for the factory children, a library and assembly rooms, and equal treatment for women.

What was remarkable at the time was that the factory was highly profitable. Through the use of up-to-date machinery and meticulous organization, in spite of the social benefits paid to workers, Owen was able to keep ahead of his competitors and still pay to the partners a profit well above the 5-percent rate normally regarded as a satisfactory return on industrial investment.

Owen's partners, like most owners of capital, were unhappy with the social payments, which they saw as deductions from profits; he therefore set about finding other partners who supported his ideas of a fixed return on capital with a view to purchasing New Lanark from its owners. This he succeeded in doing in 1813 after a long campaign of public agitation in support of his views to raise the necessary funds.

The Third Deed of Partnership which Owen persuaded his fellow investors to sign is worth quoting, because it contains the essential conditions for a noncapitalist enterprise:

All profits made in the concern beyond five per cent per annum on the capital invested shall be laid aside for the benefit of the workers and of the community at large.

The period following the Napoleonic Wars in Britain saw great poverty and destitution as rural workers left the land under pressure from enclosure and agricultural improvement and migrated to the overcrowded cities in search of work, which was generally in short supply. To some extent the situation was similar to that in China today. In the resultant agitation, Owen's ideas were widely propagated and taken up by groups of workers who set up many different forms of self-help organizations, including labor exchanges where workers exchanged goods at their labor value, producer and consumer cooperatives, and friendly and burial societies. Owen himself led a successful campaign for the first Factory Act—limiting the use of child labor—adopted by Parliament in 1819, thus bringing the state into the regulation of industry.

Many of the more utopian Owenite ventures failed, and working-class action was largely absorbed into the great Chartist Movement of the 1830s and 40s. This aimed to achieve social progress through political representation of the working class in Parliament. But the Owenite ideas took root in the retail trade, where there was strong demand by working-class people for unadulterated goods at reasonable prices, away from the control of the company shops run by manufacturers.

Working-class mutual savings institutions also prospered, giving better terms because they were free of shareholders to whom profits were paid.

The first cooperative store run on mutual lines to succeed on a permanent basis was the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers of 1844, whose founding principles provided the basis for cooperative organization throughout the world to the present day.

The Rochdale Principles included the following points:

- Open membership.
- Control by the members on the basis of one person one vote—not in proportion to capital owned.
- Distribution of surplus (profits) in proportion to trade or other involvement—not in proportion to capital.
- Fixed and limited interest paid on capital subscribed by the members.
- Promotion of education and other social objectives from the residual surplus after providing for re-investment.

These principles, which harked back to Owen's experience at New Lanark, provided the basic constitution for a noncapitalist mutual enterprise or cooperative—and were immediately successful. Within a few years, there were cooperative stores in most towns of any size in the UK; by the 1860s these stores had come together to form federal manufacturing and wholesaling societies, which rapidly expanded to include major factory and warehousing estates, plantations and farms spread world-wide, a major shipping company, and an important role in building the Manchester Ship Canal.

By the end of the nineteenth century the "Coops" had established a major presence in the British economy—adding a bank,

insurance company, and building society to their holdings— and the Rochdale Principles had spread across the world, to be endorsed virtually unchanged by the International Cooperative Alliance, now representing 800 million cooperators around the world.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Marx and Engels***

Marx and Engels, who lived through this latter period, far from dismissing Owen as an impractical utopian, on many occasions gave credit to his pioneering work.

Addressing the International Working Men's Association in London in 1864 Marx said:

In England, the seeds of the co-operative system were sown by Robert Owen; the working men's experiments tried on the Continent were, in fact, the practical upshot of the theories, not invented, but loudly proclaimed, in 1848. . . .

. . . To save the industrious masses, co-operative labour ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means (1985, 11–12)

This was perhaps as near as Marx came to describing what a socialist society would be like.

Far from decrying cooperatives, Marx was implying that the workers needed to take state power at the national level before they could establish the cooperative commonwealth. Engels was equally complimentary towards Owen's ideas (1975, 214–15, 223–28). The question that neither of them appears to have asked was: How can these noncapitalist working-class enterprises, organized on strictly collective principles, manage to survive and grow within a hostile market economy?

### ***The market***

The unfettered market economies of the time generally led to the worst forms of exploitation and destitution, in a way that can still be seen in vast areas of Latin America, Asia, and Africa today. This did not necessarily mean, however, that socialist enterprises could not flourish inside a market economy, even though it was

politically hostile, as is shown by successful survival of the cooperatives and mutuals to the present day.

As Owen showed his fellow manufacturers, it was possible to run a profitable enterprise in a market economy without exploiting the workers. In fact it was often the discipline of the market, solving the problem of determining prices while encouraging entrepreneurial talent and wise investment, that contributed to their success.

But neither Marx nor Engels appeared to believe that the market could ever play a useful role under socialism. Some believe that this lacuna on their part was an important factor in the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, depriving it of a simple means of determining prices and allocating resources to meet consumer needs.<sup>3</sup>

Had the movement to establish “socialism with a human face” in Czechoslovakia and other parts of Eastern Europe in the 1960s and 70s been allowed to flourish, it is possible that a form of harmonious socialism might have survived to the present day.

Under pressure from below, through universal franchise and trade-union action, the advanced capitalist market economies have been considerably tamed since the time of Marx and Engels. Trade-union rights, health and safety at work, free education and healthcare, rent control of housing, a minimum wage (currently about \$10 per hour in the UK), and many other reforms have been enacted. To pay for all this social provision, top rates of income tax can reach 40 or 50 percent. Sweden, one of the most successful capitalist states with the highest standard of living, is also the most highly taxed. It has managed to direct some 50 percent of its economic activity to social expenditure while still maintaining a capitalist market economy for goods and services (it also has a strong cooperative sector). Such high tax rates are constantly under attack from businessmen, but so far have been largely maintained by majority electoral pressure.

These reflections suggest that in a modern state responding to the pressures of its population, key social functions will be provided by public agencies—whether local, national or mutual—largely outside the market, leaving the provision of other goods



and services to a market sector, regulated and taxed to fund the social sector.

Society has choices, I argue here: the market sector can be either socialist or capitalist, depending on the legally established constitutions (rules or statutes, often known as articles of association) of enterprises. If those constitutions establish the typical joint stock company as exemplified in the UK Companies Acts, then both the enterprises and the economy will be capitalist—that is, a small number of individuals will soon acquire large capital holdings, as can be seen with the Russian oligarchs. Such an arrangement cannot be called a socialist market economy, even if established in a planned economy; rather it is a capitalist market economy allied to a probably dwindling state sector. The dynamism of capitalism, as Marx well knew, is such that once given its head it will be very difficult to control. After all, “money is power” and international capital has created a *nomenklatura* more powerful than that of the former Soviet Union. A socialist market economy requires that enterprises follow a socialist constitution, as set out, for example, in the UK’s “Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital” or Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, laws that are based on the Rochdale Principles. This will ensure that individuals cannot acquire ownership or control of a company’s capital, and that capital will be hired for the service of labor and not vice versa. Diffusion of power among enterprise members means that enterprises will be much less antagonistic toward state intervention and the raising of taxes because the members will all benefit from services provided by the state.

Article 1 of the Company Law of the People’s Republic of China (1993–99) calls for development of the socialist market economy. Articles 4, 33, 106, 177, and 195, however, make clear that the company is under the ownership and control of its investors, who have sole rights to its profits, and to residual assets on winding up. Such companies will not be socialist, nor will they contribute to a socialist market economy. They could, however, be brought under control by, for example, the requirement that ordinary shares be converted into preference shares or loan stock once a company reaches a certain size—thus giving entrepreneurs

fair payment for their efforts while providing a mutual future for the company.

### **Conclusion**

This paper shows that there has developed within the world market a form of economic organization in which capital is owned collectively and controlled mutually. It is suggested that they form a better basis for a socialist market economy than the joint stock company based on private capital.

*London*

### **NOTES**

1. The account of Owen's life is taken from Podmore 1923.
2. Data from International Co-operative Alliance, <http://www.ica.coop/ica>.
3. See works of Ota Sik, Oskar Lange, and successors on market economies under socialism.

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# **From Sea to Shining Sea: The Degradation of Social Welfare under Neoliberalism in the United States**

**Eddie J. Girdner**

## ***Introduction***

The United States is recognized as the wealthiest country on earth. With a reasonable degree of social welfare, its citizens should be exceptionally well off. This is only true to a relative degree and in the last thirty years inequality has been growing worse. This contradiction is a normal consequence of the dialectics of the capitalist system.

Under neoliberalism during the last thirty years, the hard-won gains of the working class in the United States have been badly eroded, degrading social welfare for the great majority of people. On the face of it, there is no objective reason why the working class in the United States should be so poor. The United States has so far spent over \$500 billion on the war in Iraq, which has completely failed in its stated goals, and no end is in sight. The United States has resources to provide adequate social welfare to everyone, yet this is not the case.

Since the 1970s, the working class in the United States has been under attack, and many gains made by the working class historically have been rolled back. People are being prepared for a much more difficult future with the enormous triple deficits

existing today: the budget deficit, the trade deficit and the current account deficit. Along with the push for more imperialist ventures, emerge the further rolling back of social welfare, the threat of loss of social security and pensions, and the further weakening and privatization of the educational system.

Private capital is gaining ever-greater control over the lives of people, with the government primarily serving the needs of capital. The government under neoliberalism is not being hollowed out, as is often said, but enlarged to serve capital, rather than the people. When capital rules, it is the antithesis of real democracy.

### *The welfare crisis in the United States*

The United States has the most regressive system of welfare among developed nations, and the system is becoming more punitive. Today the United States lacks a national health-care policy, the universal right to health care, and a comprehensive family policy. Welfare reform, beginning with the Clinton administration, has resulted in cuts in welfare and those receiving any kind of help are today under constant surveillance.

In 1965, the United States was ranked twenty-first out of twenty-two Western nations in welfare expenditures. During the 1970s, about 14 percent of the federal budget was spent on welfare compared to 24 percent for other nations in the same category. But by 1995, the United States was spending only half that of other comparable nations, and the United States spent the least of ten comparable developed nations. Welfare recipients are being forced into menial work, while most training and educational programs have been cut. More people are being sent to prison. About 12 percent of African Americans age twenty to thirty-four are in prison. The effect has been even more severe on women; the number of women in United States prisons tripled between 1985 and 1997. The United States has ten times the number of women in prison as Spain, England, France, Scotland, Germany, and England combined. "Workfare" created a new stratum of "indentured" workers who have lost previous welfare rights and have been deprived of the basic rights of workers.

Currently, some forty-two million people in the United States have no medical insurance at all. States are being given more

freedom to put caps on health benefits to the elderly, poor, and disabled. States can delegate welfare programs to religious groups, the twin aspects of “privatization and moralization.”

***The neoliberal economy in the United States today (macro factors)***

In the 1960s, capitalism in the United States faced growing competition from abroad. The reaction of capital was to attack workers’ rights, pursue tax cuts and deregulations, and increase government subsidies to large companies. The major effect was to shift wealth upwards. Between 1970 and 2003, per capita income doubled, but there was far more inequality. By 2002, some 80 percent of workers were worse off than in 1970. The top ten corporate CEOs were getting about 49 times the wages of the average worker in 1970. By 2000, this trend increased top CEO salaries to some 2,173 times the average wage.

The rich have been inordinately successful in rolling back Keynesianism since the 1970s. William Simon, who later became the Secretary of the Treasury, wrote that the financial and business class had to take back the power and privileges which it lost in the Great Depression and the New Deal. This assault was carried out with a vengeance. The political system in the United States is a “government of the rich that has acted in the interests of the rich.” Almost all money for political campaigns in the United States is provided by some 100,000 individuals.

Big corporations found enormous advantages over the working class as they steamrolled their agenda. They could conceal earnings in offshore tax havens, collect large subsidies for corporate jets, and pay their executives enormous salaries. Corporate tax rates decreased from 25 percent of federal taxes in the 1950s to only 6 percent in 2002. In 2003, some 46 companies paid zero taxes and many firms received tax rebates. Wall Street CEOs make tens of millions of dollars a year in salaries and benefits. When it comes to tax cuts, 58 percent of the benefit goes to the rich, while 78 percent of the people get no tax cut at all. The rich have become inordinately richer over the last half century, and this trend has accelerated. From 1950 to 1970, for every \$1 gain of the

bottom 90 percent of the population, the top 0.01 percent gained \$162. Between 1990 and 2003, for every \$1 gain by the bottom 90 percent of the population, the top 0.01 percent gained \$18,000.

U.S. workers worked 20 percent longer than in most advanced economies, while seeing a decline in their benefits, pensions, health care, quality of public education, and the services of other public institutions. There were higher fees for services, with banks collecting \$38 billion in service charges. While corporate profits grew, there were higher prices for health care, energy, transportation, food and education. No effective job protection is provided for workers. Americans do not have enough savings for financial setbacks, and wages have not kept up with prices. Only 18 percent of families have saved three months or more of income. While wages are flat, household debt has reached a record 126 percent of disposable income. The greatest share in history of the surplus extracted from workers goes to profits and the least to wages. By 2000, the richest 0.01 percent (13,400 people) had 3.06 percent of the income, equivalent to the poorest 25 percent of all households. Wealth became even more concentrated, with the top one percent of the population having 40 percent of the financial wealth in the United States and the bottom 80 percent having only 16.5 percent. The top one percent had four times as much financial wealth as the bottom 80 percent. Between 1983 and 2001, the top one percent of the population gained 28 percent of the rise in national income, 33 percent of the gain in wealth, and 52 percent of the gain in financial wealth. The middle classes have clearly suffered: real earnings of college graduates fell by 5 percent between 2000 and 2004.

### *The working class*

Neoliberalism has had a traumatic impact upon workers. Workers are forced into part-time contingent jobs or forced to work as “independent contractors,” accepting low wages, long hours, and miserable working conditions. In terms of a living wage, the actual poverty threshold should be double the official one, which would put 88 million people in the category of being under the poverty line. Income distribution in the United States has become much

more unequal, with the richest one percent getting 38.4 percent of the income (about the same as in 1925). Meanwhile, the poorest 20 percent receive 0.8 percent of the income.

Outstanding consumer debt as a percentage of consumer disposable income has increased greatly from 62 percent in 1975 to 127 percent in 2005. The average household carried \$5000 in credit-card debt in 2005. The unpaid balance on credit cards is some \$839 billion. This has opened up the way for an army of debt collectors, involving at least five hundred companies.

Necessary job growth has not happened, and by 2004 the Bush administration had caused the loss of 2.3 million jobs. This was the first time in eleven recessions that there had been no full recovery after thirty-one months. One must go back to 1939 to find a similar pattern. It was the first time since Herbert Hoover that there were actually fewer jobs after a four-year presidency, with 4.6 million missing jobs by 2003. This situation is not due to the normal business cycle but to “deeper structural changes.”

In this new “global labor arbitrage,” jobs can be off-shored to countries such as Mexico and India to the tune of 300,000 to 600,000 jobs a year. This saved U.S. corporations some \$11 billion in 2001. China too is a leading player, with Chinese exports reaching \$121 billion in 1994 and \$365 billion in 2003.

### ***Conclusion***

As John Hobson predicted, underconsumption among the poor and overaccumulation among the rich is driving imperialism. Hobson noted that as the power of rentiers grows, taxation becomes more regressive. This “rentier shift” toward finance capital has produced an upward shift of income and drives investment abroad. Given the contradictions of mature capitalism, even the attack we have seen upon the U.S. working class cannot set things right and it becomes necessary for capitalism to control as much of global production as possible. Capitalists are driven to destroy their own societies in order to save the capitalist system.

Imperialism is serving the interests of the U.S. ruling class. Internally, increasing inequality and concentration of income at the top contribute to a low rate of savings. This necessitates

foreign borrowing from China and Japan. Spending in recent years has largely been by “asset inflation” of real estate holdings. With “imperial overstretch,” the United States is following previous empires down the road to decline. The state is used to increase rents for the ruling class in state handouts, protection of corporate corruption, and regressive tax policies. The United States comes in flat last in terms of critical measures of social well-being among developed countries. This can only be reversed if the working class seizes power and abolishes capitalism. The working class in the United States should wake up and use all the tools of democracy in its possession to fight for its interests.

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# On G7/G8 Global Governance

Hermann Kopp

## *International power and the Group of Eight: Four theses*

1. More than ever before, the prospects of national economies depend on internationally set conditions. Hence whoever has the power to formulate these conditions and to enforce them is of greatest importance.

The sociologist Max Weber defines “power” as a social relationship in which certain individuals have the chance to find obedience by others. This definition seems me to be applicable to relationships among states.

The stronger the economy of a certain society, the bigger and more destructive its armory, the greater the influence of its ideological values—the greater is the political authority of a state or a group of states. Viewed this way, the Group of Eight (G 8), which is to meet in Germany at the end of next week, is the strongest global power on the planet—assuming it has a common political will.

These 8 nations have only 13 percent of the world’s population, but they produce almost two-thirds of the global GDP (gross domestic product) and generate 43 percent of world trade. From the G7-states (the G8 without Russia), come 79 of the 100 largest transnational companies and 8 of the 10 biggest banks. The G8 claims 75 percent of all patents.

Three-quarters of global military spending fall to the G8, and 50 percent to the United States alone! Ideologically and

culturally, the American way of life—Coca Cola, McDonalds, and Hollywood, and the neoliberal ideology for which they stand—spreads all over the world. This ubiquitous formative influence continues, in spite of growing resistance,

2. Two qualifications must be made to my statement that the G8 is the strongest global power, assuming it has a common political will. One of these reservations is a technical one, and one concerns content.

The technical reservation: The G8 is only an informal club; to have its way it needs instruments, institutions of a formal character, that are able to make hard-and-fast decisions.

These institutions are, as far as economic policy is concerned, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and primarily today the World Trade Organization (WTO). All these institutions have a broad membership of states, and the WTO is even based on the principle of “one state, one vote.” All three are, however, clearly dominated for various reasons by the G7/G8, following the direction formulated by the most powerful industrialized countries.

The reservation concerning content: The G8 states are not at all, as we say in Germany, “one heart and one soul.” Differences of opinion and even sharp conflicts among them often arise. This is especially true for the relationship between the G7 states (mainly the USA) and Russia. It is also true (shown not only by the war on Iraq) for the relations among the G7 states.

A look at the history of the G8, however, as well as an analysis of the agenda of the German G8-presidency in 2007, shows us that the G8 (to be more cautious, the G7) shares a common political will at least regarding one crucial aim. That aim is to maintain and perfect a global economic system that primarily serves the interests of transnational corporations and that is based on the subordination and exploitation of the “South.”

To realize this aim, two things are required: first: a collective management of crises of different sorts that might endanger the existing order; and second: the suppression, by political, economic, and military means, of all efforts to replace this order by one better corresponding to the needs especially of the peoples of the developing countries.

The first World Economic Summit, in Rambouillet, France in 1975, already had these two aspects: It dealt first with the monetary problems resulting from the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, and second with the so-called “oil embargo” of 1973, which was understood as an attack on the “right” of the industrialized capitalist countries to free access to “their” resources. “We are determined to ensure the sources of energy which our economies need for their growth,” was the menace of the declaration of Rambouillet.

3. Chancellor Angela Merkel presides over the G8 summit of 2007. Her agenda sticks firmly to this general line. Almost every item on it gives evidence for this. I can deal with only one point here: the demand for an “avowal” of “free markets and free trade, of free capital movement as an important basis for prosperity.”

The free-trade principle is a core element of the neoliberal ideology; it has become the guiding principle of the World Trade Organization, founded in 1994 under the decisive influence of the G7 states.

The sort of prosperity fostered by the demand for complete freedom of capital movement is a very one-sided one: it is the prosperity of the strongest protagonists in the “free market,” transnational corporations, almost all from the developed capitalist countries. (No wonder that Merkel’s agenda, in this and other points, is heavily supported by a Joint Statement of the G8 Business Organizations.)

The experiences of successfully industrialized countries show something quite different: all of them have passed through a period during which the state protected the domestic industry against foreign competition. The United States, for instance, until 1945 imposed on its imports tariffs that were usually around 40 percent; the average duty on all imports was never below 25 percent. And in addition, domestic industry was then protected by far higher costs of transport than exist today.

Certainly a state-run regulation of foreign trade alone is no guarantee for successful industrialization; other measures must also be taken: incentives for investment in certain branches, selective taxation, state credits, control of exchange rates, provision of the necessary infrastructure, research policy, and so on.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) writes in its Human Development Report 2005:

It is difficult to find examples of sectors competing successfully in world markets without active state involvement. Many of the policy measures that underpinned East Asian industrial development are now prohibited by WTO rules.

On the other hand, much in the “free-trade, free-capital flow” argumentation of the industrialized countries is pure cant. These countries hinder the export of developing countries in many ways, even if their tariff regulations are formally nondiscriminating, as requested by the most-favored-nation clause of the WTO.

The Trade and Development Report 2006 states:

Applied tariffs on agricultural products and labour-intensive manufactures . . . are higher than those on non-labour-intensive manufactures.

Overall, developed countries apply higher average tariffs to developing countries’ products than to those from other developed countries, signifying that there is a bias against export opportunities for developing countries.

Between 1994 and 2005, developed countries reduced weighted average tariffs on their imports from other developed countries by more than on their imports from developing countries. This difference in tariff reductions is especially significant for agricultural products and labour-intensive manufactures.

Just one example: The Vietnamese had to pay for their 4.7-billion-dollar exports to the United States a duty of 470 million dollars, the same sum the British had to pay for their exports to the United States, which were more than ten times higher: 50 billion dollars!

And on top of that: Every year the member states of the OECD subsidize the agriculture of their countries with over 300 billion dollars—a sum that is more than the entire gross national product of Africa south of the Sahara, an area with over 600 million people. The developed capitalist countries thus keep the

developing countries largely away from their agricultural commodities markets, and ruin the peasants of the “South” by their subsidized agricultural products.

“When is a subsidy not a subsidy?” the UNDP in its Human Development Report 2005 therefore asks. And continues, “The answer to the question . . . is simple: When the developed countries say so.”

4. In spite of the discrimination against the developing countries by the powers dominating the WTO, the WTO has today 150 member states, with an additional 20 as “observers.” The entry of Russia, the last big country not yet a member, is expected this year. Socialist Cuba is even a founding member of the WTO; this has not protected it from the criminal U.S. embargo measures.

The reasons so many governments join the WTO are obvious: Without WTO, there is no most-favored-nation clause; a country without WTO-membership has to expect high tariffs, import quotas, and bans on exports. Without WTO membership, there is less international income, indispensable for purchasing goods necessary for the building up of the country. Not to join the WTO means to uncouple oneself from international trade and to restrict oneself to bilateral agreements which, considering the superior strength of the industrialized countries, generally are very unfavorable.

China became a member of the WTO at the turn of the year 2001/2002, probably for the good reasons just mentioned. But a price is to be paid for the advantages offered by a WTO membership—or rather: for the avoidance of the disadvantages of a non-membership. Many of the temporary arrangements agreed on in the membership negotiations are still valid; but the possibilities for the Chinese government to control the economic development of the country have decreased since 2002. Before joining the WTO, China was able to protect its domestic industries by import regulations; it required foreign direct investment (FDI) to go into joint ventures, in which the state usually had a share of 50 percent. Thus the chance existed of access to new technologies, often guaranteed by contract. And the FDI could be integrated in the national economy.

Today, as far as I know, new joint ventures are rare exceptions; even most former joint ventures have passed completely into

foreign hands; the chances of access to the technologies of foreign companies have thus largely vanished, and so has the possibility for the state to control their research and development strategies. Dependence on foreign companies and their willingness to invest in China have grown; and so has dependence especially on the U.S. economic situation and U.S. trade policy.

No doubt China, unlike most developing countries, had during the last decades enormous growth rates in income and prosperity for its average citizens. Probably there is no alternative to the involvement in the “logic” of capitalist globalization. But is not the result that the “average Chinese citizen” does not exist any more? That there are two sorts of Chinese: poor and rich ones, have-nots and capital owners? In publications of my country, I read that the partition of incomes among the urban population in China, all the more so between town and country, is even greater than in Germany. Maybe this is an unavoidable transitional stage on the way to a higher type of society? I do not know.

### ***Conclusion***

These, dear friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, are questions of a German Communist, whose fervent wish is the successful outcome of the great, heroic attempt to build a humane, socialist society in this giant country; in a country that was so long subjugated and humiliated by imperialistic powers, including Germany. I would much appreciate your honest answers.

*Düsseldorf, Germany*

# Mobilizing Sustainable Industries

**Christine Jacquelyn McMahon**

China's move to Marxism in the last century envisioned the political will of people committed to equitable and cooperative policies. China continues this spirit of cooperation together with other countries including Japan and the United States, with which it collaborated on market-based clean energy as an alternative to the Kyoto Protocol (O'Meara Sheehan et al. 2007, xxviii–xxx). In the preceding year this trend toward sustainability saw Mexico create a transnational park bordering with the United States (xxviii), a global decrease in deforestation over the past five years, and a 1996 protocol becoming effective in March 2006 that strengthened rules against ocean dumping and forced polluters to pay (xxviii–xxix). Institutional investors in April 2006, from sixteen countries representing two trillion dollars in assets signed the UN's new principles for responsible investment (xxx).

These investments combine environmental, social, and corporate governance into a responsible global policy for financial investments.

Countries like Argentina, Bolivia, and Venezuela are nationalizing economic resources, increasing their economic and social capital. The South American MERCOSUR Treaty establishes a common market among the nations of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay as a necessary course of economic development as well as social justice (SICE 2006, 1). Venezuela and Bolivia are utilizing their wealth to create mutually supportive

economic investments. Cuba prospers as it continues to challenge U.S. sanctions. The *Economist*, in its 2006 Emerging Market Indicators, reports that Argentina's industrial production increased 7.3 percent and GDP increased 8.7 percent over a one-year period from October 2005 to 2006 (154); Venezuela's industrial production rose 12.2 percent and GDP grew 10.2 percent (23 December 2006, 154). The same article stated that China's industrial production grew 14.9 percent and GDP grew 10.4 percent over the one year period (154). Economic and financial indicators showed that the United States trade balance declined \$842.2 billion in the last 12 months whereas China's grew \$168.3 billion over the same 12-month period (*Economist*, 6 January 2007, 92). China's manufacturing combined with cheap labor helped provide these increases, but this growth cannot be sustained due to a global aging population trend over the next twenty-five years (McMahon 2006, 4). Developing alternative renewable energy policy needs to move toward cooperation for financial viability that is socially and ecologically sound.

China's socialist market economy is unfolding in a world ready for alternative energy sources, alternative energy industries, and alternative energy technologies. China's current economic advantages provide the economic and technological capital necessary to increase growth of sustainable industries. Mao Tse-tung wisely stated, "China's economy must develop along the path of the 'regulation of capital' and the 'equalization of landownership,' and must never be 'privately owned by the few;' we never permit the few capitalist and landlords to 'dominate the livelihood of the people'; we must never establish a capitalist society of the European-American type or allow the old semi-feudal society to survive. Whoever dares to go counter to this line of advice will certainly not succeed but will run into a brick wall" (Mao Tse-tung 1940/1997). As Mao predicted, nations like the United States are channeling their resources and wealth for the few at the expense of the people, inevitably blocking their own progress. American dominance of the means of economic weapons of control threatens sustainability of the global economy. America increases dominance through the



military-industrial complex, and its need to control the world's oil resources is advancing the U.S. economy toward Mao's proverbial "wall."

American policies continue to create an atmosphere of distrust and ethnocentrism, perpetuating a baseless and unending war on terror. Bill Moyers, president of the Schumann Center for Media and Democracy, wrote about American imperialism as a road to ruin. "One thinks of the upward redistribution called 'tax relief,' of the Iraq invasion sold as critical to the 'War on Terror,' of rising poverty, inequality, crime, debt, and foreclosure as America spews its bounty on war and a military so muscle-bound . . . It would be hard to imagine a more catastrophic failure of stewardship" (2006). U.S. economic assets are inequitably distributed to an ineffective military menace in the Mideast, leaving the American economy falling behind. Tolerance of American military dominance of the world's remaining resources needs to be balanced by a powerful commitment to preserving the natural environment, while focusing on the immediate and long-term needs of all people through sustainable renewable energy. With regulation and concern for the environment, Communism promoting a socialist agenda will evolve democratically, not by following the extreme capitalist model of the United States, but by following a natural democracy model of living systems that self-perpetuate.

Instead of investing capital in U.S. debt, reinvestment in the People's Republic of China will increase living standards and shift China's multisector socialist market economy toward environmentally sound industry, creating fair sustainable systems. According to the Worldwatch Institute, Rizhao, a coastal city in the Shandong Peninsula, is the new standard for modernization and ecological sustainability. Rizhao is not only an environmentally sound model but also an idea that is past due. This small Green community development of renewable solar energy has been in operation since 1999. Its renewable energy systems were first initiated by political policies at the national and local level that incorporated educating the population through research and development, creating an industry producing solar powered technologies and appliances. Rizhao's experiment in solar energy education and research creates a social

conservation trend along with a proven economic industry China can export (O'Meara Sheehan et al. 2007, 108–9). By investing capital back into each sector, China is constructing the infrastructure to support industries that are environmentally and ecologically sound while at the same time enriching the region by providing jobs and subsistence for its large inland population. Utilization of factories producing nonessential disposable goods to manufacture useful ecologically advanced energy products for industry and domestic use are changing China's socialist market economy. These advances include cheap domestic and industrial-grade solar, wind, and waste recycling products from China's proven technologies, including the next generation of electric motors for China's growing automobile industry. China may well become the leader in space technologies, expanding a domestic space-market-based sector that is compatible with traditional agricultural sectors.

China's autonomy, socialist ties, and its strong industrial base are poised to produce the next wave of green technological advances. The year 2008 could be the year Chongming Island's mythical "Dongtan" breaks ground for China's first sustainable city incorporating wind, solar, and solid-waste recycling, making it a first-class, self-sufficient, and zero-carbon-emissions ecocity (O'Meara Sheehan et al. 2007, 3). China has excelled in the development of these economic advances, which are being implemented in socially conscious and environmentally sound policies worldwide.

The Communist model needs to be revitalized, moving away from the capitalist extreme degradation and exploitation of dwindling resources. Inviting large corporations like Wal-Mart into the People's Republic of China may help temporarily stimulate economic growth in remote regions of China's provinces and offer a unique partnership for mass distribution of sustainable green manufacturing. China can be commended for its demands for local trade unions for its Wal-Mart employees not yet possible in other markets. China can embrace the global corporate market for means of production by weighting the balance more heavily toward its domestic social economic needs. As China continues to operate in the global economy and increase its wealth, it needs to decrease its dependence on the tenuous U.S. dollar. Socialist leadership

providing clear sustainable and equitable distribution of environmental resources elsewhere is being balanced through fair-market policies. With this considered, the human race as a whole would continue to benefit from growing socialist fair-market economies.

Socialism is part of an open democracy that applies the forces of production with accountability, while distributing resources fairly throughout the globe. Cooperation with the South American socialist market will strengthen China's economic ties in sustainable industries. China, continuing the path toward economic supremacy, will guarantee its dominance by becoming a global force for sustainable and fair-market policies. Developing and implementing ecological, social, and financial strategies, improving the health and welfare of the Chinese people, and collaborating with fair socialist markets will serve as a world model.

Grass-roots movements around the globe have brought about the changes in South American policies and are continuing to mobilize against repressive American-backed corporate capitalism that fosters corruption, racism, suppression of women's rights, and child-labor abuses. Governments like France are creating policies against the lack of sustainable living conditions and inadequate living wages, encouraging policies that promote the free movement of information and discourage unethical practices promoting profits before people. Individuals are marching against policies that pollute water and air and harm agricultural biodiversity. As the world continues to urbanize and global warming becomes more evident, civilization will become increasingly more concerned about its own survival. The Communist model is now more imperative. My own work within the penal system of the ever-growing drug and alcohol population in the United States shows an expanding trend toward socialized communities. Corporate and academic systems are developing community-based models. A tragedy in American expansion leads toward increased incarceration to house the growing crime-culture; an unfortunate but inevitable symptom of corporate greed and the global war on terror devastating the U.S. education system.

Changing the contradictions to create a viable socialized democracy by utilizing an equitable market economy will foster

multisector growth that needs to be sustainable and fair to local and global markets. China will continue its role as world leader changing the face of democracy with cooperation through sustainable fair policies and industries.

*Laporte, Pennsylvania*

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# **Socialism before “Market Socialism”: Pedagogical and Political Considerations in Teaching David Hare’s *Fanshen***

**Roger Marheine**

## ***Introduction***

Those of us of a certain age (I am sixty) once looked at China with great admiration. The Chinese workers, peasants, and their intellectual allies committed themselves to the second great revolution of the twentieth century. So many transformed so much, so quickly. As an English teacher, I sought to introduce my community college students to Chinese liberationist thinking by teaching British playwright David Hare’s *Fanshen* (1997), a dramatic rendering of William Hinton’s *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (1966). In my view, Hare’s text demonstrates strong ideological agreement with Hinton’s, yet it provides a more pedagogically accessible version of progressive themes. Utilization of dramatic works in which students read parts in class follows the educational model of Paulo Freire (1993) in which students *participate* in and thus intellectually *discover* emancipatory concepts.

Still, I approached the teaching of *Fanshen* with some trepidation. How was I to clarify the historical materialism of the Fanshen period (late 1940s–early 1950s), especially against the backdrop of current Chinese market socialism? Three broad areas needed to be addressed to assist students’ understanding of issues raised in

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Hare's text. First, I attempted to recover the rich political history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) by noting the peasants' role in the Chinese revolution, which emphasized a collective and egalitarian decision-making process guided by Leninist party cadre. Second, I attempted to clarify briefly the history of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) since Mao, including reference to what Hinton himself called *The Great Reversal* (1990). Third, I believed that *Fanshen* could provide some theoretical direction for our own time, not only in an assessment of the current Chinese political economy (including the rapid implementation of "market socialism") but also for the global clash of forces that marks our time.

### **Part one**

From the earliest guerrilla phase of the CPC, including the period in which it was allied with the Kuomintang (KMT) in opposition to the Japanese occupation, Mao had insisted that politics be primary: "Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, cooperation, and assistance cannot be gained" (1937/1961, 43). Agnes Smedley documented that Soviet-trained students, soldiers, and peasants, collectively called "political workers," agitated for equal rights and Communist politics within the Chinese guerrilla army, and that women, for the first time, played a vital leadership role (1956, 175). After 1945 and the Japanese defeat, the long-festered and politically contradictory anti-imperialist alliance between the CPC and KMT erupted into civil war. The CPC's political ties to the peasants in particular were vital in its military victory over the American- and British-supported KMT (Chesneaux, Le Barbier, and Bergere 1977, 320).

David Hare's *Fanshen* effectively addresses several critiques of Chinese politics raised by more orthodox theory. For their reliance on peasants as a revolutionary force and for emphasizing politics (i.e., consciousness) as primary, Mao and the CPC were criticized as "utopian," "ahistorical," and "volunteerist" by some. Maurice Meisner has written, "In the Maoist view, the

consciousness, the moral virtues, and the actions of dedicated people were the decisive factors in determining the course of history" (1996, 19). After the CPC's initial seizure of power (1949–50), it did *not* implement a socialist economic organization. Political expediency and economic pragmatism of the New Democracy period led the CPC to install a Soviet-inspired, developmental/transitional economic model. CPC alliances with propertied classes were orthodox in that they were programs following both the New Economic Policy (NEP) implemented by the Soviet Union in the 1920s and the United Front Against Fascism established by the Comintern in the 1930s (Foley 2002). However, during the turbulent 1950s and 1960s, the Hundred Flowers movement, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution constituted bold political attempts (albeit with decidedly mixed results) to accelerate the drive toward a more egalitarian society. *Fanshen* effectively helps students grasp these political struggles in China (see below).

### ***Part two***

In one generation removed from the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao, the CPC had moved China toward market socialism. During the Deng Xiaopeng era (1978–94), the emphasis was on increased efficiency and productivity. How do we assess a socialist market economy that has shown such stunning growth in recent years? Where is the real China in a period of unprecedented growth and amazing wealth? How can the pitfalls of Western capitalism with its egregious inequalities be avoided? Challenges certainly lie ahead and a broad participation in the decision-making process will lead, it is to be hoped, to a meaningful distribution of resources. Perhaps a return to the early revolutionary literature will provide a helpful perspective.

### ***Part three***

Revisiting the themes of Hinton's *Fanshen* through David Hare's dramatic rendering can provide some theoretical direction. My students knew next to nothing about Chinese revolutionary history. One Chinese-American student explained that her Chinese immigrant mother opposed the revolution: "My mother is against Communism

because when she was young, they made her wear uniforms.” Other students were curious but noncommittal—it was an assignment that included a lot of characters with unfamiliar names.

However, most students quickly became intrigued with *Fanshen’s* depiction of peasant thought processes. It should be noted that many in the class were either Mexican or Central American immigrants or children of immigrants from agrarian backgrounds. Peasant consciousness had meaning *for them*; they knew people like the play’s characters. *Fanshen* depicts class dignity in peasants—individuals like the students’ families who generally have little formal education but solve enormous problems in their everyday lives.

Hare’s *Fanshen* utilizes humor and simplicity to introduce great themes. Students enjoyed comically portrayed petty rivalries as *Fanshen’s* characters misinterpret their critical tasks. In one criticism/self-criticism session, a blacksmith is assessed, by Old Lady Wang, a peasant woman who decries the fact that he is a bad blacksmith, i.e., his work is shoddy. In exasperation, a CPC cadre member attempts to get her back on a political track. “It doesn’t matter what sort of blacksmith he is,” he insists (1997, 55). However, another peasant responds, “It matters to us” (55). The scene in the most minimalist fashion lays bare the essence of the red/expert dialectic. Students were intellectually engaged with the issue of political skills (being “red”) versus technical skills (being “expert”). In the same scene, a peasant asks, “What’s a worker?” (55). All Marxist theory revolves around an accurate definition of “worker,” but given the Chinese peasant revolutionary activism, the question takes on a unique perspective, again one that my students found quite fascinating. In the United States, the definitions of “worker” and “working class” are obscured by consumer capitalism; thus, the question “What is a worker?” opened a fruitful discussion.

While *Fanshen* emphasizes peasants “fanshening,” i.e., politically transforming, the CPC’s leadership is always portrayed as vital. A cadre member argues:

The Party must be the backbone of the village. It must educate, study, persuade, build up the People’s



organizations . . . give them a clear line to follow, a policy to unite everyone who will be united. Without the Party the village is a bowl of loose sand. So its members must get up earlier, work harder, attend more meetings, stay up later than anyone else, worry before anyone else is worried. . . . We must lead not by force but by example. (36)

Students found this passage particularly compelling. They are inundated daily with heavy doses of cynicism, but their notion of massive transformation developed considerably through their reading of Hare's *Fanshen*. Were they all about to dash off and join a revolutionary party or become immediate activists? No, but their minds were opening to possibilities, and being a teacher, that is all that I can ask.

*Pasadena, California*

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## Free Goods and Primitive Communism: An Anthropological Perspective

John H. Moore

Since the days of Anacharsis, who lived in the sixth century BCE, observations of “primitive,” “preliterate” or “tribal” peoples have been used by Western scholars to criticize their own supposedly “civilized” societies, usually as part of a political program pursued by progressive or “left” critics of the established order. Anacharsis was not himself a Greek, but a Scythian, a “barbarian” who traveled to Greece as a young man to learn about these so-called “civilized” people. In his writings, he scolded and taunted the pretentious Greeks, as in the following passage:

For me, a Scythian cloak serves as my garment, the skin of my feet as my shoes, the whole earth as my resting place, milk, cheese and meat as my favorite meal, hunger as my main course. Therefore, since I am free from those things for which most people sacrifice their leisure, come to me, if you need anything of mine. (Malherbe 1977, 43)<sup>1</sup>

Such sentiments continued to be expressed more than two thousand years later, again in a confrontation between “savages” and “civilized” people, but this time in North America. In Canada, French missionaries were startled to find that many native societies considered themselves not merely the cultural and intellectual equals of Europeans, but their superiors. Jesuit missionary Chrestien LeClercq, for example, observed in 1610 that the local

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Micmac Indians believed themselves “better, more valiant, more ingenious and richer” than the French. A Micmac chief explained to him, “There is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French” (Le Clercq 1896, 300).

Native people in North America also had entirely different notions of land tenure, which was a primary source of conflict between whites and Indians during “The Invasion of America” (Jennings 1975). When asked to “sell” tribal land and begin farming on a reservation, a Blackfoot chief named Crowfoot responded as follows:

Our land is more valuable than your money . . . we cannot sell this land. It was put here for us by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not belong to us. . . . You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother’s breast? (Armstrong 1991, 73)

Just from these few comments made over several thousand years, we can see the general outlines of what scholars have called “primitive communism,” the concept they used to criticize the excesses of monarchy and industrial capitalism (Engels 1972, Kropotkin 1972, Mead 1961, Rousseau 1964). Although this paper is brief, we can enhance our vision of differences between primitive communism and class society by employing some of the useful and incisive tools of social science. To analyze these institutions, we will use the concepts of *usufruct* and *reciprocity* and consider the historical processes of *commodification*.

### ***Usufruct***

For the purpose of understanding land tenure, we note that *usufruct*, or the privilege of use, is usually opposed to the notion of *property*, which ordinarily includes 1) a right of exclusion—keeping other people off your land, and 2) the right of disposal, either the disposal of produce from the land or the land itself.

The quotations above from Anacharsis and certain Native American leaders show the essence of land tenure under primitive communism. In this system, no one owns land in the same sense as

he or she may own a personal tool like a knife or a pot. One only has the *use* of a certain part of the land, for a certain period of time, by consensus of the community. Usually, as with the Mvskoke Creek Indians of my acquaintance, not only can one not sell the land, but cannot sell the right of *usufruct*. Only the community, through a council of senior clan women in this case, can transfer *usufruct*.

In addition, in the Mvskoke case, each community, all now living in the state of Oklahoma, still maintains what is called a "town field," for which *usufruct* is not assigned to any particular person, family or clan, but to everyone in common. Community members plant and cultivate this field whenever they have the time and inclination. After harvest, the produce is placed under the control of the Town King, or *Mekko*, who can use it only to relieve families in need, or entertain visitors to the community.<sup>2</sup>

The kind of communism practiced by the Scythian Anacharsis, as stated above, is more extreme and allowed him to inhabit, as he says, "the whole earth as my resting place." This is clearly an earlier conception of *usufruct*, specific to nomadic hunters, gatherers, and herders, but familiar to ethnologists of North American societies. Among Plains Indians, for example, we know that each tribal nation had a habitual territory, but might be found seasonally anywhere within that territory (Moore 1999, map 4.2). Periodically, leaders of tribal nations would meet at council to fix or reassign tribal territories. Wars were fought when territorial agreement could not be reached (Moore 1996, 104–42).

When Europeans arrived in North America, they too began to negotiate with Indian leaders, but there was an enormous misunderstanding about what was being negotiated. The native leaders were offering *usufruct*; the Europeans thought they were acquiring *property* in the form of "real estate" (Smith 1986, 1, 16–22). The nature of the disagreement became apparent to the Indian side when the whites began despoiling the land. A Wintu Indian woman described the process as follows:

The white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. (Armstrong 1991, 29)

In the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau dramatized the historical process by which “the whole earth” as a free good becomes property. In his “Second Discourse” he observed:

The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say this is mine and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. (Rousseau 1964, 141)

Judging from the North American experience, the process by which land was commodified was not by persuasion, as Rousseau said, but by military conquest. More than a thousand years earlier, land in Europe was commodified in the same way, as the Roman Empire expanded into Gaul and Germany (Caesar 1955, Tacitus 1999). It should be emphasized that the process of land commodification is not an abstract myth, but consisted of real historical episodes, at different times in different parts of the world.

### ***Reciprocity***

Another Indian nation familiar to me is the Cheyenne Indians, originally horse herders and buffalo hunters, now living on reservations in Oklahoma and Montana. Early in my fieldwork, as I came to live with an Indian family, a Cheyenne man took me aside to explain proper behavior. “Within the family,” he explained, “we share everything. The only difference between us and white people is that our families are much larger, maybe twenty or fifty people. You might say,” he added hesitantly, “that we are all communists.”<sup>3</sup>

His remarks brought home to me the fact that even in modern America, nuclear families are run in a communist mode. I don’t recall that my mother ever asked me to pay for breakfast, nor did I ever charge my grandfather for a ride to town. All such things were provided communally and reciprocally within the family—they were in the category of familial “free goods.”

Other communal institutions persist in American society, not only among Native Americans but also among some immigrant groups. Self-help and mutual-aid clubs of various kinds, contributing money from a pool to needy members, persist in urban areas, and in

rural areas there are still barn-raising and cooperative feed and fertilizer associations, resisting the drive toward “profits.” In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2006, Mormon and Mennonite farmers traveled to Louisiana to help rebuild houses and businesses, paying their own expenses and refusing payment from victims of the storm. These remnants of primitive communism exist as islands in capitalist democracy. Even after four hundred years, some towns founded by English colonists still retain “commons” areas for general use. My university, like many others in the United States, provides garden spots for faculty and students, plots that are redistributed each year under local rules of usufruct.

### **Conclusion**

Although some institutions typical of primitive communism have been preserved through subsequent evolutionary stages, the general tendency has been for capitalism to place continually more and more goods under the “laws” of supply and demand as commodities. Free range for grazing animals along roads and highways, for example, is in its last stages of extinction in the United States. By now we have become accustomed to drinking water from plastic bottles instead of natural water sources, which are often posted and forbidden. And we see in some polluted American cities public facilities for providing a few breaths of clean air or oxygen—for a small price, of course. But as far as I know, outside breathing is still permitted.

Perhaps Marx was too reserved when he described capitalism as comprising a series of “economic crises” (Marx 1906). In recent decades, these crises look more like ecological and environmental catastrophes, rather than brief pauses in economic development. But capitalism also embodies a genius for making money from these catastrophes. In addition to bottled water and oxygen, modern capitalism offers salmon from fish farms as the major fisheries of the ocean are destroyed one by one by overfishing. As the natural world is diminished in size, businesses offer tourist travel to visit those few natural areas that still exist. And global warming, according to some entrepreneurs, has created new “investment opportunities” for buying inland property that will soon be on the

beach, or sub-Arctic properties in Canada and Siberia that will soon be warm enough to raise cattle and grow corn. Some entrepreneurs look forward to the “economic opportunities” that will be created when the world runs out of petroleum. And in the end, as Marx said, the capitalists will be glad to sell you a good coffin, at a competitive price.

It is tempting to suggest that socialist planners should be mindful of the history of commodification if they entertain any notion of reversing the current historical trends and currents that are so destructive. We should note that free goods have become commodities in a particular historical order, and planners might consider that the resurrection of free goods should be in the reverse order to which they have been obliterated, or at least, the order of their obliteration should be a factor in economic planning. Although buildings should be constructed from the bottom up, perhaps they should be disassembled from the top down, and replaced with socialist institutions. First air and water, where commodification has not progressed very far, and then, depending on local and national history—education, health, and transportation, saving the most difficult task for last—land. It used to be said in socialist circles that land tenure should be the first institution redefined in a socialist society, because it could not be undone, since the people would protect the new arrangements. But the examples of Nicaragua and the Soviet Union have cast doubt on that belief. Nevertheless, I suggest in closing that the analysis of the order in which the commodification of free goods has occurred, in local, regional, or national areas, from primitive communism to the present, might be useful for socialist planning. Some kinds of socialization are easier than others.

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#### NOTES

1. Texts of Anacharsis translated by Anne M. McGuire.
2. My fieldwork concerning Mvskoke horticulture was done mostly in Okfuskee Tribal Town in eastern Oklahoma between 1980 and 1993.

3. The speaker was Bill Red Hat Jr., who later became Keeper of the Sacred Arrows.

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# The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Socialist Market Economy

David S. Pena

Is the purpose of the dictatorship of the proletariat to abolish the market economy, or is it acceptable for a proletarian dictatorship to allow markets to function? This question is of theoretical and practical importance for all countries that have adopted socialist-oriented market economies.

To answer this question one must try to determine the proper tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels made it clear that during the first stage of the proletarian revolution the working class has to transform itself into a ruling class by conquering state power and using it to seize control of all capital by means of “despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production” for the purpose of “entirely revolutionising the mode of production,” thereby beginning the transition to socialism (1976b, 504). The reference to despotic inroads against bourgeois society alludes to what would later become known as the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the stage of the communist revolution that begins with the proletariat’s conquest of political power and ends with the advent of socialism. Even in this early, indirect reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is clear that the concept of proletarian dictatorship implies not only a political revolution but a social and economic revolution as well, not just the seizure of state power by the proletariat, but the use of state power to liquidate capitalist

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society. But the fact that the purpose of the proletarian dictatorship is to prepare the way for socialism does not necessarily entail that it is possible or even desirable to abolish all aspects of capitalism at once. Indeed, the *Communist Manifesto*'s ten-point revolutionary program calls for nationalization of land, credit, communications, and transport, but not for the immediate nationalization of industry and agriculture. It merely calls for a *gradual* extension of state-owned industry. Nor does it demand the abolition of markets. This suggests that Marx and Engels expected markets to function, at least for a time, under the proletarian dictatorship (1976b, 505).

Marx first used the terms "dictatorship of the working class" and "dictatorship of the proletariat" in a series of articles on the French revolution of 1848–49 which he wrote in 1850 for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. In 1895, the articles were published in book form under the title *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*. In chapter three, Marx described the dictatorship of the proletariat as the "necessary transit point to the *abolition of class distinctions generally*, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations" (1978, 127). Such sweeping transformation certainly includes the abolition of capitalist markets in addition to all other socioeconomic features of capitalism, but Marx calls the proletarian dictatorship a transit point to such a condition. He does not claim that the dictatorship will abolish these features immediately.

This interpretation agrees with a later discussion of proletarian dictatorship in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), in which he wrote: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*" (1989, 95). The *Gotha Programme* also describes two stages of communist society: a lower form of communism (which we commonly refer to as socialism), in which wealth is distributed according to work, and a higher form of communism, in which wealth is distributed according to need. Thus the dictatorship

of the proletariat must be viewed as the transition period between capitalism and the lower phase of communism. According to Marx, the lower form, which is “still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society” (1989, 85), is characterized by common ownership of the means of production combined with the distribution of wealth according to work rather than need. Therefore, during its first phase, communist society will still be stratified according to differences of income—in effect, degrees of wealth—and we know that whenever the distribution of wealth leaves human needs unmet, whenever there is hardship due to poverty, even if it is only relative poverty, people will resort to commodity production and trading on the market—whether this is legal or illegal—in order to satisfy their unmet needs. Thus it is likely that markets will exist even in the first phase of communism let alone under the dictatorship of the proletariat, when they are likely to be much more pervasive. Markets will not disappear completely until the higher phase of communism has been achieved, when the individual’s oppression by the division of labor, the concomitant inequalities in living standards, and the conflicts of interest between intellectual and manual workers, and between the peasantry and industrial and commercial workers, have been overcome. Only then can society render markets obsolete by establishing need-based distribution for all goods and services. Marx also cautioned that distribution according to need is possible only when the productive forces have developed and increased to such an extent that the stream of industrial production flows with an abundance unmatched under both the proletarian dictatorship and the first phase of communism (Marx and Engels 1976a, 32, 48–49, 64; Marx 1989, 85–87).

The proletarian dictatorship will inherit a capitalist society ravaged by extremes of poverty and wealth, by the uneven development of the productive forces, and by the haphazard, discriminatory, and inadequate provision of goods and services that characterizes class societies. Because the advance through the various developmental stages to full communism depends on creating an economy that can fully satisfy unmet human needs, it is clear that in addition to securing the political supremacy of the proletariat, the main task of the proletarian dictatorship is to “increase the total of productive forces

as rapidly as possible” (Marx and Engels 1976b, 504). This is the basis for advancing from the proletarian dictatorship all the way to full communism while eliminating both the economic classes that exist under capitalism and the economic stratification that will exist under socialism. Marx and Engels did not explicitly endorse the use of markets to achieve these aims. The continued existence of markets under the dictatorship of the proletariat is merely implicit in their work. They clearly viewed the free capitalist market as an institution that would hinder the advance toward socialism; therefore, they marked it for relatively rapid extinction. It should be remembered, however, that they were thinking primarily of proletarian revolutions in advanced capitalist countries in which further development of the highly advanced productive forces called for replacing the anarchy of the market with scientific planning. Nevertheless, there is nothing in Marx and Engels that prohibits the proletarian dictatorship from making extensive use of market mechanisms to develop the productive forces of *backward economies*. As noted above, even the *Communist Manifesto* suggests a period of continued market relations in advanced capitalist countries undergoing proletarian revolution. This strongly suggests that Marx and Engels would favor even lengthier periods of market relations in less developed countries that are trying to make the transition to socialism.

Can markets actually play a positive role in preparing underdeveloped countries for socialism? Lenin’s views on this question were unambiguously affirmative. It is common knowledge that his New Economic Policy used market mechanisms to stimulate economic recovery after the devastation of the Russian Civil War, but it is not always realized that Lenin saw markets as more than just an expedient. He actually viewed market mechanisms as necessary for moving underdeveloped countries toward socialism. Lenin recognized that the economies of underdeveloped, agrarian countries in transition to socialism are a combination of protocapitalist, capitalist, and socialist modes of production including subsistence farming, small commodity production, private capitalism, state capitalism, and socialism, and that small commodity production is the dominant mode (1965, 330–31). These societies contain many more peasants than proletarians, and because peasants favor

the petty-bourgeois mode of production, they tend to side with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. It is tempting to argue that this situation calls for an immediate transition to socialism, in order to force the peasantry to cooperate with the proletariat in defeating the bourgeoisie. But Lenin did not believe this. He argued that the attempt to push agrarian countries directly into socialism—that is, to eliminate markets before the buildup of the productive forces had converted peasant agriculture and other forms of small commodity production into modern, large-scale industries—was a mistake that would actually hamper economic development and thwart socialist construction. The solution he proposed was for the proletarian dictatorship to use capitalism—commodity production, free markets, and concessions with foreign capitalists—to promote the growth of the productive forces, and to eliminate the conflict of interest between peasants and industrial workers by converting agriculture into a large-scale industry and the peasants into proletarians (1965, 330–33, 341–47).

But Lenin never held that the socialist cause could be advanced by permitting unbridled capitalism, which would surely undermine proletarian rule and end the socialist orientation of economic development. Instead, he advocated state capitalism, capitalism under the regulation, accounting, and control of the proletarian state, which harnesses the energy of the free market to eliminate small commodity production, puts all economic sectors on a large-scale industrial footing, transforms the whole people into one united working class, maintains the economy's socialist orientation, and raises the living standards of all people, both rural and urban. Indeed, for Lenin the key task of the proletarian dictatorship is to use state capitalism successfully to advance the socialist revolution. Here are his own words:

Can . . . the dictatorship of the proletariat be combined with state capitalism? Are they compatible? Of course they are . . . state capitalism is a step forward compared with the small-proprietor. . . . The whole problem—in theoretical and practical terms—is to find the correct methods of directing the development of capitalism . . . into the channels of state capitalism, and to determine how we are to hedge it about

with conditions to ensure its transformation into socialism in the near future. (1965, 345)

Market mechanisms are compatible with the dictatorship of the proletariat, but an unrestricted market is not. That is why Lenin argued for state capitalism. Markets entail the growth of capitalism, and Lenin understood that flourishing capitalism, even if it is state capitalism, is a grave threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism. Capitalism tempts the people to engage in profiteering at the expense of social harmony and welfare. Capitalists try to evade state control by bribing communists into bending the rules and looking the other way. That is why, for a socialist-oriented market economy to remain truly socialist, the dictatorship of the proletariat must wage a long, determined struggle against bribery and other attempts to evade state control. Lenin famously remarked that the market economy “*engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale” (1966, 24). This is undoubtedly true; thus, if the benefits of the market are to be gained without destroying socialism, the struggle against corruption must be waged on an *even more massive scale*.

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# Chinese Labor Unions and CyberUnionism

**Arthur B. Shostak**

*The color of the cat shouldn't matter as long as the cat catches mice.*

—Chairman Deng Xiaopong, 1992

Where China is concerned, certain aspects of its market socialism look bright: By 2010, for example, it is likely to have the world's largest economy, up from fourth in 2005 (Mantsios 2006, 53). Less clear by far is the near future of its labor movement. Busy reinventing capitalism, China is also busy experimenting with trade unionism, much as it has done since the first guilds were formed over 1,500 years ago in the Song Dynasty (420-78 C.E.).

Conventional unions date back to 1914, and only banded together in an All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) in 1925. Created as an umbrella body for unions backed by the government, the ACFTU is now the largest labor organization in the world. It has over 160 million members (out of nearly 800 million workers) organized in 1,170,000 grassroots local unions covering 2,330,000 enterprises (Fong 2006).

Along with almost every other major institution in China, the ACFTU is presently struggling to redefine itself. Since its founding, its "Chinese characteristics" have had it primarily mediate between employer and employee to promote harmonious relations. While it continues to have strong ties with the Communist

Party, and while many of its local officers are allegedly subservient to the employer, it is a “mistake to understate its role in advancing workers’ interest” (Mantsios 2006, 60). The Federation has always had a feisty cadre of staff militants, especially at local levels, and it has long exposed poor working conditions, lobbied for improved labor laws, litigated on behalf of members, and pressured the government to enforce the country’s Labor Law.<sup>1</sup>

Most recently, the ACFTU has grown beyond its cautious support of workplace mobilization against exploitation in a single workplace (excessive mandatory overtime, illegal piece rates, false deductions, etc.). Following years of pressure, it surprised outsiders in 2006 by vigorously organizing workers at sixty-two Wal-Mart stores in thirty cities. By the year’s end it was well on its way to unionizing 60 percent of all foreign-funded firms, for a dramatic gain of many millions of members (Fong 2006). Vexed by the rise of rival independent unions (not sanctioned by the government) in some of China’s major manufacturing zones, the ACFTU apparently seeks to rise to this challenge.

For the ACFTU to make new gains it will have to employ the ongoing information revolution in fresh and creative ways. “Digital packets and beams of light are invisibly but profoundly transforming China” (Sheff 2002, xiv). Some Chinese enthusiasts liken this virtual revolution to *Rou hu tian yi* [adding wings to a tiger] (xvi). China is already the world’s second largest national market for personal computers, with far more Internet users (197 million in 2006) than the United States (Prestowitz 2005, 74). Set-top boxes are seeking to bring broadband via the Internet to 370 million TV sets (Faris 2005, 209). The country boasts the world’s longest, fastest, and lowest-cost high-bandwidth network.

### **CyberUnionism**

Where China’s labor movement is concerned, the significance of computer power takes two forms: It can aid efficiency and effectiveness in getting the union’s work done (some work plants, for example, have as many as 200,000 workers who deserve high-quality representation) (French 2996). And it has made it possible for ACFTU affiliates to adopt a new twenty-first-century model of



unionism, one I have come to call *CyberUnionism* (1999; see also Shostak 2002, 2005).

As I have explained it in recent years to trade unionists in Britain, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Norway, and Sweden, this model is arguably the most promising of all the alternatives for organized labor in our information age. While I am not an expert on China, and only know what I have read in the extensive literature, I would humbly suggest the CyberUnion model just may warrant adaptation here by the ACFTU, its affiliates, the independent unions, and comparable prolabor NGOs.

A CyberUnion is a labor organization intent on endlessly making the most creative and empowering uses possible of computer power. It has computer tools at its core, rather than periphery. Less obvious, although no less significant, is a CyberUnion's attention to futuristics, innovations, services, and traditions (F-I-S-T). Attention to these four aspects of unionism sets the CyberUnion apart from yesteryear's models (business, social, community, etc.), and helps make a case for the adaptation soon by Chinese unions of CyberUnionism.

Employ of the CyberUnion model could help make the following differences:

*Futuristics:* A Chinese CyberUnion could hire expert forecasters to help it learn as early as possible where workplace technology and relevant domestic and global industries are heading.<sup>2</sup> This should enable it to promote timely training to help its members stay relevant. The Federation could anticipate massive layoffs, and take measures in court or in militant action to help assure the payment of fair severance pay, pay for work performed, and social insurance, all of which are not always part of the scene.<sup>3</sup>

*Innovations:* A Chinese CyberUnion could be an early adopter of cutting-edge services, such as awesome cell phone systems, teleconference equipment, and so on, likely to boost efficiency and effectiveness. Likewise, it could experiment with such Western innovations as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI), two relatively new aids to end grueling labor conditions and boost workplace productivity and worker well-being.

*Services:* A Chinese CyberUnion offering free language classes on the Internet could help bridge a gap among members who use between six to twelve different regional language groups. It could offer to sell computers at a great discount, thanks to the volume buying that labor can arrange (as demonstrated already by unions in Sweden, Norway, and elsewhere). Or, it could use the Internet to vigorously petition the state for help if members are left with slashed pension funds and worthless company stocks.

*Traditions:* A Chinese CyberUnion could honor its own history and culture. Efforts could be made to create an oral history and video record of the reminiscences of older members, complete with archival storage. Many relevant labor songs, anecdotes, and historic speeches might be added to the Web site, along with streaming video celebrations of special days and events in the organization's honorable past.

### ***Digerati***

If Chinese union members are soon to profit from adoption of this four-part CyberUnion model, the ACFTU and its constituent labor organizations will have to make room at the top for a type known in the West as *digerati*, labor's especially knowledgeable computer users.<sup>4</sup> Often fully as capable and creative as their (much better paid) counterparts in business, the *digerati* could soon prove *the* critical ingredient in assuring the success of the Chinese CyberUnion model.

Among many other aids, the *digerati* can help old-fashioned (precomputer) union leaders upgrade their union operations. For example, they can show how computers offer unprecedented communication access by everyone in labor to everyone else—by officers to members, by members to officers, by members to members, and so. This can significantly aid both in getting a message out, and in hearing from every level of the organization—provided, that is, that sensitive care is taken to keep from allowing this change to undermine protocol and proper procedures.

Similarly, the *digerati* often champion rapid Internet polling of the membership where vital matters must be decided. This can

facilitate democratic decision-making, provided care is taken to assure that the voters first have adequate information on which to base informed decisions. (In 2004, the ACFTU indicated it might soon seek a national law to require the secret ballot election of shop-floor union officers, a move the digerati could be very helpful in implementing [Compa 2004, 29].)

Many digerati encourage adoption of a web site uncensored chat room. They believe it helps create a virtual “community” of members, and bolsters union solidarity. It can air many workplace problems, and help publicize constructive responses to them (the ACFTU 2005 Annual Report highlights discrimination in employment, sexual harassment, the wage gap between men and women, and serious violations of the labor law). (79)

Much as Karl Marx envisioned, the digerati can urge unionists to draw extensively on the Internet (a Fourth International of sorts). In this way, workers can join arms around the globe for concerted industrial action (massive boycotts, demonstrations, etc.). With over 3,500 labor union Web sites online world-wide in 2006 alone, and with more being added weekly, the digerati see remarkable opportunities here for prolabor global networking and international labor solidarity.<sup>5</sup>

China’s ACFTU unions, in short, have much to gain from their digerati members. Forward thinking and visionary, these techno-savvy unionists bend the rules, break the poorest of them, and promote the creation of better ones. They stand out in their ability “to think beyond their own ego, to build their identity on membership in a group instead of individualism, [to build] on electronic tribalism” (Bard and Soderqvist 2002, 117). Believing that what they do matters, *really* matters, and graced by a strong sense of purpose, the digerati can help China’s unions adapt the CyberUnion model and reinvent themselves for the twenty-first century.

### **Doubts**

Skeptics may scorn CyberUnionism as part of the New China’s urgent drive to create the impression of modernity “without the underlying substance of critical thought or democratic

governance” (Vine 2006, 75). Proponents will remain hopeful. Other critics may argue it cannot catch on because it departs too far from convention and breaks too many rules. What they overlook, however, is that “nearly the whole of China’s twentieth century was spent overturning one set of rules or another—following the rule book of the day before brought tragedy the day after. China is a country where the public has repeatedly learned . . . that finding ways around rules offers hope and dignity” (Fishman 2005, 243).

### **Summary**

China’s modern rise, and especially its unique recent blend of capitalism and socialism, is clearly one of the transformative events of our time. When the story is written decades from now, it might take note of the conversion of the country’s unions to CyberUnion status, and credit this change with much of the nation’s continued gains in general wellbeing, productivity, profitability, union gains, and worker satisfaction.

In the years ahead, China’s unions may falter badly.<sup>6</sup> Or, they may draw handsomely instead on the four CyberUnion attributes (F-I-S-T) and thrive. If the Chinese labor movement makes bold and creative use of computer power, its contribution to the wellbeing of members and to China’s greatness will bring honor to all.

*Narberth, Pennsylvania*

### **NOTES**

1. For a balanced assessment of the ACFTU, although one that comes out hopeful, see Mantsios 2006.

2. A valuable guide is available from an Old China Hand, Naisbitt 2006.

3. On the many abuses suffered by workers, especially migrants to the cities, and among them, women, see Compa 2004.

4. For more on the digerati, see Bard and Soderqvist 2002, Sheff 2002, and Faris 2005.

5. See in this connection <http://labourstart.org>, a nonstop source of fast-breaking news of labor happenings in over on hundred countries, as sent in daily by over ninety-five volunteers in these countries.

6. On the dangers posed by the reluctance of the Communist Party to share power, see Pei 2006 and Kyngé 2006.

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# **Classical Marxism, Socialism, and the Market**

**Renildo Souza**

Reforms of real socialism have ignited the debate about the relations between socialism and the market. Ideas, projects, and experiences concerning reforms were taken into consideration until the downfall of Eastern European regimes and the Soviet Union; the debates have continued in some academic circles around the trajectory of China since 1978.

## ***Return to Marx and Engels***

The return to the theoretical conceptualization of socialism according to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels is not an idle matter or anachronistic. It should be recognized, however, that those authors left only very general indications. The context in which they lived was quite different from current reality.

The basic characterization of the mode of capitalistic production by Marx and Engels offers a solid starting point for a discussion of the processes of transformation from capitalism to socialism. One has to begin with the workers' struggle. In order to speak about socialism, it is necessary to understand both capitalism and the historical transformations. Marx states, "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in

the development of their material forces of production (1987, 263).

Is Marxist theory outdated because capitalism has changed and the exploitation of workers is not as severe or because socialist transformations were subject to failure? No, it is not. The process of the capitalist production and technological progress have produced an extraordinary expansion of social wealth. Humanity achieves a social life marked by universalism. Nevertheless, the conflict between the socialization of production and the private capitalist appropriation persists. The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie still continues.

Is it not a fact that the mergers and acquisitions triggered by the stock exchange have aggravated both capital concentration and centralization? The oligopolies and the monopolies dominate the markets. The general economic fluctuation displays the cyclical crises, new forms of international financial crises emerge, as in 1997–1998, and global economic collapses occur, as in 2001. The world today displays the timeliness of the Marxist understanding of capitalism.

Marx and Engels contested the utopian projects for the new society. A ready and finished model of the future society would be contrary to the materialist understanding of the reality, given the absence of concrete situations. On the other hand, Marx and Engels's forecast of the victory of socialism arising from the most advanced centers was not confirmed. The revolution took place in relatively underdeveloped countries.

Marx wrote his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* to counter the lack of a realistic outlook on the part of the Lassalleans (1989, 87). The transition to socialism would have to confront not only limitations of the economic structure and cultural development but also problems in the distribution of the product.

From a critical point of view, Eduard Bernstein (1997, 87–94) pointed out two preliminary conditions for the implementation of socialism: the centralization of production in large enterprises and the domination of the political power by the proletariat. He denied the first condition at his time, emphasizing that administrative impossibility and the inviability of the state's gigantic management

power in dealing with a huge quantity of both medium-sized and small enterprises, handling only the biggest ones. Concerning the second condition, he gave emphasis to the differentiation between work and life among workers, questioning the concept of the proletariat's desire for socialism and even less for a revolution made by the "industrial proletarian classes."

### ***Development of the productive forces and distribution***

Marx thought that "what had to be done" in the Gotha Programme, "was to *prove concretely* how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this historical curse" [of capitalism] (Marx 1989, 83—emphasis added).

In Bernstein's view, economism and fatalism are evident in the idea that socialism cannot exist without a previous, full, complete, and finished stage of development of the productive forces in capitalism. In that evolution, social laws are approached as natural.

The economic progress so important to the unilateral developmental logic coexists with polarization between the worker's poverty and the wealth of an exploiting minority, reaffirming that "this is the law of all history hitherto" (Marx 1989, 88). In fact, in the transition to socialism, the bourgeois law concerning the distribution of the product under capitalism would still persist.

### ***Property and the market***

In the transition to socialism, the main means of production are collectivized as property of the state. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels state that "the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible" (1976, 504). The productive forces would have adequate conditions for their development, with ever-increasing efficiency and superiority in relation to capitalism.

But, in bourgeois thought, private property, the market, and efficiency are put together as the inevitable and superior solution



of capitalism. Estimates of rationality, maximization of wealth, and *homo economicus* lead to methodological individualism. According to Friedrich Hayek, there is knowledge acquisition through the spontaneous performance in the market:

Economy gets closer, than any other social science, to answer this crucial question of all social sciences: How can the combination of fragments of existing knowledge in different minds produce results that, if they had to be produced deliberately would demand certain knowledge from the leading mind which no other individual in particular can have? Showing that, in this sense, individuals' spontaneous actions, under the conditions which we can define, will produce a distribution of resources that can be understood as if they were carried out according to a single plan, although nobody had planned it, it seems to me, in fact, as an answer to the problem that was sometimes described metaphorically as of "the social mind." (1997, 201)

In socialism, according to Oscar Lange, there would be the markets of consumption goods and labor, but the market of the means of production would be forbidden. The authorities in the socialist economy could be aware of the scale of preferences for consumption goods, and they could also know the total of available resources. So, from these data, it would be possible to determine the prices of the productive alternatives, considering the technical possibilities of allocation of resources. Lange concluded that the economic calculation was possible: the problem of choice of what and how to produce had a solution in the socialist economy.

### ***Utopianism?***

Alec Nove gave a negative appreciation of "Marx's legacy" in the first chapter of his book *The Economy of the Possible Socialism* (1989). He characterized Marx's vision on socialism as negatively utopian (27) and indicted his position decisively: "The little that [Marx] said was irrelevant or completely mistaken." He criticizes the prediction of society's polarization and points out the profound changes that differentiate the current capitalist system

from the laissez-faire model studied by Marx. He goes against the ideas of a socialism with the characteristics of economic abundance, suppression of incentives, motivation, and discipline in the new nonconsumer individual, harmony between general and partial interests and between centralization and decentralization, end of the division of labor and the market with production for use, the multicapacity of the human beings, absence of state and nations, and nonexistence of wages and currency.

But Nove's accusation strongly contrasts, for example, with the viability of the ten measures that could be adopted in the most developed countries according to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx did not mention unlimited free distribution of goods and services; he mentioned distribution according to need. Cockshott and Cottrell argue that the principle "from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs" obviously implies some criteria for the acknowledgement of that need (2004, 25).

"Long and painful delivery" is a formulation where Marx shows an understanding of the transition to socialism. But Marx and Engels several times were led to an exaggerated expectancy concerning the way capitalism was overcome. What has experience revealed? Based on twentieth-century experiences, the transformation of society was revealed to be extremely difficult, slow, contradictory, and conflicting.

### **Conclusions**

The market inevitably generates workers' alienation, the fetishism of the product, as classical Marxism long ago taught. Market forces generate growing social and regional inequalities as well as posing a threat to the environment. None of those should be underestimated when the market mechanism is used in the transition to socialism.

In spite of all this, in any new economic model it is necessary to incorporate knowledge of some possible positive effects of the market during the transition period. Experience has shown the need or inevitability of the market as an efficient regulator of the economy and planning. However, the market and private property

must be analyzed thoroughly, restricting their extensiveness and reducing their power, in accordance with the transition process. The predominance of public property, planned management, and socialist democracy must be maintained.

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# **Marxism and Sustainable Development**

**Statement Adopted at the Third Forum of the  
World Association for Political Economy,  
Langfang, China, 24–25 May 2008**

Marx identified many potential sources of contradiction in the expansionary dynamic of capitalism. In examining the sources of crisis in capitalism, Marx did not ignore the pressures economic expansion could place on the natural environment. Nevertheless, the full scale of this potential contradiction was not yet visible in the nineteenth century. A vibrant environmental movement emerged during the 1960s to address the growing damage being done by careless industrial practices in both the West and the East. Nevertheless, concern for the environment in this period remained a minority interest concentrated in the metropolitan regions of the world. In both the developed and less developed world, the environmental movement was often regarded as merely another special interest.

This situation has changed dramatically with the advent of neoliberal globalization. As capitalist industrial practices spread throughout the globe, the associated environmental problems were similarly dispersed and environment questions were actively posed for an increasing number of nations and an increasing portion of the global population. It has always been understood that environmental impacts had a strong global dimension and that many problems, like acid rain and water pollution, crossed national borders. Nevertheless, attention focused on local and national effects, and responses were generally national in character. All of this has

changed with the emergence of an unassailable scientific consensus about the existence and serious consequences of human-made climate change.

It is not a coincidence that the present global environmental crisis has emerged in the context of a dramatic globalization of capitalist social relations. After centuries of relentless capitalist accumulation, the global environmental crisis has now developed to the point that the very survival of human civilization and perhaps humanity itself is at stake. The current global crisis cannot be fully resolved within the historical framework of capitalism, and global ecological sustainability will be possible only with fundamental social transformations and a new global economic system organized on the principles of social ownership of land and other major means of production, democratic and rational planning, and production for people's needs.

While standard economic theory has begun to discuss environmental and natural resource issues, it is incapable of incorporating the fundamental interdependence of the human economy and the natural environment into its world view. All production in the economy ultimately depends on the use of materials drawn from the natural world, and all waste from production and consumption eventually finds its way into the environment. These essential material realities and constraints are absent from standard economic theory. Just as crucially, standard economic theory is unable to envision alternative ways of organizing economic and social life.

The principles of ecological sustainability require that human society minimize the use of nonrenewable resources, maintain limited and steady flows of consumption of renewable resources, and maintain limited and steady releases of material wastes within the absorptive capacity of the environment. Market-driven decision-making, which tends to ignore "externalities," makes the achievement of this necessary state especially difficult. While it has not to date made the environment a central part of its analysis, Marxist political economy is better suited than the neoclassical tradition for dealing with environmental concerns. Its materialist tradition and its recognition that economic outcomes are not

inevitable and instead are the concrete result of social relations prepare the Marxist tradition to grapple constructively with the current crisis.

The climate crisis makes the realization of the practice of sustainability especially urgent. Among all aspects of global environmental crisis, climate change is the most urgent and potentially has the most devastating consequences. Now it is nearly certain that the Arctic summer sea ice will disappear in a few years, suggesting that the processes of climate change have passed an important tipping point. With more tipping points being passed, global climate change could develop into a self-sustaining process beyond human control, leading to unprecedented catastrophes and leaving much of the earth no longer suitable for human habitation.

To alleviate the global climate crisis and prevent the worst catastrophes, it is necessary to begin immediately to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. The developed economies must begin to realize concrete reductions while the less developed economies must begin to moderate their increases and then follow the developed economies in making reductions. All countries must begin to move away from a development and production strategy based on the unrestrained consumption of fossil fuels. This will not only pose daunting challenges in the fields of energy and transportation but it will also require the rebuilding of world agriculture on a more organic and sustainable basis.

In addition, the scale of the climate crisis must not detract from a commitment to realize immediate gains on a number of other environmental fronts. These include, among others, water pollution, other forms of air pollution, the release of toxic wastes, species extinction, demographic problems, unsustainable resource exploitation, soil erosion, and desertification. It is necessary to take effective measures, from institutional, policy, technological, and psychological perspectives, to address the root causes of the ecological problems facing humankind as well as their surface manifestations.

Whatever the urgency of immediate actions, the scale of the changes needed will eventually clash with the expansionary needs

of capitalism. Capitalism is an economic system based on production for profit and the universal dominance of market relations. Under the constant and pervasive pressure of market competition and driven by the insatiable pursuit of profit, individual capitalists, capitalist corporations, and capitalist states are constantly pursuing accumulation of capital on increasingly larger scales, leading to exponential growth of material consumption and material wastes. The capitalist system is thus fundamentally incompatible with the requirements of ecological sustainability. Neither technological change nor government regulations, without changing the basic framework of capitalism, can permanently overcome this insurmountable contradiction.

Fundamental global changes required for global ecological sustainability cannot be accomplished without a massive mobilization of the world's working classes and all oppressed peoples. The global struggle for ecological sustainability, therefore, must join forces with the global struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Only socialism and the global solidarity of all working peoples can free both humanity and the earth from the fatal threat of global capitalism.

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## ABSTRACTS

**Victor G. Devinatz, “We had a Utopia in the Union’: James Wright, the Farm Equipment Workers Union, and Civil Rights Unionism in Postwar Louisville, 1946–1952”**—Led by the Communist Party USA, the Farm Equipment Workers Union (FE) fought for civil rights for African-American workers during its brief existence, 1938–55. The FE motivated and encouraged James Wright, an African American union activist, to take a leadership role in civil rights struggles in Louisville, Kentucky, in the years immediately after World War II. The author concludes that the CPUSA-led unions as a whole (not only the FE) led in the development of civil rights unionism during this era.

**Ethel Tobach, “Identity of Comparative Psychology: Its Status and Advances in Evolutionary Theory and Genetics”**—Theories emerging recently in the fields of evolution, development, and comparative psychology indicate that a redefinition of comparative psychology may be useful. A brief review is presented of the marginalization of the scientific and academic identity of comparative psychology, indicating the need to integrate contemporary thinking in evolutionary biology, genomics, and developmental theory. Comparative psychology as a science emphasizes methods of investigation relating to all levels of the integration of processes that are relevant to the evolution and development of the activity of all species.

**Sinan Koont, “Urban Agriculture in Cuba: Of, by, and for the Barrio”**—The collapse of Soviet style “industrial” agriculture in Cuba at the beginning of the 1990s left Cuba with a gigantic food security problem—as well as potential overall economic collapse. “Urban Agriculture” has emerged in Cuba as a successful, if partial, solution to the problem of food availability. Forced by

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circumstances to be in or near cities and almost totally “organic,” this approach to food production has brought Cuba to the cutting edge of theory and practice in this area. The author analyzes the technological, political, historical, and economic underpinnings of this phenomenon.

**Yan Ma, “Virtual Value of Natural Resources: A Marxist Explanation”**—Virtual value, rather than labor value, should be attributed to natural resources. The economic category of virtual value can not only establish the value basis of the price of natural resources, but can also provide a basis for exchange of natural resources with other commodities. This realization mainly stems from Marxist economics itself. It can also provide a theoretical basis for reasonable and effective use of natural resources during economic and sustainable development.

## ABREGES

**Victor G. Devinatz, «Chez nous l’utopie dans le syndicat : James Wright, le Syndicat des Ouvriers de l’Equipement Agricole, et le syndicalisme des droits civiques à Louisville dans l’après-guerre, 1946–1952»**—Le Syndicat des Ouvriers de l’Equipement Agricole (FE), dirigé par le Parti communiste des Etats-Unis (CPUSA), a lutté pour les droits civiques des ouvriers afro-américains pendant sa brève existence de 1938 à 1955. Le FE a incité et encouragé James Wright, activiste afro-américain au sein du syndicat, à prendre la direction de la lutte pour les droits civiques à Louisville, Kentucky, dans les années après la seconde guerre mondiale. L’auteur conclut que l’ensemble des syndicats dirigés par le CPUSA (et pas seulement le FE) on fait avancer le développement du syndicalisme des droits civiques pendant cette ère.

**Ethel Tobach, «L’identité de la psychologie comparative: sa position et ses avances dans la théorie évolutionnaire et la**

**génétique**»—Les théories qui ont émergé récemment dans les domaines de l'évolution, du développement et de la psychologie comparative indiquent qu'une réévaluation de la psychologie comparative pourrait être utile. L'auteur passe en revue la marginalisation de l'identité scientifique et académique de la psychologie comparative, en démontrant la nécessité d'intégrer la pensée contemporaine de la biologie évolutionnaire, de la génomique et de la théorie développementale. La psychologie comparative comme science accentue les méthodes de recherche relatives à tous les niveaux de l'intégration des processus étant pertinents par rapport à l'évolution et le développement de l'activité de toutes les espèces.

**Sinan Koont, «L'agriculture urbaine à Cuba: de, par, et pour le *barrio*»**—L'écroulement de l'agriculture «industrielle» à la mode soviétique à Cuba au début des années 1990 a laissé le pays avec un problème gigantesque de sécurité alimentaire—ainsi qu'avec le potentiel d'un effondrement général économique. «L'agriculture urbaine» est apparue comme une solution réussie, bien que partielle, au problème de la disponibilité de nourriture. Forcée par les circonstances d'être dans, ou proche, des villes et presque totalement «organique», cette approche de la production de nourriture a amené Cuba à devenir leader en la matière, dans la théorie et la pratique. L'auteur analyse les soutiens technologiques, politiques, historiques, et économiques de ce phénomène.

**Yan Ma, «La valeur virtuelle des ressources naturelles: une explication marxiste»** — On devrait attribuer aux ressources naturelles une valeur virtuelle au lieu d'une valeur de travail. La catégorie économique de la *valeur virtuelle* ne peut pas seulement établir la base de valeur du prix des ressources naturelles, mais elle peut aussi fournir une base pour l'échange des ressources naturelles avec d'autres produits. Cette prise de conscience provient en grande partie de l'économie marxiste elle-même. Elle peut aussi fournir une base théorique pour une utilisation raisonnable et efficace des ressources naturelles dans un développement économique et durable.