David Slater (ed.)

New social movements and the state in Latin America

FOR MY MOTHER AND FATHER

PREFACE

The papers collected together in this volume originate from a
CEDLA workshop, held in October 1983. That workshop was in-
spired by a belief in the importance of providing a forum for
discussion and debate on the topic of new social movements and
the state in Latin America. Although there have already been a
number of conferences organized around this theme in Latin
America, we felt that it would be well worthwhile convening
a meeting of Western European based social scientists working
on this same subject. Such a conference also seemed like an
interesting venture in the light of the growing interest in new
social movements in Western Europe.

The financial support necessary to bring people together in
Amsterdam was made available by CEDLA in Amsterdam and Z.W.O.
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spark off many stimulating and fruitful debates.

With regard to the planning and actual organization of the work-
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For the next phase, the translation and editing of a sizeable
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As far as the typing is concerned Jolanda van de Boom and Thea
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of humour - at one moment it was suggested that if any other un-
foreseen sources of delay were to surface I had perhaps better
change the title to the 'old social movements'.

Next, I would like to thank two external readers for providing
enthusiastic support together with constructive criticisms, and
finally I want to extend a word of thanks to the contributors
for ensuring that we had an enjoyable and valuable workshop
which has now resulted in the following volume.

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CONTENTS

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND A RECASTING OF THE POLITICAL

David Slater

By way of introducing and situating the following collection
of papers I want to select and briefly consider some of the
central issues that impinge upon current debates around the
theme of the new social movements and state power in Latin
America.

I. New Social Movements - A Preliminary Identification

As far as the advanced capitalist societies are concerned the
term 'the new social movements' is invariably used to refer
to *inter alia* the feminist movement, the ecology movement, the
peace movement and the anti-nuclear movement. For Latin America,
and using Brazil and Argentina as case studies, Mainwaring and
Viola (1984) suggest the existence of five 'new movements':
ecclesiastical base communities, neighbourhood associations,
and the feminist movement in Brazil; human rights groups in
Argentina, and ecological associations in both countries.[1]
Evers, in his contribution to this volume, indicates an even
broader range of new movements in Latin America, including,
in addition to those just mentioned, workers' associations
organizing independently from the traditional trade union
structures and political parties, indigenist associations
appearing autonomously on the political scene, educational
and artistic activities on a popular level, coalitions for the
defense of regional traditions and interests, environmental
movements and a patchwork of self-help groupings among the unem-
ployed and poor people. Potentially, therefore, we are presented
with a highly diverse and multi-facetted list of social move-
ments that have surfaced in recent years, causing ripple effects
in both political and theoretical contexts. However, before
looking more closely at the possible range of these so-called

new social movements let us first diagnose their suggested novelty.

II. What Precisely is New about the New Social Movements ?

In relation to the development of new social movements in Latin America, Evers appropriately draws our attention to the fact that tne surfacing of these movements has not depended on the specific political situation created by military dictatorships nor on a clear-cut defeat of Left parties. For example, we find such movements in countries like Venezuela where the institutions of peripheral capitalist democracy have not been made redundant by military rule, and in Peru where the Left has expanded its influence in conjunction with the development of new social movements. Hence, as Evers observes, because the same term is being used for new forms of expression and also because there are obvious analogies between these movements we can advance the idea that the existence of new social movements is very much rooted in the <u>contemporary social development of capitalist societies</u> (my emphasis).

It is exactly this intrinsic connection that provides the *leitmotif* for Mouffe's (1984) succinct examination of the specificity of the new social movements.[2] She argues, for instance, that these movements are the expression of antagonisms which have emerged as a consequence of the new hegemonic formation to be consolidated after the Second World War. Thus, advanced capitalist societies have been transformed into extensive market places where all the products of human labour have become commodities and where almost all 'needs' depend on the market to be satisfied. This 'commodification' of social life has been accompanied by a joint phenomenon of 'bureaucratization' resulting from the increasing intervention of the state at all levels of social reproduction. Moreover, a third and linked process can be distinguished, namely that of 'cultural massification' resulting from the all-embracing influence of the mass media. According to Mouffe most of the existing collective identities of Western societies have been demolished or profoundly challenged by the

effects of these three combined processes, and as a consequence
new forms of subordination have been created. It is then as re-
sistances against these new forms of subordination that the new
social movements ought to be interpreted and politically located.
Furthermore, Mouffe emphasizes that what all these new antago-
nisms have in common is that they do not affect the social agent
in so far as s/he occupies a place in the relations of production
and therefore they are not class antagonisms. This does not mean
of course that such antagonisms have been abolished - in fact
they have been increased. The point rather is that these are not
new antagonisms but the extension of already existing ones.
'What is new is the diffusion of social conflict into other areas
and the politicization of more and more relations'. [3]

Developing the same position Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in their
recent treatment of hegemony and radical democracy write that
the common denominator of all the 'new social movements' (urban,
ecological, anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional, feminist,
anti-racist, ethnic, regional or sexual minorities) would be
their 'differentiation from workers' struggles, considered as
'class' struggles'. [4] However Laclau and Mouffe are not interested
in the arbitrary grouping of these new movements into a category
opposed to that of class, but rather they seek to emphasize
'the novel role they play in articulating that rapid diffusion
of social conflictuality to more and more numerous relations
which is characteristic today of advanced industrial societies'. [5]
Extending the argument further Laclau and Mouffe contend that
the calling into question of new forms of subordination is cha-
racterized by continuity as well as discontinuity. The feature
of continuity is to be found in the permanence of an egalitarian
imaginary that allows us to establish an historical connection
between the struggles of the nineteenth century against the in-
equalities bequeathed by the ancien régime and the social move-
ments of today. On the other hand, the aspect of discontinuity
and of historical novelty is to be found in contemporary resis-
tance to the new forms of subordination generated by the three
processes of 'commodification', 'bureaucratization' and 'massif-

ication' mentioned above.[6]

The discontinuity and historical novelty of the new social movements is further discussed by Laclau in the following chapter, where he approaches the definition of 'newness' in terms of the way in which the new struggles have provoked a crisis of a traditional paradigm in the social sciences, concerning the kind of unity characterizing social agents and the forms which conflict between them can take. Laclau writes that traditional conceptualizations of social conflicts have been typified by three major features - i) the determination of the identity of the agents was given through categories belonging to the social structure, so that the area of emergence of every conflict is traced to the 'empirical-referential unity of the group' - struggles are labelled 'peasant', 'bourgeois' etc.; ii) the kind of conflict was determined in relation to a diachronic-evolutionary paradigm, whereby the meaning of every struggle is fixed by a 'teleological-evolutionary scheme' through which the meaning becomes 'objective', viz., 'it does not depend on the consciousness of the agents, but on an underlying movement of history', e.g. the transition from feudalism to capitalism; and iii) to the extent that conflicts became politicised, the plurality of the spaces of social conflict was reduced to a 'unified political space in which the presence of the agents was conceived of as a "representation of interests" '- here the political sphere is a precise 'level' of the social and since the identity of the social agents is constituted at an economic level their presence at the so-called political level can only take the form of a representation of interests.

For Laclau then what is symptomatic of the new social movements is that through their presence the unity of these three aspects of the paradigm is dissolved. Therefore, in the first place, it has become impossible to identify the group, conceived as referent, with an orderly and coherent system of 'subject positions'. So taking the worker as an example it cannot be assumed that there will be a stable relation between his/her position in the relations of production, his/her position as consumer, resident in

a specific area and participant in the political system. The relation between these different positions or identities is not fixed by reference to a pre-given social category but rather it becomes expressed as the result of a complex series of political constructions which cannot be read off unilaterally from the relations of production. Equally these various positions of the social agent have become increasingly autonomous, as, for instance, the bonds which linked the various identities of the worker have become weakened, and according to Laclau 'it is this autonomy which is at the root of the specificity of the new social movements'.

Secondly, the notion that each single position of the social subject can be referred to a rational and necessary succession of stages has also been undermined by the multiplication of political spaces and the coexistence of ideological elements which, according to the diachronic theory of 'stages', ought to have appeared in successive phases of development.

Finally, since the identity of social agents can no longer be constituted at a single level of society the 'representation of interests' model loses its viability and the political becomes, rather than a level, a dimension which, in varying degrees, is expressed in all social practice. Hence, for example, feminist, ecologist or anti-institutional struggles, do not necessarily assume the form of antagonisms whose politicisation must call forth the representation of each of these 'interests' in a different and pre-given political sphere, but instead they generate a direct politicisation of the space in which they are constituted. Therefore, after Laclau, the political imaginary is no longer formed by a 'total model' of society but is constituted around certain demands and specific social relations, so that the 'radically democratic potential of the new social movements lies... in their implicit demand for a radically open and indeterminate view of society', or as Evers (1984) more polemically puts it, 'it is the continuous effort at democratization that matters, not some mythical "D" day on which some winter palace is stormed, the means of production etatized, and freedom promulgated'.[7]

This particular dimension of the new social movements - their expression of a more open and pluralistic form of democracy - has been taken by a number of authors to be a central feature of their historical novelty.[8] And although, as Laclau and Mouffe have reminded us, the presence of an egalitarian imaginary within today's social movements furnishes a continuity with the democratic struggles of the last century, it is indeed the diffusion of collective and participatory values and practices through an ever-widening range of sites of social struggle that gives us one of the constitutive elements of the novelty of the new social movements.

Having outlined some elements of the existing discussion concerning the specificity of the new social movements I believe it is possible to identify three constitutive components of their novelty.

1. First we can mention the emergence of new forms of struggle in relation to new forms of subordination and oppression in late capitalist society. Here we have the discussion of bureaucratization, commodification and massification and the historical novelty of the peace movement, the ecology and anti-nuclear movements can be interpreted in terms of resistance to these contemporary social processes. For example, one of the crucial orientations of the peace movement concerns the struggle against the anti-democratic nature of the bureaucratic decision-making process governing the development of weapons-systems and the link up with the state's influence over the means of communication and the related direction and content of 'public discussion'.[9] On the other hand, movements with a longer history, such as the women's movement and certain regional and urban social movements have to be looked at more in terms of how their demands, modes of operation and social effects changed from their earlier origins. In other words their reaction to the new forms of subordination in late capitalist society must not lead us away from the need to attempt a periodization of their forms of development and differential social impact.[10]

2. Secondly, Laclau's thesis, whereby the autonomization of the
various positions of the social subject, the absence of any pre-
viously-constituted schema for the historical situation of a given
subject position and the dissolution of the 'representation of
interests' model establish the novelty of the new social move-
ments, can be taken to form a second constitutive element.
With this approach we are making of course an irrevocable break
with the notion that the economy can remain determinant 'in the
last instance'.And at the same time since, as Ryan (1984) ex-
presses it the fixing of a final and authoritative category such
as 'the economic' is closely connected to the elaboration of an
authoritarian politics,[11] the emphases given by the new social
movements reflect a more open conceptualization of politics.
Equally, however, we must not assume that there exists a linear
relationship between new movements and a progressive political
orientation, because obviously it cannot be assumed *a priori*
that every new struggle or demand will somehow automatically
express a socialist content. Everything depends on the ways
in which particular social demands and concerns are articulated
to different discourses.[12]

3. Thirdly, I think we can suggest that the previously-mentioned
values of 'basis-democracy', the importance given to high levels
of participation in internal decision-making, the search for
cooperative relations, the respect of social differences, and the
socio-cultural 'signification' of inter-personal relations com-
bine to form another key constitutive element of the novelty of
the new social movements.

Taking these three constitutive elements together we have a suf-
ficient basis for understanding the newness of the new social
movements, but the next question we have to tackle is - to what
extent are these constitutive components omnipresent ? Can we
talk of a universality ?

III. Universality or Historical Specificity ?

In the case of Latin America struggles against new forms of sub-
ordination and oppression have been linked to an intensification
and deepening   of alienation,[13] and also to a crisis of the
state. In both instances it is important to remember that in the
societies of the capitalist periphery the generalization of the
capital/wage-labour relation has been more limited and the means
for the reproduction of labour-power far less developed than in
advanced capitalist societies. With the crisis of the state a
link can be drawn with our previous reference to struggles against
bureaucratization but in contrast to Western Europe, where the
state's penetration of civil society has been far greater and
where the welfare functions of the state have been much more
effectively established, in Latin American societies many of the
new social movements have found a focus of protest around the
following three features.

First, the excessive centralization of decision-making power
within the apparatuses of the state coupled with acute and in-
creasing administrative inefficiency has provided one cause of
opposition to the contemporary state model. Second, and closely
related, the state's incapacity to provide adequate services in
the area of the so-called collective means of consumption
(urban amenities, water, electricity, health, transport etc.)
has also formed a basis for the coalescence of social demands
within both the women's movement and urban social movements
whereby we should emphasize the close interrelationships between
the two.[14] Third, there is the issue of the steadily-eroding
legitimacy of the state itself which when combined with an accen-
tuated scepticism towards the established political parties,
has led to an articulation of social demands that do not flow
directly through the already existing channels of political in-
corporation and control. [15]

Of these three aspects the first two are more specific to the Latin
American experience than the third for in the advanced capitalist
societies the new social movements have also sought to remain
independent of the established organs and institutions of the

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political system, although obviously the extent of this autono-
mous separation has varied with the changing ideological orien-
tations of the different movements.

With reference to the historical specificity of Latin America
another dimension which requires noting concerns the struggle
in countries such as Brazil and Argentina to re-establish formal
democracy and the role played therein by for instance the eccle-
siastical base communities (see Vink's contribution in this
volume), the women's movement and the human rights groups, es-
pecially in the Argentinian case.[16] In Western Europe, on the
other hand, the new social movements have been aiming to 'demo-
cratize democracy' or to extend the principles of participatory
practice and collective decision-making beyond the confines of
democratic institutionalization as prescribed under capitalism.[17]
In this sense there is a strong link with the struggle for so-
cialism for as Williams (1985) has recently argued the only
kind of socialism which now stands any chance of being realized
in the bourgeois democracies is one that would be fundamentally
based on new types of communal, cooperative and collective in-
stitutions. In these, as Williams puts it, 'the full democratic
practices of free speech, free assembly, free candidature for
elections, and also open decision-making, of a reviewable kind,
by all those concerned with the decision, would be both legally
guaranteed and, in now technically possible ways, active'.[18]

In other regions of Latin America, in particular in Central
America, (El Salvador, Guatemala) the fight for a new radical
democracy has to be sustained against highly repressive state-
structures where the degree of institutionalized violence is
such that armed struggle becomes a central and unavoidable com-
ponent of the liberation movement's *raison d'être*. Similarly,
in the Nicaragua of the Somozas, where the state had been trans-
formed into a 'bureaucratic excrescence imposed by force upon
the rest of society',[19] the methods of radical democratic strug-

gle relevant in the advanced capitalist societies were not ap-
plicable. Forms of political action had to be found which were
effective under the specific conditions of military dictatorship
- I shall return to this topic below.

Remaining still with our initially-posited constitutive element
of novelty - the response to new forms of subordination - the
commodification that Laclau and Mouffe discuss is clearly re-
lated to Aglietta's work on the contemporary regime of intensive
capital accumulation most evidently found in the developed capi-
talist economies. In Latin America, whilst 'peripheral Fordism'
may well be an important feature, overall, contraction   of capi-
talist development, especially in the industrial sector, and the
pervasive and devastating socio-economic effects of the debt
crisis have led to a growing impoverishment that cannot be left
out of account in any consideration of the genesis of the new
social movements. Kowarick, in a following chapter on recent
social struggles in São Paulo, examines this issue in the fol-
lowing way. He writes:

> '...there is no linear connection between the precariousness
> of living standards and the conflicts carried forward by
> the groups who are affected by it. This is so because, des-
> pite a variable but common situation of socio-economic ex-
> clusion... the praxes of struggle have widely disparate
> trajectories, pointing to impasses and solutions for which
> objective structural conditions are, at best, merely an e-
> normous backdrop'. It is necessary therefore to recognize
> that 'pauperization and spoliation in themselves are simply
> the raw material that potentially nourishes social conflicts'
> (p. 81).

Turning now to our second and third constitutive components
of the historical novelty of the new social movements, Laclau's
thesis on the crisis in the traditional paradigm of the scien-
tific investigation of social conflict possesses a broad rele-

vance and is pertinent in Latin America as well as in Western Europe.[20] The third element which concerns the question of 'basis-democracy', the search for autonomy, the deconcentration of power, the construction of a new political morality and the fight against all forms of oppression and exploitation would also seem to inhere in the new social movements at the Latin American 'periphery' as well as at the European and North American 'centre'. According to Mainwaring and Viola one of the conditions responsible for the surfacing of new social movements in Brazil and Argentina has been the development of such movements in the North, that is in Western Europe and the United States[21] - examples being the ecology and feminist movements. Although the diffusion of political ideas and new forms of practice, especially in the case of the ecology movement,[22] is a significant factor, with reference to the women's movement it is important to be aware of the long history that this movement has had in Latin America, while at the same time recognizing the differences in priorities and orientation that exist between the women's movement as in the 'North' and 'South' - Molyneux's initial discussion in her paper on Nicaragua is highly relevant here.

Having thus sketched out some contrasts and similarities between the new social movements of Latin America and of the developed capitalist societies we must add the following observation. The attempted comparative examination outlined above has been essentially based on our three constitutive elements of the novelty of the new social movements. What must also be stressed is this. Such movements develop along trajectories born out of civil societies with many crucial historical divergences. The nature of state-society relations, the origin and character of the dominant political discourses, the forms of insertion into world capitalist economy and the variegated composition of social forces all obviously mould the potentiality and range of political effectiveness of these movements . Such phenomena

do not possess an equivalence that stretches from the capitalist periphery to the social formations of Western Europe and North America. Perhaps we can better illustrate this idea by turning to a third series of issues.

III. State Power, Social Movements and Revolution

Recent disputes on class, social movements and socialism have been riven by a number of associated fissures. An instructive example can be found by contrasting Williams with Miliband and Mulhern. Williams, in his treatment of class, politics and socialism, writes that the significant social movements of the last thirty years and the needs and feelings which nourish them 'are now our major positive resources, but their whole problem is how they relate or can relate to the apparently more important institutions which derive from the isolation of employment and wage-labour'. He goes on to suggest that we are now faced with either the 'final incorporation of the labour movement into a capitalist bargaining mechanism, with socialism left stranded as a theory and a sect, or the wide remaking of a social movement which begins from primary human needs'. For Williams these needs are for 'peace, security, a caring society and a careful economy'. He concludes by assailing the outdated assumptions which govern the labour movement, and above all its now 'sickening self-congratulatory sense of a taken-for-granted tradition and constituency'. Finally, he states:

> 'The real struggle has broadened so much, the decisive issues have been so radically changed, that only a new kind of socialist movement, fully contemporary in its ideas and methods, bringing a wide range of needs and interests together in a new definition of the general interest, has any real future'.[23]

Responding to Williams' text, Mulhern (1984) restates the well-known 'class-politics' position. After averring that nothing unites the new social movements except their 'organizational separation from the labour movement', he goes on to sustain

the thesis that the working class is revolutionary on account
of its three immanent features - 'as an exploited class it is
caught in a systematic clash with capital '...; 'as the main
producing class it has the power to halt... the economic appa-
ratus of capitalism...'; 'and as the collective producer it
has the objective capacity to found a new, non-exploitative
mode of production' (emphases all in the original). Thus, fol-
lowing Mulhern, 'this combination of interest, power and crea-
tive capacity distinguishes the working class from every other
social or political force in capitalist society, and qualifies
it as the indispensable agency of socialism' (emphasis added).
And moreover, referring to Williams' idea that social movements
constitute 'our major positive resource', Mulhern retorts by
asserting that it is only the organized working class that can
provide this essential quality. He sums up by stating:

> 'If that resource should, in some calamitous historical
> eventuality, be dispersed or neutralized, then socialism
> really will be reduced to a sectarian utopia beyond the
> reach of even the most inspired and combative social
> movement'.[24]

This last assertive statement finds a supportive echo in
Miliband's (1985) recent critical appraisal of the so-called
'new revisionists'. Miliband holds to the view that it is
the organized working class that remains the principal if not
the only 'gravedigger' of capitalism; here is the indispensable
and necessary 'agency of historical change'. He continues:

> 'And if, as one is constantly told is the case, the or-
> ganized working class will refuse to do the job, then the
> job will not be done; and capitalist society will continue,
> generation after generation, as a conflict-ridden, grow-
> ingly authoritarian and brutalized social system, poisoned
> by its inability to make humane and rational use of the
> immense resources capitalism has itself brought into being
> - unless of course the world is pushed into nuclear war'.[25]

The above passage is further clarified when in discussing the
international dimension Miliband contends that 'not much will
really move until the organized working class decides that it
should'.[26]

The cardinal tenet of Mulhern and Miliband's position is that
it is the organized working class that remains the indispensable
agency of historical change under capitalism, and if that class,
that social force, for whatever reason, does not fulfill its
predetermined revolutionary role then socialism has no future.
For the sake of brevity, I want to concentrate on three aspects
of this expression of political determinism..

First, leaving aside the discussion on how we might best arrive
at a situation or definition of the 'true' working class in re-
lation to the trends of segmentation and fragmentation of the
contemporary production process, it can be effectively argued,
as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have demonstrated, that there is no
a priori, fixed and necessary link between socialist objectives
and the positions of social agents in the relations of produc-
tion.[27] The political direction of the workers' struggle will
depend, as with any other social struggle, on its forms of in-
sertion within a given hegemonic context. At the same time, as
was noted at the beginning of this introduction, the various
subject positions of a worker will be constructed through their
articulation to particular political discourses. As Laclau and
Mouffe suggest, 'in order to advance in the determination of
social antagonisms, it is necessary to analyse the plurality
of diverse and frequently contradictory positions, and to dis-
card the idea of a perfectly unified and homogenous agent, such
as the 'working class' of classical discourse'.[28] However, by the
same token, and as we indicated previously, it cannot be main-
tained that the new social movements must by definition be of
a progressive nature, for there are no 'privileged points for
the unleashing of a socialist political practice; this hinges
upon a 'collective will' that is laboriously constructed from
a number of dissimilar points'.[29] Thus, for example, the polit-
ical significance of an ecological struggle or of a regionalist

social movement, or of a local community struggle is not pre-given; rather it depends on its hegemonic articulation with other struggles and demands.[30]

Second, within the thesis that prioritizes the pre-determined revolutionary potential of the organized working class, one normally encounters a tendency to conceive of socialism simply in terms of the coming to power of this same class, allied to a heteronomous organization of other social sectors. Further, and along the same lines, the interpretation of the political substance and texture of socialism tends to carry with it far more traces of an authoritarian Leninist version than of a collective, democratic imaginary. One aspect of this dimension is signalled by Gorz (1982) when he writes that 'insofar as they have postulated that individuals exhaustively coincide with their social being, and that social being realises the full wealth of human capacities, the theories, utopian visions and political practices of socialism have led to a straightforward negation of the individual subject'.[31] Opposition to Leninist modes of political organization and conceptualization of socialism has been forcefully elaborated by the feminist movement, and Row-botham's (1980) incisive intervention on this question provides an excellent example of the way in which critical but constructive interrogation can be developed.[32]

Finally, what is also striking about the Mulhern and Miliband perspective is its eurocentric, universalist inclination to sustain conclusions about revolution and socialism without drawing on the experience of societies of the capitalist periphery, where revolutions against the dominance of capital have actually taken place. In this area we have to touch on issues of the revolutionary party, state power and the influence of social movements.

A preliminary comparison of the papers by Laclau and Coraggio,
included in this collection, might seem to indicate some im-
portant divergences with respect to the role of the party in
the process of revolutionary change.For Coraggio, looking at
the Nicaraguan experience, certain key political functions must
remain centralized within the structure of a mass party that
maintains a horizontal rather than vertical relation with the
people. On the interrelationship between social movements and
the revolutionary party, Coraggio writes as follows:

> 'At the level of political practice, where the objective
> is not to wipe out all forms of power, but rather to en-
> sure that social power is exercized by the people, the
> movement towards synthesis...... correlates with the pro-
> cess of articulation of social movements in which the
> political parties have historically played a central role.
> In particular, in reflecting on the process of achieving
> a correlation of power which would lead to a break with
> the structures which subjugate the people, we must rein-
> troduce the role of the revolutionary party (emphasis in
> original). Not only because it articulates specific move-
> ments into a front of social forces but also because in
> many cases, it is a product of these movements and of the
> way in which they operate' (p. 225).

In the specific case of Nicaragua, Coraggio highlights the central
importance of the form of articulation between political party
and social movement, indicating the existence of a 'verticalist'
option whereby the mass organizations are located in a subordi-
nate position vis-a-vis the party, and an option wherein the
party articulates the various identities and their corresponding
popular organizations 'horizontally'. The former option can take
us along the Cuban road, with all the organizational and proce-
dural implications of an adapted Leninist model. Such a model
stands in stark contrast to the basic thrust of the radical
democratic project carried forward by many of the new social
movements. However, the so-called 'horizontal' option comes much

closer and recalls an observation made by Laclau and Mouffe on
the role of the party.

They note, for instance, that the party as a political institution
can be one of two things; either 'an instance of bureaucratic
crystallization which acts as a brake upon mass movements', or
'the organizer of dispersed and politically virgin masses', where-
by it can serve as an 'instrument for the expansion and deepening
of democratic struggles'.[33] The second instance relates more
closely to the Nicaraguan case, although the term 'politically
virgin masses' is not entirely pertinent since the masses in
Nicaragua have a longer history of struggle and political con-
sciousness than is often assumed. Nevertheless, in the context
of the role of the party, we can see here a tangible link between
Coraggio's approach and the ideas adumbrated by Laclau and Mouffe.
In the context of the debate around the interrelationships between
the revolutionary party and social movements, Reddock's discussion
of the women's movement in Grenada - see chapter 10 - as well as
Molyneux's more theoretical treatment for Nicaragua, are both
illuminative in the way they bring out the crucial issue of
popular democracy.[34] In general, Nicaragua remains a positive
example, in the sense that a successful revolution against imperia-
list domination has been achieved, and despite continuing U.S.-
aggression, the Sandinista Revolution finds new ways to survive
and go forward. And in this process, popular democracy and politi-
cal space for the development of a range of social movements
gives the Nicaraguan experiment a vital and original historical
significance. But in what ways does the Nicaraguan experience
have a wider relevance for other regions of Latin America? How
are we to view the revolutionary potential of new social move-
ments in societies where capitalist state power appears to remain
so oppressively inviolate? Or, in other cases, where an opening
towards limited democracy has been achieved, as for instance in
Brazil or Argentina, how can that democracy be extended and ge-
neralized when the apparatuses of state repression have not been
dismantled? Many difficult issues are involved here and there
are no facile answers, or at least no easy and effective answers.

Is it perhaps in part because of the apparent intractability of
many of these questions that they are often not raised?
One possible way of approximating a general response to this set
of questions lies through reference to Gramsci's concepts of war
of position and war of movement. In the former case, we have a
close link with many aspects of the new social movements, since
in a war of position we are referring to wide-ranging social or-
ganization and ideological influence whereby the struggle for
popular hegemony on these fronts makes possible or conclusive
a frontal attack or war of movement against capitalist state power.
In countries like Brazil and Argentina with relatively densely-
structured civil societies a war of position is indispensable
and the radical democratic struggles of the new social movements
provide a crucial contribution to just such a 'war'. A success-
ful war of movement, a frontal confrontation involving an armed
struggle against the state, would appear far more elusive.

On another level, in the Peruvian case, *Sendero Luminoso's* vision
of revolutionary victory stems not from an adherence to the
Gramscian concept of a quick war of manoeuvre but from a protracted
guerrilla war. And *Sendero Luminoso*, as Gianotten et al describe
in their following contribution, certainly does not subscribe to
the notion of a war of position.[35]

In contrast, one striking facet of the originality of the Sandinista
revolutionary project has been, in practice, to carry out a necesa-
ry war of movement against Somoza, as a moment in the continuing
war of position against the external and internal forces and agents
of United States imperialism. The forging of a national popular
movement against military dictatorship, within which the capacity
to out-manoeuvre and overthrow the varied repressive apparatuses
of that dictatorship was ably constructed, led then to the task
of continually fighting for the development of popular hegemony
in the post-revolutionary situation. In the Nicaraguan case, as
in other Third World societies to have experienced revolutionary
change, pre-revolutionary civil society was not as fully developed
as in the larger countries of Latin America, such as Mexico, Brazil,

Argentina or Chile. How a revolutionary course might be charted
out in these societies seems, at this point in time, to lead us
into what can only be somewhat premature conjecture. Perhaps,
too, this is one reason why the emergence of new democra-
tic antagonisms has been so enthusiastically heralded; in the
palpable absence of more immediate prospects of radical trans-
formation of state power, new social movements generate new
sources of political hope. And optimism of the will can invariably
attentuate pessimism of the intellect.

IV On the Structure of the Collection

At the outset an attempt was made to define the novelty of the
new social movements. However no question of definition was posed
concerning social movements in general, old, new, ancient or modern.
Touraine (1984), in a condensed presentation of his ideas, suggests
that there are three types of conflict.[36] First conflictual actions
which can be characterized as defensive collective behaviour;
second, conflicts which modify decisions or whole systems of
decision-making which for Touraine become social struggles, and
third, if conflictual actions 'seek to change the social relations
of power in the decisive cultural areas - such as production,
science and ethical values - ' then Touraine proposes the term
'social movement'.[37]
A similar concern to attempt some delineation of types of struggle
can be found in Falabella's (1983) account also,[38] and certainly
there are potential classification problems around this whole
problematic. To what extent can the human rights association in
Argentina be collocated with the ecclesiastical base communities
in Brazil as both being examples of social movements? Referring
to Touraine's three-fold division of social conflict, we might
infer that human rights associations represent an example of
'defensive collective behaviour', but equally in relation to
their ability to sustain collective action they can come to re-
present in Touraine's terminology agents of social struggles,
and further, since they may seek to change the social relations
of power in the area of 'ethical values' then why not a social

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movement too?

Henry, in his contribution to the following section on social
movements and the city, also grapples with problems of classi-
fication, noting, as a point of departure, the risks involved
in directly applying to Latin American reality categories and
ideas produced in Western Europe.[39]

On classification still, Castells (1982) opts for a delineation
of urban movements from social movements; that is, urban move-
ments may become agents of social transformation (à la Touraine)
depending both on their ability to relate their protest to the
overall process of political change, and on the destruction of
the relationships of social integration established by the
state.[40] Consequently, an urban movement for Castells is not
the same as a social movement, the latter term being connotated
by social tranformation. In between there would then appear to
be an intermediate category of 'urban social movement', leading
to a degree of ambiguity that provides a focus for Pickvance's
(1985) recent article.[41]

It will be clear to the reader that, from the underlying positions
of the contributions to the volume, social movements in Latin
America are conceived of in an open and wide-ranging manner.
On the other hand, it must also be pointed out that it was not
the practical intention to try and assemble a comprehensive set
of papers on the new social movements. Instead, we have placed
on the agenda some of the pivotal problems in relation to a
selection of work on the different kinds of movements. Hence,
the volume represents more of an initial reconnaissance and
orientation than an over-arching coverage.[42]

In the first section, Laclau and Evers, in contrasting but mutu-
ally compatible ways, examine the general problematic of new
social movements and political change. In doing so they provide
us with a stimulating range of insights and conceptualizations
for further more detailed investigation.

In the second part, Kowarick, Vink and Henry look at a series of
themes in relation to social movements in the city. Kowarick and
Vink, basing their approaches on the Brazilian experience, draw

a number of important links with workers' struggles. In Kowarick's chapter on São Paulo we are presented with an analysis of the interwoven nature of urban struggles in neighbourhood and factory, whereas Vink elects to investigate the ecclesiastical base communities and the role of religion in the context of the metalworkers' strike of São Bernardo in 1980. Henry then takes up the issue of distinguishing the variety of urban social movements to have emerged in Latin America, basing many of his examples on his Peruvian work.

Peru also provides the focus for the third part of the volume. Firstly, Slater looks at the conditions affecting the surfacing of a number of regional social movements in the military period (1968-1980). This is followed by a more specific analysis of the guerrilla movement *Sendero Luminoso*, and here Gianotten, De Wit and De Wit furnish much useful information on the background to Sendero's rise to political prominence. At the same time, they give us a valuable overview of the different interpretations of Sendero's evolution and strategy.[43]

Finally, Coraggio, Molyneux and Reddock address themselves to the question of revolutionary change, the women's movement and concomitant issues of popular hegemony. This triad of papers includes the scrutiny of political themes whose significance stretches far beyond the shores of Central America and the Caribbean. Despite varying shades of emphasis and nuances of argument they also underline the importance of eschewing eurocentric approaches to the analysis of social movements and political change. Equally these contributions, as well as the foregoing, call our attention to the need for more investigation[44] - not simply for scientific reasons but also as an arm in the struggle for a genuinely democratic social transformation.

NOTES

1. See Mainwaring, S., and Viola, E., (1984), New Social Move-
   ments, Political Culture and Democracy: Brazil and Argentina
   in the 1980s, *Telos*, no. 61, Fall, pp. 17-54.

2. Mouffe, C., (1984), Towards a Theoretical Interpretation of
   'New Social Movements', in: Hanninen, S., and Paldán, L.,
   (eds.) *Rethinking Marx*, Argument - Sonderband AS 109, Berlin,
   pp. 139-143.

3. Mouffe, op.cit. 2, p. 141.

4. Laclau, E., and Mouffe, C., (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist
   Strategy* - towards a radical democratic politics, Verso Books,
   London, p. 159.

5. ibid 4.

6. As one example here, we can mention that the waste of natural
   resources, the pollution and destruction of the environment and
   the subordination of life to the boundless pursuit of profit
   have given rise to the ecology movement and to quite new forms
   of social resistance - see Bahro, R., (1982), *Socialism and
   Survival*, Heretic Books, London.

7. See Evers, T., (1984), 'Basisdemokratie'in Search of its
   Subject: New Social Movements and Political Culture in West
   Germany, *Praxis International*, 4:2, July, p. 145.

8. See, for example, Mainwaring and Viola (1984), op.cit. 1,
   p. 36, and Eder, K., A New Social Movement ? *Telos*, no. 52,
   Summer, pp. 5-20; the latter writer stresses more the cultural
   dimension of these movements and argues that the ecological
   movement as exemplar is characterized by a cultural orienta-
   tion of social development based on a new conception of nature
   and man, and a new moral order rooted in collective needs and
   wants (p. 18).

9. There is a connection here with McCarthy's (1984) recent dis-
   cussion of the 'scientization of politics' in relation to
   Habermas' work on critical theory where it is argued that
   'new potentials for expanded power of technical control make
   obvious the disproportion between the results of the most
   organized rationality and unreflected goals, rigidified value-
   systems and obsolete ideologies' - see McCarthy, T., (1984),
   The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas, Polity Press, Cambrid-
   ge, p. 13. For a comment on the anti-democratic nature of
   decisions on nuclear weapon development, see, for example,
   Kaldor, M., (1982), An Interview, *Telos*, no. 52, Spring, p.88.

10. On the women's movement in the Third World Janyawardena (1982)
    usefully points out that contrary to the Eurocentric assump-
    tion which holds that the movement for women's liberation
    in the Third World has been 'merely imitative of Western
    models', and devoid of its own history, in actual fact fem-
    inist struggles originated in many countries of Africa, Asia
    and Latin America between 60 to 80 years ago - see Jayawardena,
    K., (1982), *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* -

in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

11. Ryan, M. (1984), *Marxism and Deconstruction*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, p. 102.

12. For instance as Mouffe (1984) explains what is really 'new' in the 'new right' is its ability to utilize potential opposition to bureaucratization, increasing social insecurity etc. and to incorporate this opposition into a reactionary discourse that re-emphasizes traditional values and the supposed superiority of a mythical previous epoch: - Mouffe, C., (1984), op.cit. 2, p. 142.

13. See, for example, Karner, H., (1983), Los Movimientos Sociales: Revolución de lo Cotidiano, *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 64, enero-febrero, pp. 25-32.

14. for a recent study, see CEPAL (1984), *La Mujer en el Sector Popular Urbano - América Latina y el Caribe*, Santiago de Chile, especially, pp. 19-116.

15. One recent example is that of '*el movimiento vecinal*' in Venezuela, a country not characterized by the military's suspension of the political institutions of formal democracy - see De la Cruz, R., (1985), Encuentros y Desencuentros con la Democracia - los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales, *Neuva Sociedad*, no. 77, mayo-junio, pp. 87-88.

16. See Mainwaring and Viola (1984) op.cit. 1.

17. The solidarity movement in Poland expresses a similar objective although pitted against another kind of state-structure, governed by the ideological parameters of an ossified 'Marxism-Leninism' - for an interesting discussion see the Special Section on the Polish Crisis, *Telos*, No. 51, Spring 1982, pp. 173-190.

18. Williams, R., (1985), *Towards 2000*, Pelican Books, p. 123. There are some interesting links between Williams' discussion of democracy with its critique of 'commandist' viewpoints and Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) recent work. On reading these two analyses together there is one strongly-expressed standpoint in Laclau and Mouffe which seems to sum up both positions; they write: 'The task of the Left therefore cannot be to renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy' - Laclau and Mouffe (1985) op.cit. 4, p. 176.

19. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) op.cit. 4, p. 180.

20. As a qualifying comment it might be added that the 'diachronic-evolutionary schema' has been generally less influential in Latin America, and also the representation of interests model perhaps less developed than in Western Europe, given the greater permanence of bourgeois democratic institutions in the latter case.

21. Mainwaring and Viola (1984), op.cit. 1, p. 32.

22. Although the development of the ecology movement in Latin America has been much more limited than in Western Europe, due to the predominance of issues of basic survival for major sections of the population, some progress has been made. For instance, in Brazil the group *'Desobedeça'*, inspired by the European ecological parties became established within the Workers Party in São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio. In the November 1982 elections, *Desobedeça*' elected one representative in the state House of Rio de Janeiro. In Argentina too, an ecology group was formed in the early 1980's setting up a journal called *Mutantia*. For further details, see Mainwaring and Viola (1984), op.cit. 1, pp. 29-30.

23. Williams, R., (1985), op.cit. 18, p. 174; other quotations p. 173.

24. Mulhern, F., (1984), 'Towards 2000': News From You Know Where, *New Left Review*, no. 148, November/December, p. 22; previous ibid.

25. Miliband, R., (1985), The New Revisionism in Britain, *New Left Review*, no. 150, March/April, pp. 13-14.

26. Miliband, R., op.cit. 25, p. 25.

27. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), op.cit. 4, see in particular pp. 75-88.

28. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), op.cit. 4, p. 84.

29. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), op.cit. 4, p. 87. It is useful at this point to contrast Laclau and Mouffe on the new social movements with Mulhern's (1985) observation that these movements are increasingly drawn into a 'ceremony of approval' that 'inhibits political and intellectual engagement' - Mulhern, F., (1985), op.cit. 24, p. 20.

30. Again this position can be contrasted with Mulhern's approach contra Williams whereby Mulhern sees the 'community'as a highly dubious focus for left-wing politics thus missing the need for hegemonic struggle at and through all levels and spheres of social existence.

31. Gorz, A., (1982), *Farewell to the Working Class*-an essay on post-industrial socialism, Pluto Press, London, p.90.

32. Rowbotham, S., (1980), The Women's Movement and Organizing for Socialism, in Rowbotham, S., Segal, L., and Wainwright, H., (eds.) *Beyond the Fragments* - feminism and the making of socialism, Merlin Press, London, pp. 21-156.

33. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), op.cit. 4, p.180.

34. The reader will also find Henfrey's (1984) recent article on Grenada useful.
Henfrey, C., (1984), Between Populism and Leninism - the Grenadian Experience, *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 42, vol. II, No. 3, Summer, pp. 15-36.

35. Also on *Sendero Luminoso*, see Taylor, L., (1983), *Marxism in the Andes: Sendero Luminoso and the Contemporary Guerrilla Movement in Peru*, Centre for Latin American Studies, Univer-

sity of Liverpool, and McClintock, C., (1984), Why Peasants Rebel: The Case of Peru's Sendero Luminoso, *World Politics*, Vol. XXXVII, October, No. 1, pp. 48-84.

36. Touraine , A., (1984), Social Movements: Special Area or Central Problem in Sociological Analysis ? *Thesis Eleven*, No. 9, July, pp. 5-15, and also see his *The Voice and the Eye* - an analysis of social movements, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

37. There is some link between this definition and a recent article on urban social movements by Pickvance (1985), where he suggests a distinction between urban movements and 'urban social movement' the latter term being reserved for 'the extremely rare cases of a major change in urban power relations' - Pickvance, C., (1985), The Rise and Fall of Urban Movements and the Role of Comparative Analysis, *Society and Space*, Vol. 3, pp. 31-53.

38. Falabella, G., (1983), *Movimientos Sociales, Intelectuales Organizados y el Intelectual Orgánico en América Latina:* una perspectiva comparada, Centro de Investigaciones del Caribe y América Latina, CISCLA, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Documentos de Trabajo, no. 16.

39. Henry includes here a reference to the influential work of Castells - see, for instance, Castells, M., (1982), Squatters and Politics in Latin America: A Comparative Analysis of Urban Social Movements in Chile, Peru and Mexico, in Safa, H., (ed.), *Towards a Political Economy of Urbanization in Third World Countries*, Oxford University Press, pp. 249-282.

40. Castells, (1982), op.cit. 39, p. 262.

41. Pickvance (1985), op.cit. 37.

42. For a relevant study that had still not arrived in Amsterdam at the time of writing, I would refer the reader to Esterez, J., and Falabella, G., (eds.) (1985), *Movimientos Sociales en América Latina: Perspectiva de los años ochenta*, Editorial Nueva Imagen, México.

43. It can be argued that on most counts *Sendero Luminoso* is not a 'new social movement', certainly not in relation to the way this category has been discussed earlier on. On the other hand, its tactics and strategy as a guerrilla movement are new. Its political immersion in the rural communities of Ayacucho and beyond contrasts markedly with earlier guerrilla movements whose leadership was easily identifiable and whose armed practice remained fragile.

44. One of the few existing research projects on social movements and the state in Latin America was originally launched by UNRISD in Geneva. Stiefel's (1984) overview paper as well as reports published in *Dialogue* are very relevant - see Stiefel, M., (1984), *Social Movements and the State in Latin America* - methodological questions and preliminary findings from an UNRISD research project, (mimeo) UNRISD, Geneva.

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE PLURALITY OF THE SOCIAL

Ernesto Laclau

We have come together in this workshop to try to throw some light
on the new social movements in Latin America. Our concern is thus
rooted within the numerous contemporary debates in which an attempt
is made to determine the radically new forms and dimensions which
social conflict has assumed in recent decades. My contribution to
this discussion is not aimed at a descriptive analysis of the move-
ments as a whole, or of some of them in particular - that is work
to be done by specialists who are more competent in this particu-
lar field than I. Rather, I shall put forward certain theoretical
premises which make it possible to think the novelty and the spe-
cificity of the new forms of struggle and resistance.

The first question that arises when dealing with the new social
movements is: in what respects are they 'new'? In our attempt to
outline a reply, we will refer this novelty, above all, to the
way in which the new struggles bring about a crisis of a traditio-
nal paradigm in social sciences concerning the kind of unity
which characterises social agents and the shapes which conflict
between them can take. Three main characteristics have typified
traditional conceptualizations of social conflicts: the determi-
nation of the *identity of the agents* was given through categories
belonging to the social structure; the *kind of conflict* was deter-
mined in terms of a diachronic-evolutionary paradigm; and the
plurality of spaces of social conflict was reduced, insofar as
the conflicts became politicised, to a *unified political space*
in which the presence of the agents was conceived of as a 're-
presentation of interests'. The first feature refers the area
of emergence of every conflict to the empirical-referential unity
of the group: struggles are labelled 'peasant', 'bourgeois', 'pe-
tit-bourgeois', etc. Each of these categories thus designates both

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the social agent as referent and an assumed *a priori* principle
of unity between the agent's various positions. The second deter-
mines the meaning of every struggle in terms of a teleological,
evolutionary scheme, through which that meaning becomes 'objecti-
ve': it does not depend on the consciousness of the agents, but
on an underlying movement of history - the transition from tra-
ditional to mass society, in some conceptualisations; or the
transition from feudalism to capitalism in others, etc. The
third aspect is an inevitable consequence of the first two: in
the closed society postulated by the synchronic and diachronic
dimensions of the paradigm under scrutiny, the political sphere
is a precise 'level' of the social; if the identity of the social
agents, then, is constituted at a different level - e.g. the
economic - their presence at the political level can only take
the form of a representation of interests. What is characteristic
of the new social movements is that, through them, the unity of
these three aspects of the paradigm has been broken up. On the
one hand, it has become increasingly impossible to identify the
group, conceived as referent, with an orderly and coherent system
of 'subject positions'. Take the example of the worker. Is there
some stable relation between his/her position in the relations of
production and his/her position as consumer, resident in a specific
area, participant in the political system, etc.? Evidently, the
relation between these different positions is far from being ob-
vious and permanent; it is rather the result of complex political
constructions which are based on the totality of social relations
and which cannot be derived unilaterally from the relations of
production. In the 19th century the priority of the relations of
production was due to the long hours spent by the workers in the
factories and their limited access to consumer goods and to general
social participation as a result of their low wages. The transfor-
mation of these conditions in the 20th century, however, has weak-
ened the ties which linked the various identities of the worker
as producer, consumer, political agent, etc. This has had two
results: on the one hand, the social agent's positions become
autonomous - it is this autonomy which is at the root of the spe-
cificity of the new social movements -, but on the other hand,

the type of articulation existing among these different positions
becomes continually more indeterminate. At any rate, they cannot
be derived automatically from the unity of the group as referent.
Categories such as 'working class', 'petit-bourgeois', etc., be-
come less and less meaningful as ways of understanding the over-
all identity of social agents. The concept of 'class struggle',
for example, is neither correct nor incorrect - it is, simply,
totally insufficient as a way of accounting for contemporary
social conflicts.

Secondly, this collapse of the synchronic unity between the dif-
ferent positions of the agent has led to a crisis in the dia-
chronic theory of 'stages': thus in the same way that a determi-
nate subject position - in the example given above the position
in the relations of production - does not automatically provide
any necessary determination of the other positions, it is impos-
sible to refer each single position to a rational, necessary
succession of stages. Very early on Marxism had to deal with the
phenomena designated as 'unequal and combined development',
with the growing coexistence of 'elements' which political prac-
tice had to articulate in the present and which, theoretically,
should have made their appearance in successive phases of develop-
ment. Similarly, the so-called 'modernisation' theories were soon
forced to recognise the uselessness for political analysis of
assigning each aspect of social and economic reality to the succes-
sive stages of 'traditional' and 'modern' society, given the
variety of heterodox combinations of the two, which derived from
the phenomena of economic and social dependence.

Lastly, if the identity of social agents is no longer con-
ceived as constituted at a single level of society their pre-
sence at the other 'levels' can also not be conceived of as a
'representation of interests'. The 'representation of interests'
model thus loses its validity. But, for the same reason, the
political ceases to be a *level* of the social and becomes a *di-
mension* which is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in all
social practice. The political is one of the possible forms of
existence of the social - we shall see which. The new social mo-
vements have been characterised by an increasing politicisation

of social life (remember the feminist slogan: 'The personal is political'); but also it is precisely this which has shattered the vision of the political as a closed, homogeneous space.

At this point one might ask: is it not the case that this plurality of the social and this proliferation of political spaces which lie behind the new social movements, are basically typical of the advanced industrial societies, whilst the social reality of the Third World, given its lower level of differentiation, can still be apprehended in terms of the more classical categories of sociological and class analysis? The reply is that, besides the fact that this 'lower level of differentiation' is a myth, Third World societies have *never* been comprehensible in terms of a strict class analysis. We hardly need to refer to the Eurocentrism in which the 'universalization' of that analysis was based. It saw the categories emerging from distinctions among modes of production, among social classes - i.e. categories which had been conceived of as a way of apprehending the European experience - as constants of every possible society. Starting from this point, sociological analysis followed a very simple course: everything depended on a strategy of recognition, in which the very way in which the questions were asked already presupposed half of the answer. A question such as 'what is the class structure of the agrarian sector in country x or z?' presupposes what it sets out to show, namely, that the divisions between social agents should be treated as class divisions. Likewise, questions about the precise location of the capitalist State within a certain social formation are frequently treated as if that entity - the capitalist State - derived all its essential determinations from a level ontologically different from that in which its historically contingent variations are constituted. (A similar process of essentialist reduction is at work behind questions such as 'What path did the transition from feudalism to capitalism follow in that country or area?'; or 'Was the revolution of such a year *the* democratic bourgeois revolution?').

We should try to avoid this kind of Eurocentric universalism. To do so, we must start by taking a step backwards and look at

entities such as 'classes', 'levels' of the social, etc. as complexes resulting from the *contingent* articulation of smaller entities. We have to determine the theoretical status of these entities and the specificity of that articulatory link, existing among them, a link to which we have referred without, however, providing an adequate theoretical concept of it.

1. Subject positions, articulation, hegemony.[1]

One of the fundamental advances in social sciences in recent years has been the break with the category of the 'subject' as a rational, transparent unity which would convey a homogeneous meaning on the total field of his/her conduct by being the source of his/her actions. Psychoanalysis has shown that, far from being organised around the transparency of an ego, personality is structured in a number of levels which lie outside the consciousness and rationality of the agents. Marxism was early on forced to recognise the fundamental asymmetry between the actual consciousness of the agents and the one which should have corresponded to them according to their historical interests - although its reaction to this discovery, instead of leading to a critique of the rationalism implicit in the notion of 'interests', was rather to reaffirm the latter by means of the 'in itself/for itself' distinction.

This removal of the centrality of the subject in contemporary social science has led to an inversion of the classic notion of subjectivity. Instead of seeing the subject as a source which would provide the world with meaning, we see each subject *position* as occupying differential loci within a structure. This structure or ensemble of differential positions we call a *discourse*. *There is no a priori, necessary relation* between the discourses which constitute the worker, for example, as a militant or as a technical agent in the workplace, and those which determine his attitude towards politics, racial violence, sexism and other spheres in which the agent is active. It is thus impossible to speak of the social agent as if we were dealing with a unified, homogeneous entity. We have rather to approach the social

agent as a plurality, dependent on the various subject positions
by which s/he is constituted within various discursive formations.
This provides us with a theoretical key to understand the peculia-
rity of the new social movements : their central characteristic
is, for reasons which will be discussed later, that an ensemble
of subject positions (at the level of, the place of residence,
institutional apparatuses, various forms of cultural, racial and
sexual subordination) have become points of conflict and political
mobilisation. The proliferation of these new forms of struggle
results from the increasing autonomization of social spheres in
contemporary societies, autonomization which can only be theore-
tically grasped in all its implications if we start from the no-
tion of the subject as a de-centred, de-totalised agent.

We should at this point indicate the theoretical status that can
be attributed to these units of analysis which we have called 'sub-
ject positions'. They certainly give us the instruments with which
to think the specificity of a number of situations which have evad-
ed classical sociological analysis. For example, they enable us to
see that a category such as the 'working class' of the European ex-
perience was the result of an articulation between specific subject
positions at the level of the relations of production, and other
positions at a separate level which were nevertheless organised
around a central axis constituted by the former. The explanation
for this lies in particular historical factors connected with the
specificity of that situation. In other historical contexts the po-
sitions at the level of the relations of production will be articu-
lated with the others in a different way, without it being possible
to guarantee *a priori* the centrality of any one of them. One problem,
however, remains unsolved: what is it that guarantees the *separation*
between the different subject positions. The answer is: nothing -
none of them is immune to the action of the others. Their differen-
tiation is certainly related to the impossibility of establishing an
a priori, necessary link between them; but this does not mean that
there are not constant efforts to establish between them historically
contingent and variable links. This type of link, which establishes
between various positions a contingent, non-predetermined rela-
tion, is what we call *articulation*. There is no necessary link

between racism and militancy on the part of white workers, but at different moments there will be discourses that will try to provide an articulation between the two from politically opposed standpoints - the immigrants may be portrayed as foreigners who come to steal the jobs of the white nationals, or alternatively racism may be portrayed as an ideology which tries to stir up xenophobic feelings in the interests of the capitalists. Every subject position is thus constituted within an essentially unstable discursive structure, since it is subjected to articulatory practices which, from different standpoints, subvert and transform it. If the link between anti-racism and workers' militancy were to reach the point that each would necessarily imply the other, they would both have become part of the same discursive formation and would thus no longer constitute different subject positions, but differential *moments* of a unified subject position. In such a case, there would be no room for any articulatory practice. Because this is not the case, because social reality never arrives at such a point of closure, the subject positions always display a certain degree of openness and ambiguity (in technical terms, they always retain, to *some* extent, the character of 'floating signifiers').

This last point is decisive. *There is no subject position whose links with the others is permanently assured; and consequently, there is no fully acquired social identity which is not subject, to a greater or lesser degree, to the action of articulatory practices.* The rise of fascism in western Europe at the end of World War I can be seen as a vast process of re-articulation which deeply transformed the social identities and which fascinated political analysts of totally different ideological persuasions, because it shattered the confidence in the permanence attributed by the dominant conception of progress to the basic articulations of the liberal State. Similarly, the analysis of contemporary new social movements must not allow us to fall under the illusion that they are necessarily progressive. If they open up the *potential* for advance towards freer, more democratic and egalitarian societies, it is clear that this is only a *potential*, and that its realisation will depend largely on the forms of articulation which are set up among the different democratic demands. The ab-

sorption of part of these demands by neo-conservative populist projects (e.g. Reagan, Thatcher) is an example which is only too obvious and which should serve as a warning.

The foregoing analysis shows us a double movement of opposite signs. On the one hand, there is tendency towards autonomy on the part of the separate subject positions; on the other, there is the opposite tendency to fix them, through articulatory practices, as moments of a unified discursive structure. The question then inevitably arises : 'are these two moments contradictory?' We can only reply in the affirmative : carried to extremes, the logic of autonomy and the logic of articulation are contradictory. However, there is no contradiction in our theoretical position, since there is no inconsistency in affirming that the social is constructed by the partial limitation of the effects of contradictory logics. We should stress the implications of this assertion. It would be an essentialist premise to assume that every social contradiction or incompatibility can be reduced to a moment in the operation of an underlying logic which would fully restore the positivity of the social - as in the case of the Hegelian 'cunning of reason'. It is precisely the rejection of this rationalist notion of the social which leads us to see its plurality and instability - which is shown among other things, by the possibility of contradiction - as constitutive and fundamental. In other words, the social is in the last instance groundless. The forms of rationality it shows are only those resulting from the contingent and precarious links established by articulatory practices. 'Society' as a rational, intelligible entity is consequently impossible. The social can never be fully constituted as positivity.

Now, among the factors which combine to subvert the positivity of the social, there is one which has prime importance : the presence of antagonism. When articulatory practices operate in a field criss-crossed by antagonistic articulatory projects, we call them *hegemonic practices*. The concept of hegemony supposes the concept of antagonism, to which we shall now turn.

2. Antagonisms and the multiplication of political spaces.

Antagonism involves the presence of negativity within the social.
Let us take as an example a political discourse which seeks to
create the division of social space into two antagonistic camps :
'the conservatives, liberals and social democrats are the same
vis-à-vis the interests of the working class'. This discourse sub-
verts the positivity of the social in two closely linked dimen-
sions. Firstly, the positivity of the social is denied inasmuch as
the *system of differences* on which it is based is subverted - con-
servatives, liberals and social democrats as positive entities,
differing from one another, are subverted by the discourse in
question, in so far as each of these positivities is presented as
equivalent to the others. In others words, from a certain perspec-
tive they all represent the same. There is, however, a second sense
in which the subversion of positivity takes place. If we look more
closely we see that it is the relation of opposition to the inter-
ests of the working class which makes possible the equivalence of
all these instances. Now this relation of opposition is not the
differential, positive coexistence between two entities, but the
fact that one of them is the purely negative reverse of the other.
The division of the political space into two camps prevents them
both from being constituted through determination, difference and
positivity since the identity of each is established as the nega-
tion of the other and, thus, the internal differential moments of
each camp are presented as a chain of equivalences which constructs
the opposition to the other camp. This is why antagonism prevents
the social from becoming 'society' - i.e. a stable and conceptual-
ly apprehensible system of differences.

We are thus saying that the social can only be constituted and
conceived as a totality, through the expulsion of a certain 'sur-
plus of meaning' - the other camp - which is constructed and re-
presented as negativity. To put it in a different way, a certain
social order can only be constituted on the base of a frontier
which separates it from what is radically 'other' and opposed to
it. Let us take two diametrically opposed examples of these op-
posed social logics of equivalence and difference, in order to
arrive at an understanding of the radical nature of the change

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wrought in the political imaginary by the rise of the new social movements.

The first case is that of millenarianism. Here the logic of equivalence is unchallenged. *All* the aspects of urban culture - differences in dress, habits, even skin colour - are presented as the negation of the culture of the peasant community. One type of community is radically exterior to the other. But this very exteriority implies, firstly, that there is *only one* space in which antagonisms are constituted, and, secondly, that this space, far from calling for a complex political construction, is a primary, fixed datum of experience. In other words, the dimension which we have defined as *hegemony* and *articulation* is absent.

The second, diametrically opposed example, is that of the practices and ideologies which have accompanied the establishment of the Welfare State. Here the focal point of constitution of the social and political imaginary is a horizon establishing the possibility of an *unlimited integration*. *Every* demand can be (potentially) satisfied, and can as such be considered as a legitimate difference within the system. Here the logic of difference is extended towards a tendentially unlimited horizon. The project is the construction of a society without internal division or frontiers (Daniel Bell's 'the end of ideology', the Tory slogan 'one nation'). It is in the movements of displacement of this internal political frontier that we must seek the distinctive features of contemporary social struggles.

The ensemble of historical experience and political discourses in 19th century Europe was dominated by the displacements and transformations of this internal frontier, of this line which constitutes social negativity. In the period 1789-1848 the dividing line was drawn by the opposition 'people/Ancien Régimes'. The 'people' was a powerful entity within the political imaginary - a 'myth' in Sorel's usage - because it organised the mass of forces opposed to the dominant order into a vast system of equivalences. Even at a time when it became increasingly difficult to see both camps as simple *givens*, and when the internal frontiers required, correspondingly, an increasing effort of political cons-

truction, one can still say that, in general, the line separating
the two camps continued to act as a stable framework of significa-
tions which made it possible to identify social agents and their
antagonisms. It was when this framework of stable significations
began to break up, and when the symbolic productivity of the
'people' as an agent of historical struggles began to fail, that
Marxism attempted to conceive the internal frontier of the social
in terms of a different dividing principle : the class division.
Now, it is of the greatest importance to realise that for Marxism
this partition, which was constituted in the economic sphere,
could only reproduce itself without alteration in the political
sphere in a distant future, when capitalist development had sim-
plified the social structure and the class struggle had reached
its climax in a simple showdown between capitalists and proleta-
rians. The failure of capitalism to evolve in this way, and the
increasing complexity of class structure in advanced industrial
societies, rendered class division,as a constitutive principle of
an internal social frontier,less and less operative in its ef-
fects and increasingly dependent upon contingent forms of politi-
cal construction. To put it in a different way, *from this point
on politics was impossible without articulation and hegemony.*

The transition to this new form of politics implies a decisive
change : the transformation of the role of the *political imagi-
nary.* By this we mean the ensemble of significations which, with-
in a determinate ideological-discursive complex, function as a
horizon - i.e. as the moment of equivalent *totalisation* of a
number of partial struggles and confrontations. This horizon is
always present, but its role in the constitution of political
significations can vary considerably. We can indicate two extreme
situations. In the first one, there is a radical disproportion
between the actual situation of domination and the possibility
of combatting the dominant force and, in this respect, of waging
an effective war of position against it. In such a case, the con-
flict is *exclusively* conceived and experienced at the imaginary
level; the function of the horizon is not to allow the totalisa-
tion of a mass of partial confrontations, but, on the contrary,
to constitute their primary signification. But by the very fact

that this horizon has this primary constitutive function, the
social can *only* be experienced and conceived as a totality. In
the second case, by contrast, each partial struggle is success-
ful in constituting itself as a war of position and, as such,
draws out of itself, from its differential uniqueness, the world
of significations which allow the constitution of a social or
political identity. The moment of totalisation is thus *purely*
a horizon, and its relation to the concrete antagonisms becomes
unstable and takes on a certain exteriority.

Within such a perspective, we can formulate the distinction be-
tween the social struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries as
follows. In the 19th century, social struggles led not so much
towards a proliferation of political spaces and a politicisation
of each social antagonism, but rather to the construction of ways
of giving to these antagonisms access to a relatively unified
political space. To this extent, there was always a distance be-
tween the areas of emergence of antagonisms and the area of con-
struction of the political. As a result of that, the presence of
the former in the latter had to take on the form of a relation
of representation. Moments of crisis in the political system
were moments in which new social antagonisms directly impinged
on the traditional political spaces (1830, 1848, 1871); but,
in any case, these crises were always crises of a *total* model
of society - what we have called a unified political imaginary.
In recent decades, by contrast, the multiplication of points of
rupture which has accompanied the increasing bureaucratisation
of social life and the 'commodification' of advanced industrial
societies, has led to a proliferation of antagonisms; but each of
them has tended to create its own space and to politicise a spe-
cific area of social relations. Feminist, ecologist, anti-institu-
tional struggles and those of the marginal groups do not generally
assume the form of antagonisms whose politicisation should lead to
the representation of each of these 'interests' in a different
and preconstituted political sphere, but they lead rather to a
direct politicisation of the space in which they are each const-
ituted. This means only that the moment of totalisation, the di-
mension of horizon of the political imaginary, is no longer

constituted as a 'total model' of society, but is restricted to certain demands and certain specific social relations. The radically democratic potential of the new social movements lies precisely in this - in their implicit demand for a radically open and indeterminate view of society, in so far as every 'global' social arrangement is only the contingent result of bargaining between a plurality of spaces and not a foundational category, which would determine the meaning and limits of each of these spaces.

Political spaces and social movements in Latin America.

How are we to extend the preceding reflections to the process of formation of Latin American societies, to the specific forms in which the political has been constructed in them? We have already referred the formation of the political imaginary to a basic asymmetry : to the distance which prevents the stabilisation of any system of differences as a positive, complete totality, closed in on itself, and the referral of this moment of closure to the totalizing dimension of a horizon, instituting social division and antagonism. From this perspective we can say that the field of politics in Latin America has been constructed, in the past century, around two successive, basic , totalizing matrices : liberalism and populism. Both seem to be called into question by the social movements of the past twenty years, which point in the direction of a new experience of democracy. We will concentrate our analysis on these two historical matrices, since the crisis of them both brings the specificity of the new situation into relief.

The liberal political imaginary conceived Latin American societies as systems of differences - in the sense already indicated - whose expansion would progressively bridge the gap which separated them from the European societies. The idea of this closing gap was the dimension of horizon which was at the root of the constitution of all political significations. Each political reform, each technical innovation, each economic transformation, would be interpreted - in the light of the positivist ideology of progress - as a step towards a type of society which existed completely and explicitly

only in liberal capitalist Europe. Without this reference to a
reality external to the Latin American societies, the social and
political experience of the latter was meaningless : this is why
this imaginary dimension became the fundamental key and the total-
ising moment of the whole political experience. Social division
was conceived as a frontier which exactly reproduced the terms of
this imaginary dimension. Sarmiento - and the rest of Latin Ame-
rican liberalism - had already said it : the fundamental division
was between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism'. Two symmetrically op-
posed systems of equivalence sliced political space in two.

This political horizon was organized around the following dimen-
sions : i) the existence of an internal frontier between the
rationality of a political world modelled on Europe and that
'fringe' constituted by the native backwardness of Latin American
social reality; ii) the momento of antagonism was provided by
the existence of that dividing frontier - what was beyond it could
not be integrated as difference, but had to be dominated and des-
troyed; iii) the progressive advance of 'civilisation' would
end up by replacing that more primitive world - in this way the
ideal could be attained of homogeneous societies, in which the
logic of difference would hold an undivided sway. This last point
is decisive : the horizon constitutive of the liberal imaginary
found its point of closure, its totalising dimension, in a future
reduction of the social to a pure logic of difference and in the
ejection of the logic of equivalence ('the two nations') from
the political sphere. The oppositional movements which emerged
at the time could be located at either of the two sides of the
political frontier resulting from the hegemony of the liberal
discourse. Either they totally rejected the latter and presented
themselves as counter-totalities - as in the case of the Canudos
movement in Brazil - or they were constructed as antagonisms in-
ternal to the liberal imaginary, which did not question the 'Ci-
vilization/Barbarism' dichotomy - such was the case with the
emerging socialist and anarchist groups, generally organized
around European immigrants in the urban centers. The liberal
imaginary was thus a horizon which aimed to *close* the social,
to constitute it as 'society'. It is important to recall that the

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populist imaginary started from an indentical totalising aspira-
tion. The imaginary dimension of liberalism ceased to be produc-
tive at the point when hope had been lost in the possibility of
its unlimited expansion, in its capacity to extend its frontiers
and absorb all antagonisms within a homogeneous system of dif-
ferences. When this expansive dimension came into crisis, the
role of the frontier was transformed : what had been *borders*
became *limitations*. The liberal system was no longer seen as a
tool of progress and social homogenisation, but as a simple sys-
tem of domination. This is the base from which populism emerged
as a new matrix of the political imaginary. Two features stand
out for comment. Firstly, while the liberal imaginary point of
closure was a horizon provided by a pure logic of difference,
in the case of populism this horizon was constituted by the af-
firmation of social division and the logic of equivalence. The
totalising dimension of the social is instituted through basic
oppositions such as 'people/oligarchy', 'nation/imperialism',
etc. Secondly, this imaginary dimension defines nodal points
around which the new political horizon is organized : the lead-
er, the armed forces, or the appeal of technical expertise and
economic development. Populism, in other words, remains a dis-
course of the totality of the social, which sets up a frontier
between the social forces whose relation of equivalence consti-
tute the popular camp and those other, symmetrically opposed,
which represent the camp of domination.

What is particularly new and striking in the social movements
which have emerged in Latin America in the last twenty years is
that - perhaps for the first time - this totalising moment is
absent, or at least seriously called into question. Popular mo-
bilisations are no longer based on a model of total society or
on the crystallisation in terms of equivalence of a single con-
flict which divides the totality of the social in two camps,
but on a plurality of concrete demands leading to a proliferation
of political spaces. This is the dimension which, it seems to me,
is the most important for us to clarify in our discussions : to
what extent do the new mobilisations break with a totalising

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imaginary, or, on the contrary, to what extent do they remain im-
prisoned within it? This problem involves an issue of fundamental
importance for the future of democracy in Latin America : will
the experience of the opening up of the political systems after
the crisis of the dictatorships lead to the reproduction of
the traditional political spaces, based on a dichotomy which
reduces all political practice to a relation of representation?
Or will the radicalisation of a variety of struggles based on
a plurality of subject positions lead to a proliferation of
spaces, reducing the distance between representative and repre-
sented?

1 The theoretical considerations in this paper are developed in
  E. Laclau and Ch. Mouffe (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*,
  London, Verso Books.

IDENTITY: THE HIDDEN SIDE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN
LATIN AMERICA

Tilman Evers

I. Introduction

Who or what is moving in the so-called new social movements in
Latin America? How? Why, and where? Our doubts have multiplied
alongside the multiplication of these new social groupings: workers
associations organizing independently and even in opposition to
traditional trade union structures and political parties; squatter
movements and neighbourhood councils springing up in virtually all
the big cities of the region and communicating among each other
on a local and even national level; numerous base level communit-
ies within the Catholic Church spreading even into large parts of
the countryside; indigenist associations appearing autonomously on
the political scene; women's associations and even decidedly
feminist groupings; human rights committees converting themselves
into focal points of social communication and consciousness; youth
meetings; educational and artistic activities on a popular level;
coalitions for the defence of regional traditions and interest;
environmental movements; a patchwork of self-help groupings among
unemployed and poor people. All this just in the three countries
of which I have some personal knowledge: Brazil, Chile, Peru.

And in the same countries: hunger and criminality; gangs assaulting
supermarkets, or even thousands of campesinos marching upon pro-
vincial towns in search of food; an armed anti-modernist rebellion
(Sendero Luminoso); marks of misery, political oppression and cul-
tural devastation on almost every lower class individual. And
alongside all this: a well-established tradition of political part-
ies, among them a variety of semi-clandestine leninist parties,
but also attempts at a renewed, non-leninist socialism (PT, Conver-
gencia Socialista); effective professional associations and econo-

mic interest groups....

Enough to bewilder any observer. Nothing seems to fit. Not only
is reality changing, it is moving out of the realm of our modes
of perception and instruments of interpretation. What has been
said with regard to the West European industrialized countries
probably applies just as much to Latin America: the ribbon between
social movement and social knowledge has been torn, and any intent
to knit it together again has to start off with the painful recog-
nition of its rupture.[1]

We do not know what these new social movements are, and whatever
direction we take towards a new understanding, we shall err to
some extent. Paradoxically, this has eased off the fear to err
and cleared the field for 'schools' of a new, unconventional and
creative thinking in (and on) Latin America.[2] The greatest error
would obviously be to stick to old categories of proven inadequacy
- we can therefore take the liberty to experiment. And in a way,
this experiment will be part of the movement.

Maybe the most prudent starting point within this field consists
precisely in reflecting this rupture between reality and percep-
tion: What is it, in these new phenomena, that subverts our
categories?

The following pages are an essay in that direction. Its necessary
limitations are clear from this starting point. What I mean to
say can be summed up in four points.
1. Political power as a central category of social science is too
   limiting a conception for an understanding of new social move-
   ments; their potential is mainly not one of power, but of re-
   newing socio-cultural and socio-psychic patterns of everyday
   social relations, penetrating the microstructure of society.
2. The direction of this creative process is necessarily open,
   embryonic, discontinuous and plagued by contradictions - and
   therefore difficult to perceive. As a first step towards an al-
   ternative society it represents something like the unorganized
   'back side' of the social sphere whose front side of well-
   established, mutual systemic reinforcements is occupied by the

dominant society.

3. In a first attempt to give a name to the direction of this process, maybe the dichotomy 'alienation - identity' provides some insights.

4. Embedded in this process is the procreation of its proper subjects. As yet, these subjects cannot be thought of as social entities or individuals in their wholeness, but rather as fragments of subjectivity cutting through the consciousness and practice of individuals and organizations.

II. Some current interpretations: Broadening the sphere of 'the political'.

Of course, to state that we do not know what these movements are, definitely and precisely, does not mean that we do not know anything about them. On the contrary, we can draw upon quite an amount of accompanying reflections, starting with the constant efforts of self-reflection and expression of many of these movements themselves. Perhaps one of the hints to the essence of these movements lies precisely in this effort, especially visible for example in the new 'authentic' workers unions and in Catholic base level communities, to define themselves as new and distinctive with regard to traditional politics and to be the founders and wardens of their own traditions of social knowledge.

The main thrust of this quest for an autonomous identity appears to be directed against the generalized attitude and practice of tutelage with regard to social movements that characterizes traditional Latin America politics. This applies as much to conservative paternalism and populist manipulation as to the technicist understanding of history inherited by Latin American Marxists from the Third International, according to which the course of history can be known beforehand, thus legitimizing the illuminated vanguard in possession of this knowledge to command the process of production of the forthcoming revolution.[3] Within this conception, social movements had at best the role of supposedly unstructured 'mass movements' to be integrated into the workers organizations as the social movement of the proletariat, or of special political

'fronts' to be subordinated to the party leadership as the sole
organ of 'doing politics'.

Leaving aside interpretations in the line of marxist traditional-
ism which try in some way to reaffirm the political monopoly of
parties, Latin American scholars have perceived this tendency to-
ward taking politics into one's own hands as a broadening of the
sphere of 'the political'. Precisely those efforts of military
dictatorships to suppress politics, closing down the traditional
channels of political articulation, had the counterproductive
effect of politicising the primary expressions of social life
such as housing, consumption, popular culture and religion. Coming
at a time of a profound crisis of the left - less because of re-
pression than because of the theoretical and practical defeat that
led to it - the invention of new and autonomous forms of social
expression was as much a necessity as an opportunity. The manifold
variety of groups, workshops, centres of self help, committees,
etc. was 'spontaneous' only in the sense that they followed no
common plan and obeyed no central control; but behind this 'spon-
taneity' was a patient and arduous 'ants-labour' of organizing
and structuring small nuclei which were trying to cope with the
hardship of everyday life. If there was any centralized organi-
zation behind this, it was the Catholic church, in its progressive
parts, that lent its roof to many of these initiatives.

Together with the emergence of new fields of political action,
corresponding new ways of 'doing politics', alongside the associat-
ed new political agents, started to emerge.[4] According to this
line of interpretation, the intellectual task for today consists
in "thinking the construction of a new hegemony through direct
action of the masses, undertaking a reconceptualization of politics
that broadens its realm and recovers as valid action the vast
popular field with its everyday life, thus accepting the challenge
of visualizing a project of society from the viewpoint of the
practice of the popular classes".[5] Instead of a '*partidistà*'
viewpoint, a '*movimientista*' standpoint is called for.[6]

This line of interpretation - whose richness I cannot possibly
sum up in a few sentences - has given valuable impulses towards

an adequate understanding of the new social movements. Far from
considering its findings false, I go along with them all the way
- my concern is whether they go far enough in their search for
new concepts. I feel that some parameters of the criticised tra-
ditional conceptions have escaped our critical eye and have
successfully made their way into the new lines of thought.

Basically, this holds for the very idea of the centrality of pol-
itics. When we speak of 'rethinking politics' or of 'broadening
its realm', what remains unchanged is the central and determining
reference to politics itself. As a part of conceptual centralism,
we continue to consider politics as a specialised sphere, toward
which the various expressions of social life coalesce and from
which they can be altered. Accordingly, the overall question
guiding this new line of thought has not changed with regard to
traditional thinking: to reappraise the political role of base
level movements means that we are looking for the same thing, only
with a better topic: its political potential.[7]

Even though we speak of social movements, we are obviously not
interested in new social agents emerging from them, but in po-
litical ones; we are not paying attention to new ways of 'doing
society', but of 'doing politics'. In one word, our universal
measure continues to be that of power. What do these new practices
represent, converted into the universal currency of power ?

Alongside points of rupture, there appear to be lines of semi-
conscious continuity in our ways of thinking that make the whole
operation look more like an opening up of old concepts rather
than their supersession. The 'recognized'list of political actors
and forms of action organized around the state and the sphere of
production receives the important addenda of 'civil society' and
of 'social movements'. With this, cultural production as well as
the whole sphere of reproduction are accepted as valid political
fields.[8] Under the category of 'hegemony', it is accepted that
within the perspective of an anti-capitalist movement a multi-
issue reality (Gramsci) and a multi-class identity (Laclau and
others) is not only inevitable, but positively indispensable

And it is admitted that these new political actors are not se-
condary to political parties, but at least parallel.

Nevertheless, the whole aim of this reformulation is to discover
ways of enhancing the political within this new-found reality.
Consequently, at the end of the discussion the question of a new
political party emerges.[9] New, different, incomparable, democratic,
- but a political party, in the last resort.

I do not intend to question the validity of this line of under-
standing – who could negate the importance of political power ?
Nevertheless, I wonder whether power is the only or most important
potential for social transformation we can find in these move-
ments and groupings.

Much less do I intend to postulate that there are realms of so-
cial life exempt from politics; one thing we have learned is that
power relations penetrate every aspect of social life. My point
is rather the complementary one: it is sufficiently clear that
to an even greater extent every power relation is penetrated by
social life. Treating politics as something separable from the
whole of social reality is by no means a natural law, but a his-
toric construction of bourgeois society that has been internalized
profoundly into the modes of perception of friend and foe alike.
Of course, the century-old social and intellectual practice of
this separation has had its strong material bearings on social
structures, and thus a social knowledge organized around the ab-
straction of power is well warranted by historical experience.

Nevertheless, as an historical construction, our everyday practice
- starting with our manner of perception - can be oriented toward
reinforcing this separate centrality of power, or toward down-
grading it. It is my impression that the 'new' element within the
new social movements consists precisely in creating bits of social
practice in which power is not central; and that we will not come
to understand this potential as long as we look upon it from the
viewpoint of power *apriori*.
One indication of this possible shortcoming in current interpre-
tations is the fact that the emergence of new social movements

has not depended on the specific political situation created by
military dictatorships nor on a clear-cut defeat of left parties;
we find such movements in countries like Venezuela that have not
suffered an interruption of their liberal institutions, or in
Peru where the left has been expanding its influence alongside
the emergence of new social movements.

The fact that the same term is being used for new forms of so-
cial expression in industrialized countries and that there are
obvious analogies between these movements is a further indication
that they owe their existence not to a specific political setting
but to something very much rooted in the present day social de-
velopment of capitalist societies.

III. Clues for a Different Understanding

All this leads me to the question: could it be that the historical
contribution these movements are about to offer does not consist
in enhancing the political potential of a revolutionary left, but
on the contrary in rescuing fragments of a meaningful social life
from the grip of politics (including that of the left) ? In other
words: are these movements 'new' insofar as they are aimed at
reappropriating society from the state?

For the necessity of organizing into an argument what is hardly
more than an intuition I shall develop this idea through a sequen-
ce of four theses.

First thesis: The transformatory potential within new social
movements is not political, but socio-cultural.
Among the recurrent traits of these new movements we have become
accustomed to find (of course not in all of them) a relatively
small number of participants; non-bureaucratic and even informal
structures; collective decision making; relatively little social
distance between members and leadership; a rather untheoretical
immediate way of perceiving and presenting the social aims of
the movement, etc. Many of the groupings are directly dedicated
to cultural activities (in the broadest sense); others are making
use of forms of cultural expression like music, theatre, dance,

poetry etc. for propagating their aims. For many participants, the fact of participating itself represents a strong educational aspect, even when the original motive was a material necessity like securing legal recognition for the plots of land occupied for housing.

Quite frequently, observers point to these traits as an indication of the weak, pre-political nature of these groupings. According to this viewpoint, cultural activities are either a tactical camouflage or a political naivety. And insofar as these movements have to survive and struggle within a given power reality, this viewpoint is justified.

Nevertheless, there could be another side to the coin on which these forms of associating and acting do not appear negatively as immature forms of politics, but positively as germs of a different social life less afflicted   by the plagues of present day capitalism, in its peripheral version. Why should the experience of cooperation be illegitimate in a society marked by a ferocious competition for survival ? Why should personal relations on a more egalitarian and less utilitarian base be considered immature in a capitalist environment that tends to convert all social life into market relations ? Will culture as an original field of human expression have to wait until after the revolution ? Does solidarity have only an instrumental value within certain political aims ? And with regard to the openly political activities of some of these movements, for example that of the 'authentic' workers unions in São Paulo, why should their attempt at reunifying social interests with their political expression in the hands of the respective social sectors be considered a less valid political form than that dominated by professional bureaucratic mediators ?

Thus, the innovatory capacity of these movements appears to lie less in their political potential than in their ability to create and experiment with different forms of social relations in everyday life. Of course, this process is taking place at a level far below existing power structures and will probably never develop by itself into a revolutionary threat to the dominant society.

But is it therefore irrelevant?

Increasingly, we have come to understand that social structures have no existence outside a social practice. The existing reifications of these structures, like technology, constructions, laws etc. could not by themselves uphold the dominant order for a single minute, were they not put into action accordingly by social actors. It is the millions of small everyday acts of unreflected obedience to the existing order that create, reproduce and reinforce social structures.
This everyday practice is prefigured within the acting individuals by modes of perception, beliefs, values and orientation, most of them operating unconsciously. No structure of social domination could survive were it not for this representation on the socio-cultural and socio-physical level of everyday life.

It is within this cellular structure of society that the everyday 'doing it differently' of new social groupings takes its meaning. Exactly because these 'microphysics of power' depend on operating subconsciously, even a few, weak models of a deviant social practice signify a potential danger insofar as they tend to put into question the unconscious automatism of obedience. By creating spaces for the experience of more collective social relations, of a less market-oriented consciousness, of less alienated expressions of culture and of different basic values and assumptions, these movements represent a constant injection of an alien element within the social body of peripheral capitalism.

Of course, whatever effect we expect from this small-scale counter-culture will only become manifest in the very long term. But it could, in the long run, prove to be more incontestable and irreversible than many abrupt changes within the power cupola, because it has been rooted in the everyday practice and in the corresponding basic orientations in which all social structures have their foundations. By this, and by reclaiming politics as a constant element within social life and not separated from it, this socio-cultural potential of the new social movements may turn out to be not less, but more political than action directly oriented towards existing power structures.

- When discussing this point with my compañera, her objections
came immediately: You must be thinking of middle class associa-
tions, she said, or at best of your Catholic base level communi-
ties in São Paulo with their strong working class component.
The truly marginalized sectors of the poor population simply do
not have the physical energy to go about creating popular cul-
ture and new forms of sociability. With regard to culture, their
first concern is to reassure themselves of their human dignity,
which will probably mean an effort at imitating the dominant
culture. Whatever forms of association they create are dictated
by pure necessity and dissolve the moment these necessities
change.

These are serious objections. Social reality itself seems to
conspire against 'new' social movements representing anything
new. If there is anything new, in what shape can we expect to
find it ? This leads to the next thesis:

Second thesis: The direction of this counter-cultural remodelling
of social patterns is open, forming part of a utopian 'hidden
reverse side' of the social sphere, deformed by its 'front'.
Obviously, new social movements are inserted in the dominant so-
cial and political context of their respective countries and re-
ceive from this context their first and foremost features. It is
within this framework that the question of their political poten-
tial is valid and necessary and our habitual mode of perception
is adequate. But, we will probably not perceive anything substan-
tially new about these movements, viewing them from this perspec-
tive.
If there are new elements, they will probably appear in such awk-
ward forms that we shall be unable to appraise them as such un-
less we adapt our expectations beforehand. Considering the con-
stant pressure of existing realities, any pattern not adapting
closely to this reality will appear to be weak, implausible,
fragmented, disorganized, discontinuous and contradictory.
At this point, a phrase written ten years ago by Negt/Kluge, a
sociologist and a cineast working together on proletarian culture,
comes to my mind: 'Under fully established capitalist domination',

they write, 'proletarian culture is something coherent from the
aspect of non-emancipation; from the aspect of emancipation it
is something incoherent'.[10] Just as bourgeois society demanded
centuries of cultural premonitions for its gestation and continued
to be something improbable and inconceivable up to the 18th cen-
tury, they argue, proletarian culture will not find its own ex-
pression until the advent of socialism. Within present society,
proletarian culture is perversely organized in a way which
stresses its subordinate situation; and whatever emancipatory
element we can find will appear disorganized and crippled.

Leaving aside the aspect of the proletarian character of future
societies, something that I am today less sure about, this is
a precise expression of the difficulty we are liable to come
across, in my opinion, when trying to rethink the potential of
new social movements. We will not be able to understand the logic
of the bits and pieces of new social practices except in the
framework of a utopian projection of an alternative, non-capitalist
society. This utopia would have to be projected from the pieces
of social experience we have, trying to establish their hypothe-
tical point of convergence. And at the same time, this is rendered
impossible by the pressure of existing society that deforms
these bits of new social practice almost beyond recognition.

To give some examples:
- In Brazil, there is a continuous struggle between *posseiros*,
small peasants driven away by the expansion of capitalist *lati-
fundio*, and Indian tribes whose land they invade. Of course, they
are both victims of the same land tenure system, yet set against
each other in their struggle for survival.
- On the occasion of the 'Second Feminist Meeting of Latin America
and the Caribbean' held near Lima in July 1983, there was considerable
tension between feminist groupings and women considering the ques-
tion of female emancipation as part of a social struggle. Moreover,
representatives of indigenous and black women felt excluded by
the relatively elegant place of the conference and the high re-
gistration fees, and lesbian women felt a psychological barrier

against the representation of their concerns. All these divisions
are obviously very real and hinder a female solidarity - which
in perspective would contribute to overcoming all the mechanisms
of capitalist and patriarchal society that create these divisions.
- In present day Chile, there is considerable tension between those
currents of opposition identifying themselves with traditional
party loyalties, and autonomous groupings that emerged during the
years of dictatorship, some of them set up by a youth that has
no active memory of the pre-73 years. For these groupings, a per-
manent dilemma of the new social movements in all parts of the
world is making itself felt: will they have to integrate into
established political structures to gain some efficiency, at the
price of sacrificing their specific identity ?

- Or finally, the example mentioned by my compañera as an objec-
tion: the *favela* dweller who spends his last bit of money to imitate
bourgeois patterns of consumption - for example, buying the Hong
Kong-made plastic toy advertised on television as the one that
'all the children have' for his child - and for whom this act
of objective submission has the subjective meaning of reasserting
his human dignity.
To use a picture: the new social movements make their appearance
along the fringe of the social sphere, in response to the various
shortcomings of dominant society that appear on its periphery.
But of course, society is not organized according to the problems
of its periphery, but according to the needs of accumulation and
political control by its central sectors, to which everything else
is systemically related.
The aggregation of shortcomings, on the contrary, makes no systema-
tic sense, except when projected to its hypothetical opposite of
a different society. Dominant society is thus the well-illuminated
and solid front of the social sphere, which exerts a permanent
pressure on its contestatory fringe to adapt to existing power
realities. The positive utopia toward which the new elements in
these movements possibly point is as yet a hidden reverse side,
in the dark of the future, accessible only to anticipatory social
phantasy. Were it not for some inexplicable oscillation along

this fringe, we would not even suspect that the social sphere
had a reverse side.

The alternatives open to these movements are, then: either to
yield to the weight of reality, accepting a certain breathing
space and maybe some spoils of power, as an established opposi-
tion within the framework of dominant society at the price of
resigning itself to its position; or to try to uphold an identi-
ty of its own, at the price of remaining weak, inefficient and
plagued by contradictions. In reality, the only chance of exis-
tence of new social movements as such consists in a precarious
combination of both alternatives - maybe the Brazilian experience
with the *'Partido dos Trabalhadores'* is the most substantial
example of this.

Our elaborations of social knowledge with regard to these move-
ments are inevitably trapped in the same dilemma. From the stand-
point of power <u>apriori</u>, we are on the firm ground of established
reality, even contributing with our mode of perception to the
pressure of this reality; we cannot err much in our analysis,
but we will not see much that could justify calling these move-
ments 'new' ones. If, on the contrary, we try to come to an un-
derstanding of these new elements, we have first to adapt our
organs of perception to the almost imperceptible nature of these
elements, knowing we are looking for something that is as yet
predominantly 'represented by its felt absence'[11]: a society with
more solidarity.

Is this an idealistic approach ? Probably. But any anticipatory
thinking is necessarily partly idealistic. There cannot be a
sound political effort without a utopia; and there cannot be a
projection of a more just and humane society for Latin America
that would not take the new social movements into account as
its present day premonitions.

<u>Third thesis</u>: Central aspects of the counter-cultural construction
within new social movements can be understood alongside the dicho-
tomy 'alienation - identity'.

If it is an audacity to link the heterogeneous new elements within
new social movements together in order to interpret them as

embryonic aspects of a common social utopia, it is even more auda-
cious to proceed to name the direction of this utopian construc-
tion. On the other hand, only audacious anticipation can help a
utopia into being.

In my perception, the rebellion against existing society hidden
within the new social movements is not against any specific as-
pect of capitalist society, even though the different movements
tend to specialize around the issues that gave birth to each of
them. The thrust seems to be against alienation as such, in all
its aspects: alienation of man from himself, from the product
of his work, from other human beings and from nature.[12]

In the opposite direction, the final perspective is that of a
libertarian, egalitarian and communitarian society, of'an asso-
ciation in which the free development of each one is the condi-
tion for the free development of all' (Marx/Engels).[13]

Possibly, this is a goal that will never be reached, and is it
not pure sarcasm to even name it, in the face of present day re-
alities in Latin America ? Even for the first step to be taken,
a destination must be in mind. One of the reasons for the crisis
of the Latin American left could be that it lost its utopia,
at least as a libertarian perspective.

In the long emancipatory process leading away from alienation,
what can be of any practical relevance to the present day social
movements will help the members of these movements in the ini-
tial and difficult task of becoming the subjects of their own
history. Perhaps the notion of identity is most appropriate for
outlining the basic content of this first phase. On an individual
as well as on a collective level, the difficult first task con-
sists in coming to a realistic self-perception of one's own charac-
teristics, potentials and limitations, overcoming offers of false
identity from outside and passing through the tempests of alter-
nating over- and underestimation. At the very fundamental level,
this means a reassertion of one's own human dignity, vis-à-vis
the everyday experience of misery, oppression and cultural de-
vastation. For better-off groupings, this can mean a contribution

to popular culture or even to a national self-recognition, espe-
cially after times of social crisis. Possibly we could even draw
the dividing line between traditional social organizations and
the field of 'different' phenomena we have come to name 'new
social movements' according to this quest for an autonomous iden-
tity.

What is meant by 'identity' ? Obviously, there cannot be one pre-
cise definition of the term, and nor can there be one for the
other two terms with which it forms a *continuum*:'autonomy'and
'emancipation'. 'Identity' is probably one of the most multi-
facetted and intriguing notions of the human sciences, and naming
it as one central aspect of the new social movements cannot be
taken as an answer to the many riddles of these movements, but
rather as a direction in which possible answers should be sought.
There cannot be any fewer aspects of 'identity' than of the term
'alienation', to which it is counterposed. Any domination is a
theft of identity – and what forms of domination have Latin Ame-
ricans not suffered! Within its very limited forces, no movement
can do more than try to recover some very specific fragments of
identity, struggling on one (or very few) of many possible 'fronts'
of domination, thus tacitly accepting the *status quo* on all other
'fronts'. Precisely for this reason there will be numerous contra-
dictions inside as well as among these movements, making it so
difficult to bring them together, practically as well as concep-
tually.

Nevertheless, in terms of the *locus* of a central problem,
the idea of identity – under this or some other wording – seems
to be increasingly on the mind of participants and observers of
these movements. To cite some recent – and very incidental –
examples: 'maybe the grand theme produced by the social movements
for the practice of the left is the question of autonomy' writes
Marilena Chaui, a member of the Brazilian PT.[14] With regard to
Argentina, Juan Carlos Portantiero defines the present crisis
'as a crisis of identity which faces a society with the necessity
to change all its fundamental certitudes'.[15] For the Chilean case,
Tomás Moulián demands a vision of politics 'for which the centre

of action lies in the reconstruction of the social movement, of cells of an alternative hegemony', with cultural work as one of its basic aspects.[16] A leaflet calling for the Second Day of National Protest in Chile on July 14th, summed up the experience of the previous day of protest on May 11th as 'a success, because it enables us to rediscover our identity as a free and sovereign people.[17] In Venezuela, there even exists a movement expressively baptized *'Movimiento de Identidad Nacional'*.[18]

It is not by chance that we have struck upon a notion with a long tradition within the Latin American literature. Earlier and more insistently than social scientists, Latin American writers have interpreted the unsolved 'national question' as a question of the lack of identity.

Maybe the attempts at resolving the 'national question' within the paradigms of traditional politics had to fail: by definition, identity is a do-it-yourself matter that cannot be given to us by someone else - even less can it be passed down fron the heights of political power. It has to be constructed from below, on the base of a conscious and self-determined social practice - again, something I associate with the new social movements.

At the same time, the principal problems with which these movements have to cope stem from domination and exploitation of the lower class - thus, the 'social question' is very much present in these movements as well. Maybe the much sought for linkage between the national and the social question can effectively be found in the everyday 'ant's work' of these movements to rescue bits of meaningful individual and collective existence from dominant society. Moreover, it can probably not be found anywhere else; and the olympic heights of the national whole from which some heirs of dependency theory are searching for this linkage are definitely too far from the social base for this grassroot construction to be perceived.

And maybe this hidden side of the new social movements conceals also the profound necessity for the reappraisal of democracy as a central notion within recent discussion. Identity cannot be found within authoritarian structures, and, what is more, it ex-

cludes uniformity: it can only develop in the midst of variety which demands a political setting in which 'all the voices, all of them' (as one Chilean song has it) can express themselves.

Weak and fragmented as they are, the new social movements thus hold a key position for any emancipatory project in Latin America. They _are_ it.

Fourth thesis: Together with the emergence of germs of an alternative project, the new social movements procreate the germs of the corresponding subjects.
In the process of creating new patterns of socio-cultural practice and of reconstructing fragments of an autonomous identity, the individuals involved as well as the group as a whole constitute themselves as the subjects of this process. To be more precise, they develop the corresponding fragments of a new subjectivity within themselves. This, of course, entails a profound revision of traditional concepts of social subjects, and of the process of their constitution as such.
Within the Marxist tradition, social subjects had an apriori objective existence, in the form of social classes; they constituted themselves subjectively as such by developing a consciousness that gradually approximated to this objective reality, and the conversion into political agents operated by enlarging the organization representing this full consciousness of reality through the incorporation of a progressive number of individuals.
None of this seems to hold for our present understanding of social processes in Latin America. We can no longer conceive a positive utopia as a fixed historical aim to be reached through preestablished means, but as a long and sinuous process of emancipation whose end - if there is one - is unknown. Accordingly, the subject would be the wholly realized individual within a disalienated society - in other words, a subject that will not exist at the beginning, but will only appear at the hypothetical end of the process. All the way through this process there will be some difficult dialectics in which an advance in social structures depends on an advance of the subject, and vice versa. In all probability, there will never be anything else but a rudimentary subject-coming-into-being, struggling with correspondingly

imperfect structures-in-the-making.

If this holds good, the consequences for our traditional ways of conceptualizing historical subjects could not be more far-reaching. Two points stand out:

First, if the process of emancipation is a never-ending one, so is the process of constitution of its subjects. No individual and no collective entity can therefore ever be regarded as being, wholly, subject. They are bearers of fragments of subjectivity, in so far as they have succeeded in overcoming some aspects of alienation and in constructing some first traits of an autonomous identity.

At first sight, this way of perceiving social subjectivity as a necessarily fragmented phenomenon cutting across social consciousness and practice may seem artificial and contradictory with our current perception of individuals being exactly that they are indivisible. Upon brief reflection, though, we will find this assumption of a cross-personal subjectivity as the only one compatible with all we know about the complex and contradictory compositions of individual consciousness. And with regard to collectivities, the assumption of heterogeneity rests on even more evidence.

Secondly, the possible directions of emancipation are just as multiform as the aspects of alienation - and all of them count ! There is no unalterably preestablished hierarchy of emancipatory aims, and accordingly no ontologically privileged subjects.[19]

This is not to deny that there are nodal points, within social structures, and that there are barriers more difficult and more important to overcome than others. And within capitalist society, exploitation and private appropriation form, without doubt, a nodal point. But it is not the only front that counts, and any advance in a different - for example, socio-cultural, socio-psychic direction has its relevance.

Is this anti-theoretical ? The fact is that maybe no aspect of social life has been so thoroughly and validly theorized as the filed of political economy, and of course basically by Marx. But do other aspects of social life simply not exist as possible

fields of theory, just because they escape the realm of Marx's
theory and have not been as validly theorized by someone else ?
Maybe it is just that another Marx would be needed to elaborate
on problems such as patriarchy or the psychology of domination,
or human consciousness and action, or language... For example,
is it anti-theoretical when we pass from Marx to Freud ?

IV. How New are the New Social Movements ?

Has it not always been like this, perhaps, and is it just our
perception that is clumsily catching up with reality ? Could
these lines not have been written at any previous time ?

Yes and no.

Probably, it was false from the beginning to pose the socializa-
tion of the means of production as the only and absolute goal of
emancipation, and the proletariat as its sole subject. Further,
and obviously, the problems of identity, emancipation and utopia
are permanent themes.

But equally obviously, they are embedded in an historical process
with changing socio-economic and cultural patterns, according
to which issues emerge and fade away, spaces open and close again.

Within this permanent shifting of emphasis, it is new, in my opin-
ion, that social movements are not questioning a specific form
of political power, but the centrality of the power criterion it-
self. The question of a reappropriation of society from the state
has become thinkable. Why ? Is this merely an idealistic return
to the proto-socialists and anarchists of the 19th century ?
I have no conclusive answer, but I have some ideas on the direc-
tion in which an answer should be sought. To a great extent, pre-
sent political structures, as embodied in the bourgeois state but
even more in leninist parties, are a reproduction of the hierarchy
within a capitalist factory. It is not by chance that they have evolved
along with capitalist industrialism and reflect this industria-
list mentality. And so do, even more crudely, the traditional
socialist utopias. Aims like 'freeing the productive forces' or
the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' are an apotheosis of in-

dustrial development.

By now, capitalist industrialization has reached a phase that is
commonly referred to as the 'third industrial revolution'. With
the generalization of electronics and cybernetics, automation and
communication have become the defining aspects of present-day
capitalism. We all know what that entails, in its dominant central-
izing version as administered by transnational capital and the
state apparatuses of the leading Western powers - the classical
industrial workers are rapidly diminishing in numbers,swelling
the tertiary sector and, worse, the mass of unemployed. With the
automatization of production, the social existence of individuals
and groups is increasingly defined through their potential for
consumption, or in less euphemistic words, social life is mercan-
tilized and dehumanized to extremes, and large sectors of the
population are marginalized. In perspective, culture, society, a
meaningful human existence itself are being dissolved and reduced
to market relations, for which no other political structure is
necessary but a market police that efficiently represses any other
expression of human life apart from that of commodity owners. In
their necrophilic obsession, the destructive forces freed by the
third industrial revolution are about to destroy the natural en-
vironment of mankind, if not mankind itself in nuclear war. War
is, in fact, already going on throughout the world with millions
of victims, through arms or starvation.
Once again, the negative effects of this revolution are concen-
trated in the countries of the capitalist periphery.

For Latin America, this is having the consequence that social
projects centred around the idea of industrialization apparently
belong to the past, at least as viable ones. On a conscious level,
the equation between industrialization and emancipation dear to
generations of the Latin American left has lost its credibility.
Correspondingly, forms of organization and action that paraphrase
the production process within an old-type capitalist factory are
no longer plausible. Rigid hierarchies could be made acceptable
as long as they could be presented as indispensable for the social
project pursued - why still submit to them once this project has
faded away ?

Of course, the same goes for traditional bourgeois projects in
Latin America. There is a wide spread sentiment of being in a
cul-de-sac; the generalized economic crisis has eroded what bits
of legitimacy there remained; states themselves have fallen into
discredit.

For all possible contenders, hegemony has to be reconstructed.
Not by accident, many of the military dictatorships presented
their project with the pretension of being the founding fathers
of a New Republic; of them all, only the Brazilian had a partial
and transient success. But in itself, the perception of being in
a phase of Latin American history marked by the bitter need for
a founding project is shared by all segments of the respective
societies.

In a way, the new socio-cultural patterns of everyday sociabil-
ity that germinate within the new social movements are part of
that founding effort. They are the embryos of a popular counter-
foundation, in response to the ill-fated efforts from above. The
dissolution of established socio-economic structures and socio-
cultural orientations has had the effect, coupled with a devas-
tating social disintegration, of 'setting free' what remained
of a constructive potential to find new, self-determined orien-
tations and openings.

Some observers have pointed to the puzzling fact that some of
the new impulses coming out of these base level groupings have
similarities with the ultra-liberal ideology of Friedman. They
share - it is said - an anti-statist posture and a reappraisal
of individual freedom... Looking a bit closer, what they share
is the contemporaneity of crisis and the necessity to find
some solution to it - but the directions in which they are look-
ing for it are diametrically opposed to one other. The dominant
centralizing solution intends to dismantle all non-repressive
functions of the state, leaving intact and even enhancing its
aspect of pure and abstract domination, through the repressive
apparatus. New social movements, on the contrary, are not taking
a stance against the organizational and auxiliary functions of
the state, but against its expression of domination. The indivi-
dual freedom referred to by Friedman and his followers is that

of the commodity owner on the market. For the counter-foundation
elements within new social movements,it is precisely the non-market
elements within social relations that are being reappraised; and so
is human expression in all aspects except that of buying power.

Automation and communication are not 'bad' in themselves and could
be set into motion so as to fulfil age-old dreams of human realiza-
tion. The 'hidden side' of present day societies of which the new
social movements are a vague premonition could conceal a popular,
decentralising alternative to the dominant model of the third in-
dustrial revolution.
Significantly, within these movements, pre-capitalist and even
pre-mercantile elements and values reappear - in that sense, the
'new' within these movements is also archaic.

V. How to be political without being only that

Of course, the reality of political power is there, and the new
social movements are the first to feel its weight, with every
tiny attempt they make to call relations other than power rela-
tions into being. To rescue society from politics is in itself
a political task and needs political power to advance. And expressed
more   starkly   everyday life for most of these groupings is
marked by political oppression and economic misery, and every
bit of political potential is bitterly needed for survival. How
does this reality match, then, with a search for social relation-
ships that are not primarily relations of domination ?

The question of a 'new party' has eventually to be faced.

It is a very common experience that social movements, after a
phase of broadening mobilization around concrete issues, gain some
access to established political structures. In order to expand
their efficiency, its leaders get engaged in these structures -
and the movement falls into decay, at least as an authentic ex-
pression of determinate social interest and as an experience of
vivid social life. Can this be avoided ?

Probably it cannot be avoided totally. But quite another thing is
to actively (if unconsciously) preclude anything else from happen-

ing, which is precisely the effect of the still prevailing criterion of the power potential.

Perhaps as a remnant of the traditional base-superstructure perspective, there is still an almost unbroken consensus that culture is something inferior to the 'hard facts' of economy and politics. Quite often, we can find some writer analysing the pro-gress (sic) of a social movement from a 'still purely' cultural expression, via its social articulation to a political presence. And very naturally, this line is described as a line of growing consciousness. No doubt it is (if analysed correctly) a line of growing political consciousness - the point is that there are other forms and contents of social consciousness that are lost in that way. For example, a movement for the defence of a region against its ecological devastation and social disintegration for the sake of export crops will produce an enormous advance in eco-logical, economic, historical, and regionalist consciousness among its participants, along with strong links of solidarity and co-operation - and all this may well be lost the moment this movement 'gains political consciousness' by nominating its leaders as candidates within the lists of established parties.

Hence, a movement's increased potential for political power can carry with it a decrease in its long-term socio-cultural poten-tial. More power means, almost invariably, less identity, more alienation.

To use a comparison, to view social movements under no other criterion than that of power is like asking for nothing else except the amount of calories represented by a quantity of petroleum - a highly reasonable question, but one that presupposes that petro-leum is for burning, leaving aside all its qualities of chemical transformation.

Social movements cannot exist without political expression, which has to articulate the aims of the movement with the existing alienated - and alienating - power structures. In terms of aliena-tion vs. identity, the political expression of social movements is, thus, a necessary retrospective part of its existence.

Transferred to the perspective of a 'new type of party' that in some countries may some day take upon itself the political expression of a broad culture of new social movements, this means that these parties would have to accept the role of not only not being the vanguard, but of being the rearguard in relation to the contents of these movements. They would have to be conceptualized as servants, not as masters of these movements. Of course, this excludes from the beginning any idea of control. And it imposes open, democratic structures, in which the open expression of variety, including contradictions among participants, is more important than unity of outward action.[20]

- Possibly the present crisis of the Brazilian PT, as the only practical experience of relevance in that direction, is due to tendencies to 'free' itself from allegiance with regard to the social movements that gave birth to it.[21]

VI. Finally: Who are the New Social Movements ?

We are, at the end, coming back to our initial question. Who or what is moving in the new social movements ?
In the beginning, I was specific in considering the new social movements in Latin America, with some empirical evidence from only three countries. I am now leaving out this specification. After all I have said, it is clear that in my view the essence of these movements is the same, wherever they occur. If it was not for that, there would be no justification in calling by the same name such apparently incomparable social phenomena as - say - the anti-nuclear movement in West Germany and a 'popular kitchen' in Chile.[22]
Of course, account has to be taken of the enormous differences that separate the various expressions of this essence from the specific modalities of their existence under concrete historical circumstances. Actually, this is the field of study of the new social movements, and unless this vast field of historical experiences is ever-present in our minds, the general vision I tried to give would dry out to become sheer ideology. But vice versa, without such a general vision, our efforts to understand concrete cases run the danger of missing the essential, and therefore, of

contributing actively to their 'asphyxiation' ?

The essence of these movements is, in my view, their capacity to
generate germs of a new social subjectivity - new as much in con-
tent as in self-consciousness. By taking up the age-old themes
of emancipation and self-determination, this 'new' subjectivity
is, at the same time, the most advanced and the oldest.

It is also new in the sense that it subverts our modes of percep-
tion. Our monolithic concepts of social subjectivity have exploded,
and we find that the aggregate state of subjectivity is not solid,
but liquid or even gaseous, penetrating - and blending with - the
most varied elements within the social texture. Paradoxically,
we have thought of social subjectivity as something that could be
objectivized and used as a tool - now we come to accept that it
is, definitely and radically, subjective, inextricably linked to
human life itself, and therefore just as insubordinate to reifi-
cation as life itself. Thus, we come to understand that whenever
we speak of social or political subjectivity as something dif-
ferent from human subjectivity as such the distinction is, ulti-
mately, an artificial and analytical one.

This may mean a sacrifice of long-standing intellectual certain-
ties - but in return we receive an infinitely wider and more fer-
tile field of action and reflection.

How can we tell this to the dweller of an *estera* hut outside
Lima ?

Do we need to tell him ? He knows the obstacles he must - and can,
possibly - overcome next, maybe better than a West German indus-
trial worker.

Of course it would be cynical to claim that everybody should on-
ly care for his own emancipation and leave the poor to resolve
theirs. The process of pushing back alienation will have to use
present-day means which, of themselves, cannot be free of aliena-
tion. Any purism would be an escape from respons bility.
But basically , whenever a step of de-alienation is brought about
by the help of another, it contains an element of re-alienation
and has to be done over again by the beneficiary. Whatever element

of alienation is overcome by an individual or a group for itself is then out of the world for good. And maybe this _is_ the most effective help one can give to another.

At least, it will not go without this help. We are the new social movements.

NOTES

1. Adalbert Evers and Zoltan Szankay: Das gerissene Band. Über-
   legungen zum Verhältnis von sozialem Wissen und sozialer Be-
   wegung, in: *Prokla* (Berlin) No. 43, 1981, pp. 43-59.

2. For example, see the contributions to the reader edited by
   Norbert Lechner: *¿Qué significa hacer política?*, Lima: Desco,
   1982; or to another reader edited by Francisco Rojas Aravena:
   Autoritarismo y alternativas populares en América Latina
   San José: Colección 25 años FLASCO, EUNED, 1982; or in:
   Alternativas populares da democracia: Brasil, años 80, by
   José Alvares Moisés and others, Petropolis: Vozes/CEDEC, 1982;
   or the collection of articles in No. 64 of '*Nueva Sociedad*'
   (Caracas) on 'Nuevas formas de hacer política' (Jan/Febr.1983).
   The works and authors cited in the following footnotes contain
   many further examples.

3. Again, there is an increasingly vast literature criticising
   this conception of politics, for example; Henry Pease García:
   Vanguardia iluminada y organización de masas, in *Nueva So-
   ciedad* No 64, Jan/Febr. 1983, pp. 33-38; Fernando Mires: Reta-
   guardias sin Vanguardias, in: *Nueva Sociedad* No. 61, July/
   Aug. 1982, pp. 35-54; Norbert Lechner: Revolución y ruptura
   pactada, Madrid: Trabajo presentado al simposio 'Caminos de la
   democracia en América Latina', Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 30th
   of May to 5th of June, 1983, mimeo.

4. For example, Lechner, ibid. p. 10; Mires op cit.

5. Henry Pease García, op.cit. p. 38.

6. Mires op.cit. p. 35; and by the same author: Acerca de la ne-
   cesidad y las condiciones que se dan en Chile para el surgi-
   miento (no necesariamente en plazos inmediatos) de un nuevo
   partido político, Oldenburg: mimeo, August 1983.

7. This has been the basic line of my own previous work on Latin
   American social movements (but not my invention) - explicitly
   for example in: Tilman Evers, Clarita Müller-Plantenberg,
   Stefanie Spessart: Stadtteilbewegung und Staat. Kämpfe im Re-
   productionsbereich in Lateinamerika, in: *Lateinamerika - Ana-
   lysen und Berichte* Vol.3, Berlin: Olle & Wolter, 1979, pp.
   118-170 (Spanish version: *Movimientos barriales y estado.*
   Luchas en la esfera de la reproducción en América Latina,
   Bogotá: CINEP, 1983, Colección Teoría y Sociedad No.11: Por-
   tuguese version in: José Alvaro Moises and others: *Cidade,*
   Povo o Poder. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra/CEDEC, 1981, pp.
   110-164); see also Tilman Evers: Os Movimientos sociais ur-
   banos: O caso do 'Movimento do Custo de Vida', in: J.A. Moisés
   and others: *Alternativas populares da democracia,* op.cit.,
   pp. 73-98 (Spanish version in: *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*
   No. 4/81, pp. 1371-1393). Nevertheless, the central 'message'
   of these works was to say that political potential was lost
   through methods of instrumentalization of social movements
   by left parties, and that their autonomy should be respected.

8. See Evers, Müller-Plantenber, Spessart, op.cit. 7.

9. Fernando Mires: Acerca de la necesidad..., op.cit.

10. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge: Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Frankfurt: *Suhrkamp*, 1972, p. 485.

11. Ernst Bloch: Prinzip Hoffnung. Frankfurt: *Suhrkamp*, 7th ed. 1980, vol. 1, p. 223.

12. See Hartmut Kärner: Los movimientos sociales: Revoluciones de lo cotidiano, in: *Nueva Sociedad* No. 64, pp. 25-32, esp. p. 26.

13. Marx, Engels: *Communist Manifesto*.

14. Marilena Chaui: Notas sobre la crisis de la izquierda en Brasil, in: *Nueva Sociedad*, No. 61, July/Aug. 1982, pp. 67-80, p. 77.

15. Juan Carlos Portantiero: Transición a la democracia en Argentina: ¿ Un trabajo de Sísifo ?, in: *Cuadernos de Marcha (México)*, July 1983, pp. 15-26, p.15.

16. Tomás Moulián: La crisis de la izquierda, in: *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* No. 2/82, pp. 649-664, pp. 663/664.

17. Cited by: Clarita Müller-Plantenberg: Wer sind die Subjekte der Interessen-vertretung im neoliberalen Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftsmodell in Lateinamerika ? paper presented to the seminar' Massenkultur und religiöse und soziale Bewegungen', Bielefeld (West Germany) 7/8th of June 1983, mimeo, p. 38; see by the same author: La vida por la vida. Autonome Frauen-komitees, Indianerräte und Basisgruppen, in: same author (ed.): *Frauen und Familie im chilenischen Befreiungsprozess*, Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1983; and same author:*Ueberlebungskampf und Selbstbestimmung. Zur Arbeiter- und Volksbewegung in kolumbianischen Städten*. Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1983.

18. Francisco Mires: Alternatives de organización y poder popular, in: *Nueva Sociedad* No. 64, pp. 47-55, p.53. - The list of examples could be infinite: see for example; Paul Singer and Vinicius Caldeira Brant (org.): *O povo em movimento·* Petropolis: Vozes/CEBRAP, 1980.

19. Again, for many others: Norbert Lechner: Revolución y ruptura pactada, op.cit.,p.10.

20. All this presupposes a different concept of politics; for an interesting metaphor, see Jorge Sanchez Vega: El Ajedrez y el Go: ¿ Dos formas de hacer política ? Paper presented to the II Encuentro de Chantilly, 2nd to 4th of Sept. 1983, Paris: CETRAL. See also: Manuel Antonio Garretón M.: Democracia, transición política y alternativa socialista en el capitalismo autoritario del Cono Sur, Madrid: Paper presented to the Symposium 'Los Caminos de la Democracía en América Latina', Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 30th of May to 3rd of June, 1983, mimeo, esp. p. 14.

21. While writing these pages, I received a letter from a colleague in Bogotá: 'A few days ago I attented the congress for the founding of a 'Movimiento Popular Nacional', sponsored by

Orlando Fals Borda and other people that could generically be called non-dogmatic socialists. It is meant to group all popular movements, maintaining their respective individuality and excluding any attempts of instrumentalization by the left. (...) It is, nevertheless, beyond doubt that for the moment this movimiento would not exist without Fals Borda'. Contradictions of reality !

22. See Tilman Evers: De costas para o estado, longe do parlamento. Os movimentos alternativos na Alemanha Occidental, in: *Novos Estudos* CEBRAP (São Paulo) Apr. 83, pp. 25-39; and same author: Kleinerer Goliath - oder David ? Frage nach dem Subjekt in den grün/alternativen Bewegungen. Berlin/Todtmoos-Rütte: mimeo, August 1983.

THE PATHWAYS TO ENCOUNTER:

REFLECTIONS ON THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE IN SÃO PAULO

Lucio Kowarick

I. Introduction

Metropolitan São Paulo: 14 million inhabitants. Of these, the
majority, when not unemployed, earn meagre wages and live in
squatter settlements (*favelas*), slums and 'precarious houses on
the periphery'. In other words, they are excluded to such an ex-
tent that their work capacity becomes weakened. This paper focus-
es on the social struggles that occurred in the last decade. It
is primarily a theoretical and methodological effort to recon-
struct the course of the conflicts that culminated in the metal-
workers strikes of 1978-1980, indisputably a new high point in
the worker-union movement. However, the explanation for such or-
ganized and vigorous protests is, in my opinion, to be found in
social movements that transcend the ambit of labour relations
stricto sensu, indicating that there are links, generally not
visible, between the *bairros* and the factories.

I have restricted my studies to the richest area of the country,
São Paulo, the cumulative center of this dependent capitalism,
and to a period of time which, although marked by intense economic
dynamism in terms of growth   in the gross national product, led
to an accentuated wage decrease and a deterioration of urban liv-
ing conditions for large segments of the labour force: it is in
this untamed, predatory politico-social context that the struggles
of the workers and the inhabitants of the poorer *bairros* occur.

I begin the article by delineating the essential characteristics
of this context, emphasizing that the reproduction of the labour
force cannot be viewed exclusively from the point of view of the
process of exploitation and the pauperization that results from

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it. I then go on to analyse the so-called social contradictions
relating the macro-structural determinations of Brazilian society
to what I call experiences or praxes of struggle. Finally, I en-
deavor to interweave the multiple and discontinuous paths that
lead to the moment of encounter: when the partial and isolated
pathways merge into a conjuncture, in which the practices of re-
sistance and organization, developed in innumerable localities
in this complex and contradictory urban-industrial arena, inter-
lace in a broad, collective process of conflict. This is the cen-
tral objective of the article. Before reaching that point, I have
woven my own analytic preamble, which begins with the structural
level on which the inequalities and antagonisms of a country,
which was a notable and deplorable example of a capitalism that
associates growth with poverty, are based.

II. The Structural Level of Urban Struggles: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations.

Despite the fact that Brazil is now eighth on the list of coun-
tries of the capitalist world in terms of industrial output,
wages, even when compared with those in societies of nascent in-
dustrialization, are exceedingly low. The legislation in effect
declares strikes illegal and permits intervention in trade unions
and imprisonment or dismissal of their leaders, a situation that,
considering the frequent pressure upon and repression of the pop-
ular and labour movement, together with the existence of a vast
reserve army, has fostered a growth which weakens the majority
of those who have only their labour force to sell on the market.[1]

In periods prior to 1980, when the economy was expanding at an
accelerated rate, there was a marked increase in job opportuni-
ties, especially in the modern sectors of industry, which to a
certain extent compensated for the low wage levels.(We shall see
further on that these were drastically depressed). The survival
of impoverished families, although in a dramatically precarious
manner, was made possible by the entry of other members of the
family into the labour market, as well as by the extension of
the working day, which was frequently around 11 to 12 hours per
day.[2]

It is useful to remember that Brazil became the most highly in-
dustrialized country of the capitalist periphery. The economy
which up to the decade of the 1950's had been based on tradition-
al activities - especially textiles and foodstuffs - then came
under the dynamic impetus of industrial enterprises producing
consumer durables (automobiles and electrical home appliances),
intermediate goods (steel, paper, petrochemicals and rubber), and
capital goods (machinery and equipment). In fact, between 1950
and 1980, the gross national product grew at the considerable
average rage of 7.1% per annum. The secondary sector of the eco-
nomy expanded in particular, increasing from 20% of the national
income to 26%, while the industrial work force grew from 14 to
24%. During the last decade three and a half million new factory
jobs were created, a figure that corresponds to a 7.8% annual
increase, considerably higher than that of the population increase
in urban zones of 4.8%.

This notable increase in wealth was the fruit of changes in the
international division of labour. The traditional relationship
of dependence - expressed through the export of raw materials
and importation of manufactured goods - was replaced by a new
relationship in which the more highly developed countries began
to produce within Brazil the products that had previously been
exported to it. As a result of this new character of dependence, a
more extensive, and complex industrial structure developed. Cer-
tainly there was economic growth, if by that we mean the forma-
tion of additional capital and the increase of the internal pro-
duct. The poverty that resulted was not, therefore, the fruit of
stagnation, but of an extremely dynamic form of capitalism.

This enormous accumulation of riches was concentrated in Metro-
politan São Paulo, which became the fundamental locus of accumu-
lated capital and the concentration of the labour force. By
around 1980, this area accounted for 46% of the total industrial
wages paid in the country, 40% of the total value of manufacturing
industries, and capital investments in industry, and 24% of the
gross national product. This region accounts for 70% of the in-
dustrial value added in the branches of vehicles, electrical home

appliances and rubber; 60% of pharmaceutical and plastics pro-
ducts; and 55% of the machinery sector, in addition to a signi-
ficant segment of practically all the manufacturing industries.

These observations serve to demonstrate a fundamental contradic-
tion in the nature of that economic growth, conventionally refer-
red to as 'dependent-associated', expressed by the fact that such
growth occurred concomitantly with accentuated socio-economic ex-
clusion: the enormous progress achieved was accompanied by a dras-
tic decrease in wages and a deterioration of urban living condi-
tions.[3]

Proof of this lies in the fact that the minimum wage decreased
in real terms, between 1959 and 1982, by approximately 50% (see
Table 1). This immense reduction acquires real significance if
we consider that this was not, at least until 1981, an expression
of a moment of crisis, but a structural tendency present over decades.
The weakening of the labour force becomes obvious: the employee
who earned a minimum wage in 1981 had to work 84.35 hours longer
per month to acquire the same essential staples as the worker who
received the minimum wage 22 years before. Even in 1981, the work-
er who earned two minimum wages per month, had to work approxima-
tely 20 hours longer per month to acquire the same basic food
package, as compared to the purchasing power of one single mini-
mum wage at the end of the decade of the 1950's. It can be argued
that very few workers earn the minimum wage. Without doubt, this
argument is valid, for 11% are included in this category and even
this   sector   had tended to decrease in the last few years.
What is important, however, is the fact that, although few work-
ers are affected, the minimum wage serves as a parameter that ex-
ercises a braking effect on the wage levels immediately above it.
It is, in fact, the beam that illumines the wage spectrum of the
working class, especially when we consider the fact that 39%
of workers earn up to 2 minimum salaries and that 77% of the
labour force does not exceed five times that wage level.[4]

It is not the intention of this paper to enlarge upon the com-
bination of processes that 'permitted' enormous economic growth
to be associated with severe pauperization of the workers.

Table 1.   The Municipality of São Paulo

Evolution of the Price of Land per Square Meter, Minimum Wages, and Work Hours Required to Earn the Essential Staple Consumption.

(1959 = index 100)

Year	I. Price of land per SQ.M. (Index)	II. Real average mini- mum annual wage (Index)	III. Time required to earn the essential staple consumption		
			hrs.	min	(index)
1959	100,00	100,00	65	05	100,00
1960	64,99	83,96	81	30	125,22
1961	–	93,36	71	54	110,47
1962	73,95	85,24 (1)	94	48	145,66
1963	–	75,02	98	20	151,09
1964	73,38	77,42	–	–	–
1965	–	74,35	88	16	135,62
1966	76,26	63,65	109	15	167,80
1967	–	60,31	105	16	161,74
1968	126,44	58,92	101	35	156,08
1969	–	56,70	110	23	169,60
1970	170,70	57,70	105	13	161,60
1971	–	55,22	111	47	171,75
1972	185,39	54,24	119	08	183,05
1973	–	49,70	147	04	225,97
1974	266,61	45,60	163	32	251,27
1975	–	47,60	149	40	229,96
1976	292,87	47,33	157	29	241,97
1977	–	49,32	141	49	217,90
1978	273,38	50,79	135	37	211,45
1979	–	51,26	153	04	235,00
1980	–	52,10	157	31	242,04
1981	–	52,94	149	40	229,97
1982	–	46,23*	–	–	–

Sources: I. Evolution of the price of land (1959-1978), Munici-
             pality of São Paulo.
             COGEP (prices of 1975, average).

       II. - DIEESE - Minimum Wage - Boletim of DIEESE, April
             1982.

       (1) from 1962 on, includes 13th salary.

        *   March 1982.

It is sufficient to say that, among other factors, the State, in maintaining, by means of pressure and repression, rigid control over civil society and, in particular, over the workers' organizations, put itself at the service of a new modality of capital accumulation. On the other hand, in a much more vigorous way, the State became the most important direct producer in strategic sectors. At the same time, it granted a number of subsidies - tax exemptions, financing at negative interest rates, facilities in the importation of machinery and equipment, which were of fundamental importance in accelerating the rate of capital accumulation. Furthermore, as a result of the rapidity with which the industrial plants were expanded, a vast infrastructure of services was created - electricity, street and highway communications networks, water and sewage systems - prerequisites to the process of accumulation whose level increased rapidly and prodigiously[5]. Hence, a state was organized which, in order to preserve 'social order', permitted capital to follow heinous practices in exploiting labour at the same time that it drained off voluminous resources in order to stimulate the reproduction of capital which was in turn detrimental to the standard of living of the workers.[6]

An example of this process of exclusion strictly within the urban setting is the *Banco Nacional de Habitação* (Federal Housing Bank), a powerful machine created in 1964, that served to boost the economy, financing approximately 2 million housing units, the great majority of which were destined for the middle and upper income levels. While this was taking place, in São Paulo there were 2 million people living in slums, 800 thousand in favelas and 2.6 million in so-called 'precarious houses on the periphery', built by the owners of the lots themselves during what is ironically referred to as 'spare time', in areas with no basic services, located far from work-centres.

These precarious aspects of life in the city prompt a discussion of the socio-economic exclusion that affects labour from an angle that is intimately related but not limited to the degrees and types of labour exploitation that prevail in the process of pro-

duction. The idea here involves what I have called urban spolia-tion[7]: the sum total of the extortions that result from the non-existence or precariousness of collective consumer goods and ser-vices which - together with access to land and housing - are con-sidered socially necessary in relation to working class subsis-tence levels, and which aggravate to an even greater degree the collapse that occurs in the sphere of labour relations.

It must be emphasized, initially, that urban spoliation is not a process that can be disassociated from capital accumulation and from the degree of pauperization. This is so not only because the exploited workers are at the same time spoliated inhabi-tants, but also because it is the very dynamics of the creation and appropriation of wealth that gives rise to these two faces of the same coin. In other words, reproduction of the labour force reflects the renumeration that salaried or self-employed workers succeed in obtaining. However, such reproduction is in-creasingly tempered by the state, which 'regulates' wages and working conditions in general, in addition to directly or in-directly generating collective consumer goods and services, es-sential to the labourers' daily living.

Accordingly, I believe that standards of living are not solely a question of the degree of pauperization and the standard of individual consumption.[8] I consider that in addition to pauperi-zation there are a variety of collective consumer goods and ser-vices that are vital to the subsistence of the workers: trans-portation, health, sanitation, housing - which to be considered adequate in quality must be served by water and sewage systems - not to mention other components such as electricity, paving, day care centres or schools, areas and equipment for leisure and cultural activities, elements to a greater or lesser extent nec-essary if labour capacity is to be maintained. Thus, even when the levels of pauperization are constant, reproduction levels may improve or deteriorate in relation to what the workers suc-ceed in 'taking from the State in terms of collective consumer goods, subsidies for popular housing or access to urbanized land, processes that vary greatly according to political conjunctures

and which may or may not be associated with the conquests obtain-
ed by the workers in the sphere of production relations.[9]

III. Social Contradictions and Experiences of Struggle.

The considerations outlined in the foregoing pages permit us to
point out a set of contradictions regarding the urban reproduc-
tion of the labour force, which, although intimately associated
with questions of production and of pauperism, cannot be limited
to them.[10] The contrast between growing historical needs and the
precarious nature of popular *bairros* leads workers, insofar as
they are spoliated inhabitants, to develop actions that extend
beyond demands directed against the process of accumulation-ex-
ploitation practiced by companies, and that put pressure on the
state to improve specifically urban components necessary for
their subsistence. In this sense, it must be pointed out here
that these are not only old problems that became worse as the
city grew . On the other hand, the nature of the contradictions
present in Brazilian metropoles today does not stem solely from
the imperatives of the monopolistic economy which requires from
the state, as mentioned before, voluminous resources in order
to expand in an increasingly broad manner - agglomeration ef-
fects - which in turn are detrimental to the collective consumer
needs of the working population.[11] It also results from the chang-
es that occur in the number of state   actions that make it
more and more, directly or indirectly, a producing and organizing
agent of inequalities, and therefore the   focus   toward which
conflicts and pressures for collective benefits are channelled.
In fact, the cities are *loci* of production and consumption, in-
cluding not only housing, but also highway systems,water and se-
werage systems, and other services, in addition to urban land.
The material foundation of the city then comes to express marked
forms of socio-economic segregation. In this context, the restrict-
ed privileged areas destined for middle and high level purchasing
power contrast radically with the immense zones crowded with
workers who are unable to pay the price of progress based on pau-
perization.[12]

I wish to make it clear that I do not consider it possible to
separate social struggles from macro-structural determinations,
but equally there is no linear connection between the precarious-
ness of living standards and the conflicts carried forward by the
groups who are affected by it.[13] This is so because, despite a
variable but common situation of socio-economic exclusion, the
conflicts manifest themselves in different ways and, above all,
the praxes of struggle have widely disparate trajectories, point-
ing to impasses and solutions for which objective structural
conditions are, at best, merely an enormous backdrop. It is not
a case of ignoring them, but of recognizing that pauperization
and spoliation in themselves are simply the raw material that
potentially nourishes social conflicts.
Between the contradictions and the struggles as such, there lies
a whole process of accumulation of experience that is not wover
beforehand into the web of structural determinations.[14]

Before going on to develop this point, it seems advisable to
touch on several questions that I believe to be strategic in any
analysis of urban struggles. The first observation to be made
refers to the fact that it is not from the sudden and discontinu-
ous nature of such struggles, as part of the literature on the
subject has emphasized, that one can infer their political poten-
tial. Indeed, some researchers are surprised by the fact that
urban movements appear and disappear in a constant ebb and flow,
with no apparent continuity or evolution. The error in such in-
terpretations lies in their being based on the immediate pulsa-
tions of the social conflicts, using as a reference a parameter,
equally immediate, of the effectiveness of the movements in
creating space for struggles of greater amplitude. When some of
these achieve their demands and lose their vigour of protest,
they are, as we say, co-opted by the state. When, weary of de-
manding, they recede without achieving anything, disbelief
in the effectiveness of this type of popular struggle becomes
general. But surely it is not by means of reconstructions, bound
in time and space to a natural history of the occurrences, that
one can analyze the influence of the multiple and apparently
extinct struggles that evolve within the ambit of our cities.

Conversely, there is a whole series of interpretations that claim that the objective demands are the factor that determines the political horizon. In the opinion of some, the struggle for self-construction of housing would, by definition, be reformist or petty bourgeois, not only because it is easily manipulated by state agencies, but also because it is contaminated by the ideology of private property.[15]

In this sense, I am inclined to favour the demands related to basic subsistence necessities as the ones that can develop into struggles of greater political amplitude, insofar as they penetrate further into the contradictions that structure the forms of domination and exclusion within a society. However, the potential of the conflicts is not made up of the content of demands taken separately. The discontinuous paths of the various struggles only achieve their full dimension in the ambit of certain conjunctures; that is to say when the fragmentation of everyday occurrences tends to coalesce around oppositions that intensify conflicts of a collective nature. In other words, self-construction, demands for land or public services may show little capacity for transformation, in the sense that they only aim at partial and isolated results, but they may also, on the other hand, establish themselves within a process of radical and strategic confrontation - as, for example, in the case of the urban conflicts at the time of the overthrow of Somoza, or during the recent clashes in the *'barrios'* of El Salvador, which were clearly linked to a struggle that directly confronted capitalism at the national level.[16]

Although we have not attained the quality of the struggles, characteristic of the Central American situation, it is necessary to criticize that other interpretative fallacy which consists of defining popular conflicts according to a conception that attributes to them, *a priori*, certain historical aims. There is nothing that allows us - as do some of the analyses based on the recent Brazilian reality - to take this point as a premise, attributing a transforming potentiality that would be, by definition, inherent in the struggles that develop in our cities.
In other words, the theoretical and methodological effort to

define the trajectory and significance of the various social
movements should discard what could be called the genetic-fina-
list point of view, in which the popular and union movement would
harbour within itself the seeds that sooner or later would result
in struggles ofan increasingly superior quality.

In this manner, the ebb and flow of social struggles, as judged
through positive and negative signs, according to the role they
are expected to play on the pre-established horizon, acquire an
interpretative colouring that is eminently voluntarist and dichot-
omous. The state comes to be seen as a perverse agent of the so-
cial drama, while the social movement is considered as homogeneous
in its composition and aims, in search of an organizational and
programmatic autonomy perennially incomplete or simply negated
by the concrete dyanmics of events.On the other hand, it is from
analysis within the movements that their ebb and flow, their ca-
pacity for invention and articulation with other social forces,
must be understood; and this is especially relevant, in view of
the events that take place in the course of the struggle, whose
results cannot be stipulated beforehand by analytical categories
that bind the various agents to a pre-determined historical
scheme.

Nevertheless, such internal analysis does not entail focusing
on the movements at the margin of, or opposed to the political
and social agents carrying forward the organization, since in
the course of the formulation of demands political and religious
parties and groups, technical personnel and relief organizations
are, among others, agents which frequently adhere to popular
movements, strengthening these demands and assuming positions
of leadership. This 'outside' presence, which often aims to util-
ize these movements for objectives other than those proposed, and
which, also sometimes ensues in the division and destruction of
their fighting spirit, is far from being foreign to these move-
ments. On the contrary, it is an integral part of their course.[17]
It is this course - marked by diversities, full of deviations,
characterized by the constant recomposition of divisions and al-
liances - that must be reconstituted as we reconstruct the daily
paths of the struggles in the *bairros* and factories.

IV. The Moments of Fusion of Conflicts and Demands

To understand the conjuncture of conflicts that marked the period
of the large metalworkers strikes in São Paulo and São Bernardo
do Campo (1978-1980), it becomes necessary to reconstruct the
small conflicts that occurred in the factories and *bairros* from
the outset of that decade, when an extremely repressive situation
existed toward all forms of social and economic demands.[18] In
concrete terms, the vast and severe conflicts of the late 1970s
pass along winding and barely noticeable pathways, through the
trajectory of the '*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base*' of the Church,
through groups linked to the workers' pastoral, and later,
through the 'union opposition' of the metalworkers, penetrating
as well into the '*Movimento contra o Custo de Vida*' (Movement
against the cost of living), the regularization of 'clandestine'
real estate subdivisions, and a broad and varied set of demands
that rallied residents in defence of urban improvements. All
of these processes of struggle, with their ebbs and flows, be-
came channels of an experience, until then, one of resistance
and highly centralized in the city's popular *bairros*, that was
of fundamental organizational and ideological   importance for
future areas of conflicts. Along these discontinuous pathways,
bairros and factories met in mutual opposition to the established
order, articulating practices built up, little by little, in
scattered and seemingly disconnected day-to-day struggles.

It was not just a question of chance that the great majority
of specialists, academic or otherwise, was taken by surprise
when the 1978 metalworkers strike broke out in São Paulo. It
was simply that - as we now know - small struggles had been de-
veloping in a manner that was not perceptible to those who ex-
pected and gave credit only to action restricted to organiza-
tional instances, disregarding the fragmentary demonstrations
that had begun to occur in the places of work and in the squat-
ter settlements and 'clandestine' subdivisions of the periphery
where demands, related to health care, water, sanitation, collec-
tive transport, housing or access to land, were being increasing-
ly articulated.

These micro elements that had kept alive   consciences buried
by the repression of the earlier period, were, at a later moment,
revivified in a collective manner in a movement aimed at recover-
ing an identity against the dominant world that for many years
had systematically ignored, disarticulated or repressed the ini-
tiatives that arose in the places of work and living. Crushed
and fragmented during the peak years of authoritarianism, the
strength of this protest can only be fully understood if one looks
beyond the broad organizational scenario - unions and parties -
to the day-to-day network of struggles that transformed isolated
practices into experiences that accumulated into broader con-
flicts. It is not a question of denying the importance of parties
and unions in the unfolding of these struggles; it is simply a
matter of adopting a theoretical and methodological focus that in-
corporates and transcends these levels of interpretation, in an
attempt to grasp a history that takes place in innumerable and
undefined social spaces of resistance and mobilization. Therein
lies the need to approach social movements with the intention
of recovering the moments previous to the visible explosion of
the conflicts, in order to reconstruct a praxis of struggles that
cannot be perceived solely through institutional apparatuses.

Even in the case of the metalworkers strike in São Bernardo do
Campo in 1980, a reading of the 40 days of paralysis   would
be enormously impoverished if the analysis did not incorporate
the extremely rich sets of fusions that were occurring in the
bairros and factories- by which, in this case, union action was
nourished, thereby giving impetus to the strike movement. The
oppression that ruled in the factory milieu, together with the
process of recovery of worker identity, are aspects that are
crucial to understanding the force of the strike in that region,
which is the industrial heart of the country.[19] However, this
force cannot be explained solely in terms of the strength of
union organization and mobilization as such; it is also ex-
plained by the identification of the population with the metal-
workers' cause, transforming the city into a broad supportive
network, in which the struggle gained multiple and varied so-
cial spaces of solidarity. Although the peak of the conjuncture

- in this case, a strike - was aimed at a multitude of demands
in the sphere of factory labour, the long trajectory of which
reached its outlet by being fed by innumerable affluents that flowed
through converging channels in the scenario of the popular *bairros*
of the city, towards a moment of fusion formed of disparate prax-
es of resistance and conflict.[20]

This approach makes it possible to identify more accurately the
link between demands of the labour world and those related to
urban improvement. In this particular case, the strikes of São
Bernardo and São Paulo of 1978-1980 indicate multiple and varied
trajectories that permit an analysis of *bairros* and factory to-
gether. The struggles related to urban demands were of importance
in intensifying the labour movement, and also because their sup-
port in the moments of conflict served to generalize praxes of
resistance that would not exist if the popular *bairros* had not
identified and involved themselves with the metalworkers strike.
In the same way, in its turn, the union and labour movement in-
fluenced in numerous ways the intensification of the urban strug-
gles seeking improvements for the popular *bairros*.

The point must be stressed that the pathways that lead to the
encounter of fragmented praxes of struggle never occur natural-
ly, as they would if there existed a spontaneous vocation for
identification of interests. Such an encounter comes about as
the result of a praxis that builds up within a debilitating day-
to-day routine. And everything indicates that the weight of the
latter functions, most of the time, as a demobilizing element -
insofar as participation in it involves an immediate cost that
is immensely greater than that of the results to be achieved,
which are always delayed and frequently not obtained. Neverthe-
less, cynicism , together with the fatigue inherent in the daily
routine that takes place between house and work, do not impede
the emergence of convergences that in certain moments become mo-
bilizations of greater strength of protest. These movements em-
body a series of exchanges and social contacts sustained by prox-
imity, a common situation of poverty-stricken *bairros*, delays in
transportation, accidents and illnesses and identification with

workers. Also, in spite of the diversity of trajectories, within certain conjunctures, they may create broader and more strongly collective forms of solidarity, at which time the moment of fusion of the conflicts and demands becomes manifest.

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that, despite the dispersion and fragmentation of the conflicts that occur in isolated arenas, without the addition of broad and varied spheres of demands, researchers have been trained to analyze what is isolated and partial so that they have great theoretical and methodological difficulty in perceiving and comprehending the fact that the real movements of the struggles very often interweave in a barely perceptible manner, and that these social movements do not become articulated in a systematic and permanent way.

It is obviously not a question of creating fusion on the theoretical level in order to disguise what does not exist in reality, precisely because the (dis)articulation and (dis)union of each concrete struggle (and above all of their sum total) stems from the opposition of social forces. The most outstanding example in this particular case, is the way in which state bureaucracies give rise to conflicts and demands which are structured in such a way as to dilute and segment – by concession, pressure or repression – multiple groups in their actions to conquer wider socio-economic and political spaces.

In this sense, a great deal of theoretical and research effort still needs to be made in order to obtain adequate concepts that explain the relation between labour exploitation and urban spoliation, topics which can be dealt with separately only for the purpose of facilitating analysis. In other words, the analytical separation that is normally made between the 'spheres' of production and reproduction of the labour force should be eliminated.[21]

In order to do this, I think that it is necessary to discard the approach that considers the movements attaining urban improvements as mere tributaires of the conflicts that occur in the ambit of labour exploitation. This long-standing analytical tradition has weighed not only on the social sciences but also on the action of

political groups, who have viewed urban demands as mere append-
ages to labour conflicts. Such demands would have a reason to
exist - in theory and in practice - only insofar as they served
to intensify the labour movement, which alone has been seen to
bear the responsibility for striking at the heart of the so-called
fundamental contradictions, while all other conflicts are viewed
as secondary.[22]

On the other hand, it is equally necessary to emphasize that the
approach to urban struggles cannot be reduced to the analysis
of the demands that occur in the ambit of collective consumer
goods and services, access to land or housing. This approach
should be related to a broader theoretical and research level,
especially to that which is linked to the pauperization that
originates in the world of labour relations - which is, at least
in the case of the more highly industrialized areas such as São
Paulo, one of the dynamic poles of the struggles. Although these
struggles develop in parallel, there are conjunctional estuaries
into which they flow, so that an understanding of this encounter
requires examination of the diverse movements that occur in the
factories as well as in the *bairros*, if what I have called the
moments of fusion of the conflicts and demands are to be under-
stood. Fusion, however, does not signify unity. On the contrary,
it describes the diversity that temporarily embraces convergent
elements surrounding a common opponent. Likewise, this fusion
is not merely the sum of previous experiences. Although born of
the multiplicity of past struggles, its moment of encounter ex-
hibits something new, where social forces are redefined, gener-
ating spaces for future events.

The proposals I have introduced in this paper are as yet tenta-
tive. They stem from an underlying position that holds that so-
cial struggles, understood as those that occur not only in the
sphere of labour relations, but also in the popular *bairros*,
are movements that, due to the heterogeneity of their objectives
and the diversity of the social composition of their members,
should be reconstructed in the light of the theory of class con-
flict. Perhaps simultaneous study of the processes of labour ex-

ploitation and urban spoliation, analyzed along the pathway that reconstructs the moments of conflicts, would provide a theoretical and methodological perspective which would facilitate perception of how deeply class conflict is involved in day-to-day struggles.

NOTES

1. Suplicy, 1978.

2. 'In general, the working day varies between 11 and 12 hours, extending in some cases to 14, 15 and 16 or more hours... The companies plan their production based on a working day of 11 to 12 hours'. Arroyo, 1978: 34. This situation referred to the periods of economic expansion; today, with the crisis, along with unemployment, the working day tends to decrease.

3. Kowarick & Brant, 1978.

4. In order to emphasize even more this savage mode of capitalism, I shall add that at the peak of the economic boom known as the 'Brazilian miracle' (1968-1973) which occurred after the military takeover in 1964, although the economy grew at a rate of more than 10% annually and work productivity increased 33% in São Paulo, the median salary – which corresponds to half of the workers on the lower wage level – decreased 15% in terms of real purchasing power. It was not for nothing that infant mortality, indicator of the standard of living, rose to levels equivalent to those that followed World War II, passing the rate of 90 deaths in every 1,000 live births; Kowarick, 1979: 199-201. It is known that 70% of infant mortality under one year is directly associated with malnutrition; that is, with pauperization, and lack or poor quality of household water supply.

5. Oliveira, 1977: 73.

6. Afonso & Souza, 1977: 51.

7. Kowarick, 1979, specially chapter 4.

8. This is the opinion of Evers et al., 1980: 115. 'The fact that in practically all of the Latin American countries there are 'barrio' movements indicates that in their origin must lie some common problem of general scope. In a word, this problem is: pauperization'.

9. Perhaps it may be useful to elaborate this argument somewhat further. Thus, although the level of pauperization remained practically unaltered, from 1975 on, the infant mortality rate decreased in São Paulo from 87 to 51 per thousand at the end of the decade: this occurred because the number of domiciles served by water and sewage systems increased in those five years from 53 to 92% and from 30 to 47%, respectively. In other words, the inhabitants succeeded in obtaining from the State an essential service for their '*bairros*', thereby basically improving their level of reproduction by means of these collective consumer goods, at the same time that they continued to work many hours per day for insubstantial wages: pauperism continued basically unchanged. Similar reasoning can be applied to the vertiginous increase in the number of slum dwellers, especially from 1975 on. From that date to the end of the decade, there was no increase in pauperization, nor had there yet begun the process of mass unemployment. Such an increase is, in my opinion, more closely related to specifically urban

causes linked to the fact that selfconstruction is possible
only in areas extremely distant from work sites. This implies
excessive expenses in transportation, physical wear as a re-
sult of 3 or 4 hours or more spent in travel per day, to
which must be added the enormous sacrifices required in 'self-
help' housing.

10. Castells, 1980.

11. Topalov, 1979.

12. Kowarick, 1983: 56.

13. I reproduce here the argument I have developed in my recent
    work: Kowarick, 1983.

14. Telles, 1982.

15. Pradilla, 1982.

16. 'The political and military contribution to the clash in
    Moninbo (a small town a few kilometers from Managua) is in-
    calculable in the revolutionary process. It shows that the
    heart of an insurrection is indisputably composed of the
    people organized within the structure of the 'barrios', which
    harbour the unemployed, expelled from or discarded by the
    labour centres of our particular capitalist development, at
    least in the urban sectors'. Lungo, undated: 61. See also:
    Lungo, 1982. In the same manner, the 'barrio' struggles in some
    Latin American areas of conflict may be thus analyzed. These
    include the '*paros nacionales*' of Peru at the end of the past
    decade; Ballon & Tovar, 1982. This is also the case with the
    '*huelgas cívicas*' of Colombia in the '70s. See: Sandroni,
    1981.

17. Valladares, 1983.

18. Telles, 1983.

19. Abramo, 1983.

20. Caccia Bava, 1983.

21. Evers et al., 1982.

22. 'The determining factor is not the factory or the 'barrio',
    but the political relationships between the classes, in par-
    ticular those linked to the process of occupation-transforma-
    tion of the State'. Castells - 1980: 33.

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BASE COMMUNITIES AND URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE METALWORKERS' STRIKE 1980 -
SAO BERNARDO, BRAZIL

Nico Vink

I. Introduction

In a recent reader dealing with the political situation in Brazil
after 1964, a leading sociologist, Ruth Cardoso, strikes a criti-
cal balance of recent urban social movements and Brazilian re-
search concerning them.[1] Concluding her contribution, she asks:
what is new about these movements? First, are they acting against
the authoritarian State ? Her answer is no. Do these movements
mark the presence of the oppressed in Brazilian society ? Her
answer is yes, but they are easily co-opted by the State. Third,
do they have an innovative influence on political parties through
their democratic character ? Cardoso's answer again is negative.
Why are her conclusions so negative ? The underlying question in
her paper is: are the new urban social movements in confrontation
with the State, and can they contribute to radical structural changes?
But is this a right and fair question ? Is Cardoso not asking too
much of the subjects of these movements ? It reminds one of the
remark of a peasant to a Brazilian anthropologist observing a
popular feast: those who know, dance; those who don't, study.
This sharp remark is not only valid for popular feasts, but also
for the struggle of the people. Modesty is a necessary virtue for
the intellectual outsider. We should listen carefully to the ac-
tors themselves.
In this paper we shall not be very preoccupied with the differen-
ces between recent urban social movements and the traditional ones
such as unions. Even if we can define the first as aiming at redistri-
bution of the urban infrastructure and collective facilities, all
in the sphere of reproduction, and the second at defending class

interests against capital, in the sphere of production, this
distinction is purely analytical. There is a risk that we shall
forget that often the same people are involved. Next to this we
are interested in a moment of collaboration between the two move-
ments such as occurred with the metalworkers' strike.
The central theme of this paper concerns not only power but also ideology
It tries to answer the question of why religion, a basic element
of Brazilian subculture, and working traditionally as an alienat-
ing factor, can become an element of change. What is the function
of faith in the Catholic grass root communities ? Related to this
question: what is the relation between hierarchy and the basis of
the church ? And how do both relate to the State ?

II. The Church in Brazil

In the first section of this paper we shall consider the circum-
stances that made possible the birth and growth of the (grass
root) communities in Brazil. In order to situate this new socio-
religious movement correctly, we will consider first, very briefly
the recent history of the Catholic church and the cause of the
changes that it has undergone.

II.1. From fraternities to base community

During the last three centuries the history of Catholicism in
Brazil was determined by the concordat between the Holy See and
the Portuguese Crown. The system of the 'Patronate' made the king
the supreme lord of the church. The religious life of the colony
was controlled locally by the big landowners and by the fraterni-
ties of lay-people in the town. The latter group organised reli-
gion in accordance with the different segments and categories of
the population. Fraternities were composed of landowners, offi-
cers, manual workers, slaves and freedmen. In each of these cate-
gories layleaders started and controlled their fraternities and
contracted priests as their functionaries. In a certain way the
whole society shared the same symbolic capital: there was no dis-
tinction between high orthodox beliefs and popular religious be-
liefs. With the advent of the Republic things began to change.

Some innovatory bishops came into conflict with the State, when they were trying to make the church independent of the positivist State. In order to regain control over religious matters and the believers the role of the fraternities had to be reduced. For this reason the bishops started to import pious associations from Europe, and these were introduced to the people by a clergy which was also imported. Devotional groups of laypeople were created around a saint under the direction of a priest called the director. The power of the clergy increased dramatically. The introduction of these associations constituted one of the elements of the romanisation of the church. The reorientation of the clerical organisation towards Rome and its ideology was also realized by the appointment of *nuncios*, by the clerical training in Rome of Latin American candidates and by the first Latin American Council held in Rome. Fundamental in this process was a new type of seminary , from that time on exclusively reserved for the training of future priests and closed to laymen. The result was a clergy alienated from the people and with a disdain for popular culture and folk-religion. The official orthodoxy and popular religion each went their own way.[2]

From the thirties onwards a new pastoral approach emerged characteristic of the social-christian church. The isolated church opened up to society in order to Christianize it. Under the influence of Jacques Maritains' writings, an ideological renovation was inaugurated. The church widened its range of influence by organizing its own educational institutions and by organizing laymen in a new way, again imported from Europe: 'Catholic action'. The bishops saw 'Catholic action' as an organisational form in which laymen participated in their hierarchical mission and tried to establish the universal kingdom of Jesus Christ, where they could not operate. The bishops delegated their authority to clerical advisors, who controlled lay-activity. It was a new attempt to realize the old ideal of Christianity, the identification of church and world.[3] Under the influence of the French model, 'Catholic action' was differentiated into categorical branches in the early fifties: JUC for university-students, JEC for college people, JAC for the

rural youth and JOC for the urban working youth. It was only a
decade later that the JUC liberated itself from this exclusive
spirituality and assumed responsibility for a more just and equal
societal structure. In 1961 members of the JUC participated in
the elections for the National Students Union (UNE) and soon the
A.P. was founded, a political movement of its own, opting for so-
cialism, that broke with the old social order. At the same time
the Movement for Basic Education (MEB) started a literary cam-
paign and an organisational programme for the rural population
in the very poor North East. Although it was taken over by the
bishops it did radicalize and the title of one of its publications
indicates its efforts to mobilize the people: 'Life is a strug-
gle.[3]
Only half way between reform and revolution, these attempts at
social commitment in the name of the church evoked a lot of oppo-
sition from outside as well as inside the church. The hierarchy
was divided on social problems, and in a divided manner the bish-
ops reacted to the coup of March 1963. The hierarchy needed much
energetic diplomatic juggling in order to maintain its image of
unity. Only when the State's repression started to hit priests
and even some bishops, did the conservative wing of the hierarchy
allow the CNBB a critical stand against the regime. In the early
seventies a growing number of bishops became defenders of human
rights. In the meantime all channels of political expression were
blocked by the repression. Church organisations became the only
place where freedom of speech and criticism were tolerated. The
church became a shelter for the people without a voice. A growing
number of priests and also bishops identified themselves with the
victims of the economic model which only aimed at quantitative
growth. A new type of church emerged, no longer identifying itself
with the elite or middle class, but with the subaltern classes.
A prophetic church, denouncing injustice and structural 'sins',
no longer imposed its own Christian models on the society, but
participated in the liberating struggle of the masses.

II.2. The causes of recent change

In analysing changes in the organisation and ideology of the church
we depart from the idea that these changes are related to trans-
formations in the society as a whole. As an independent symbolic
institution the church has its own dynamics, such as competing
theological schools. At the same time, for an understanding of
this process of renovation it is necessary to take into considera-
tion the Latin American context. On the first level one has the
international socio-economic situation and at the level of the
church links such as the conference of Latin American bishops,
the CELAM. This organisation was responsible for the meetings
of Medellín and Puebla, and also for a range of pastoral insti-
tutes influential in the continent as a whole.[5]
On the first level the end of *desarrollismo* is quite crucial.
The reform attempted especially by Christian-democrats to form
an alternative between capitalism and communism proved to be an
illusion. There was no third way. Even the Alliance for Progress,
started by Kennedy, failed. Then there was the impact of the Cuban
example, showing that radical changes were possible in the Latin
American context. Based on the analysis of this reality some so-
ciologists developed an alternative model of explanation: the
theory of dependence. They rejected development theories and saw
a radical structural change as the only remaining possibility.
The repression by military dictatorships showed, often in a very
cruel way, that the road of reformism was blocked.
As we consider the renovation proces within the church, the ab-
sence of a Latin American representative to the second Vatican
Council is striking. Neither bishops, theologians, nor priests
were prepared for this event. Western European problems and so-
lutions determined the outcome of this meeting of the world hier-
archy. Certainly, the 'aggiormento' stimulated the use of socio-
logical tools in the Latin American church. New organisations
such as FERES (*Federación Internacional de los Institutos Cató-
licos de Investigaciónes Sociales y Socio-Religiosas*), DESAL
(*Centro para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de América Latina*),
ILADES (*Instituto Latino Americano de Doctrina y Estudios Socia-
les*), were founded in order to investigate their own socio-re-

ligious reality. They made the church aware of Latin American
reality, which is so different from Europe. Theologians trained
in Europe, when confronted with local problems, started to criti-
cize the European pastoral solutions and developed their own
ways. Inspired by the sociological rejection of development policy
and basing themselves on dependency theory they developed what
is now called the theology of liberation. In the first instance
it was a rejection of the 'political theology' developed in Europe
as too abstract, not dialectic, and without relation to the masses
of the oppressed in the Third World. In itself the theology of
liberation is not revolutionary in content but in method. Its
point of departure is the conduct of the people in the periphery.
It is a systematic reflection on the experiences of Christians
and others committed to the process of liberation. The theolo-
gians themselves are participating in this process and share in
the repression like anyone active in the liberation struggle.
The new approach of liberation theology reshapes traditional con-
cepts: sin is no longer a merely personal matter but social in-
justice. God's Kingdom has to be realized here and now and takes
form where people are active in reshaping their world towards
fraternity and justice. A re-reading of the bible is presupposed:
centrality is given to the passover (Pesach), Gods choice for the
oppressed and their struggle for liberation.
Also the relation church - world is reconsidered. There is no need
to Christianize the world, and the church is seen as a minority
without any need for power. The functionaries of the church are
to serve the poor and oppressed. The development and diffusion
of these new ideas occurred in a process in which the meetings
of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) were crucial and they in-
cluded considerable internal struggle. For instance, bishop Tru-
jillo, secretary of the CELAM, organized Puebla in order to stop
the influence of liberation theology. The preparatory documents
clearly reflected a neo-christendom vision. In spite of support
from the Vatican the machinations of Trujillo failed against the
strong opposition of progressive hierarchies, such as the Brazil-
ian.
In this renovation process the pressure from below, from the grass

roots level of the church was decisive, as already indicated. Therefore it is time to turn our attention to the movements at this level of the church, the CEB's.

In the next chapter we shall analyse their characteristics and, especially important for the topic of this paper, their relation to (urban) popular movements.

III. Base Communities and Popular Movements

III.1. Characteristics of the CEB's.

A song very much in use in the (rural) CEB's contains these words:

    we are the people, we are many
    we are God's people
    we want land on earth
    we have it already in heaven.[6]

This song illustrates a real inversion in the outlook of popular religion. In the old days people waited patiently for a better future after death, but now people claim land here and in the in-mediate future. Faith songs in the cult meetings inspire action and struggle. What are the CEB's ? Friar Betto, active in the movement himself, gives the following characteristics.[7] They are communities, because they bring together people with the same beliefs, living in the same rural region or urban neighbourhood. These persons, inspired by their faith, live in unison dealing with problems of survival, housing, and struggle for a better life. The CEB's are ecclestiastical because they belong to the church as a nucleus of religious community. They are basic be-cause their members are persons who work with their own hands and belong to the popular masses.

This description raises a number of questions. Starting with the last characteristic: quantitative data about the class origins of the CEB-members are not available. Catalogues of groups are quiet common, such as Betto makes: housewives, workers, subem-ployed, rentiers, people working in the urban periphery, rural workers, small landowners, peasants, tenants etc. It is clear that the members of the CEB see themselves as 'the people', 'the poor' as opposed to 'the rich, the exploiters', using a dichotomous

model of society. C. Boff, a theologian active in the CEB's, writes: 'grass root communities are not class organisations in the strict sense, their members do not determine themselves by the fundamental class criterion: their position in the system of production'.[8] Another point of discussion is the relation to the hierarchical church: in what sense are the CEB's ecclesiastical ? We return to these two questions later.

What are the activities of the communities ? Before looking at their social and political activities, it has to be made perfectly clear that they are primarily cult communities, where people celebrate their faith and hope. Brandao's warning is particularly to the point for sociologists: 'The daily urgency to criticize society could make one forget the dream of a society without classes.[9] It is not only necessary to interrogate the principles of social doctrine and pastoral praxis but also to investigate the utopian imagination, the dream about a new society and a new man. The CEB is the place where the commitment is celebrated and faith is recreated as a feast.

People love to sing and so cement the feeling of fraternity, anticipating a new fraternal world, that has to come. This is how the celebration of the eucharist is experienced: by sharing the bread together, people anticipate a society without shortage of food. As Betto says: 'people who almost always live in a sphere of necessity now for a moment live in a sphere of liberty'.[10] Yet daily problems are not forgotten or repressed: there is no question of alienation. The situation of people is dealt with by the following method: see, judge and act, a method very popular in 'catholic action', especially the JOC. The participants of a meeting tell each other about actual problems, such as danger of removal of their houses, the need for electricity or water-supply, etc. One or two cases are chosen as most urgent and the participants comment on the problem and add facts and information. Then comes the moment of judgement: what would Jesus do in this situation ? On the suggestion of someone present the gospel is opened and an appropriate passage is read. People meditate and comment on the reading. What are the causes of the problem ? Is it just to suffer this injustice ? In the third and last

stage the question what to do is dealt with. What are the pos-
sibilities for our community to solve the problem ? What action
can be taken ? Suggestions are discussed and a concrete plan is
agreed upon.[11]
The method is flexible, and it can happen that a community is con-
centrating on the same problem for a long period. It is not a
linear method, but a dialectical one. The perception of the prob-
lem already contains elements for a judgement and ways of action.
Each moment is interrelated with the other two. The evaluation
of the action during the next meeting will not return to the start,
but intensify the action, learning from errors and mistakes made.
They discover that they are the subject of their own history.
They start to speak in their own name and in their own language.
The CEB is an excercise in practical democratic behaviour, be-
cause everybody has the possibility to speak up and give his/
her opinion.
Is this not an overly optimistic or naive view ? How is the leader-
ship in the communities exercised ? This is indeed an important
problem, that needs some special attention. The leaders of the
CEB's are called pastoral agents and can be priests, nuns or lay-
people, sometimes students, teachers, etc. but all of them are of
middle class origin. If the leaders come from the community it-
self they are sometimes called agents of 'the base'. They emerge
in the action and struggle of the community, but continuous train-
ing is organized in order to strengthen their skills. So the CEB
becomes a real school for leaders of the popular movement. The
pastoral agents live among the people in the popular neighbour-
hoods, sharing the hardship of precarious urbanisation and earn-
ing slightly more than the minimum salary. But nevertheless a
cultural difference between community and middle class agents re-
mains. Most of the articles on the CEB point to this problem and
stress the need for adaptation to popular culture. One of the dif-
ficult issues in the communication between people with different
social class backgrounds is popular religion. The reasons for
processions, the veneration of images, the devotion to certain
saints, are not easy to understand for members of the middle
class.

The pastoral agent is also the heir of a long intellectual tra-
dition which considers all that is not orthodox, i.e. legitimised
by the hierarchical church, as superstitious and erroneous. This
is one of the bitter fruits of the Romanisation process we wrote
about earlier.
Objective and unbiased research on popular religion has only
started recently. One of these researchers is Rolim.[12] He points
out that we have to understand the religion of the poor in rela-
tion to their precarious life conditions, which especially affect
their bodies. For that reason it is understandable that in an
overwhelming majority of situations the religious practices of
the poor are appeals for protection against anything that can
damage their physical integrity: illness, lack of food, lack of
decent housing, etc. They appeal to a power outside and above
the oppressing society. Therefore religion for the poor is the
only outlet to feel protected from the constant and innumerable
difficulties of life. This short summary does not do justice to
Rolim's analysis, but this is not the place to go further. Besides
there is not only the difference between popular and clerical
beliefs, but also more generally between theoretical, scientific
knowledge and popular knowledge. This is clearly reflected in
the discussion on popular education.[13]
Now let us return to the CEB. It is the function of the pastoral
agent to assist the people in analysing their situation, starting
from their faith and religious motivation to become aware of the
causes of injustice.
Especially when the agent is in a hurry, he can overemphasize the
political aspects of his message and use the religious discourse
as a mere peg on which to hang the political message. Betto gives
the rather ridiculous example of a priest who, after reading the
Gospel passage about the Lord's ascension, closes the book and
starts his sermon in the following way: brothers, just as Jesus
rises to heaven, the prices of food are rising everyday.[14] No
doubt this is a violation of popular culture and religious sensi-
bility.
Certainly class differences cause communication problems, but they

can also be looked upon in a more positive way. This is the ap-
proach of brother Michel when he compares the behaviour of the
CEB members and the believers of the Pentecostal cults.[15] He
states that both groups share the same social and cultural back-
ground and then asks why their religious behaviour is so differ-
ent. The pentecostals maintain their traditional religious be-
liefs, but concentrate them around the person of Jesus Christ.
The Catholic members of the CEB's have introduced into their
religious practices the dimension of social awareness. Why this
difference ? According to this author the explanation can be found
in the fact that the CEB's are guided by people with a middle
class origin. In this class it is quite normal to give attention
to the social dimension of faith and to criticize society. They
now pass this attitude on to the subaltern classes. This is an
interesting point of view, but one that needs more investigation.
A rural union leader like Manuel de Conçeição, who emanated from
the pentecostal movement, could falsify the absolute difference
between pentecostals and CEB-members as Michel does.
After having considered the characteristics of the base movements,
we conlude that they are indeed communities, ecclesiastical and
representative of the base. We will now analyse their relation
to the other social movements in present day Brazil.

III.2. Base communities and social movements.

The first CEB's emerged around 1960 and since that time this move-
ment has passed through several distinguishable stages. Betto
isolates four phases:
1. The first one is formation; the community is concentrating
on religious motivations, searching through the Gospel. It is the
stage of locating its own identity.
2. The second stage is social action. The organisation of popular
movements starts with the participation of CEB members. Not only
Catholics enter these movements, but also Protestants, 'spiritual-
ists',non-believers on the side of the oppressed. The line of di-
vision is not faith but identification with the poor.
3. In the next stage the topic is the reinforcement of the labour-
movement. Many CEB members participate in the 'union opposition'

and the authentic unions aiming at a labour movement which is more
representative of the interests of the working class. They are
active in strikes and labour struggles.

4. The fourth stage, which is going on now, is the reform of po-
litical parties; the search for new channels of <u>political</u> expres-
sion.[16]

This division in stages already gives a clue to understanding the
relationship between CEB's and other social movements. There is
no need for us to deal with the other social movements in general,
since others will do that in this volume. Here we will only make
some short remarks on the social movements in order to situate
the stages of the CEB mentioned so far.

It is only in the second stage of the CEB development that we can
speak about a relationship with other social movements. It has to
be placed in the early seventies. We have to remember that at that
time the church was a shelter to all opposition that did not have
an outlet elsewhere. Important too, is to know that the Brazilian
left realised at that time that work on the base level had been
neglected and consequently it changed its tactics and strategy.
Guerrilla warfare adventures were over, the tedious work on the
popular base began. Even during the time that military repression
was very strong, urban movements arose. This was probably because,
as Kowarick states, the State in the dependent Latin American econ-
omies shows more flexibility in relation to 'urban problems', than
in the economic sphere. The little flexibility that the system
has in this field is used in order to integrate and to co-opt the
urban social movements.[17]

In the second half of the seventies a new form of unionism devel-
oped, particularly in the industrial region of São Paulo: the
'oposição sindical' and a new type of leader emerged, of which
Lula is the best known. These new leaders resented State control.
During long and extended strikes the unions showed a new antago-
nistic behaviour towards the State, something quite unknown in
Brazilian history. Since the thirties the unions had played a
key role in the State strategy to force industrial relations into
a model of harmony: they were an essential element in the State's

system of control over the working class. The codification of la-
bour legislation (CLT) in the Vargas period views the unions in
a cooperative relation with capital. Any potential problem in this
relation could be resolved by the mediation of the State with the
assistance of a Regional Labour Office or the Labour Court. So
there was neither a reason for conflict, nor a need for strikes.
The function of the unions was reduced, especially after the 1964
coup, to one of mere assistance and recreation.[18] What is this
new approach of the unions ? Moisés gives the following charac-
teristics, which we will summarize here. The new unions are ac-
tive among the workers of the strategic and dynamic sectors of
Brazilian industry; they use new forms of struggle, not only the
ones allowed by the CLT, but also new forms like mobilisation
of the workers on the factory floor by the salary commission;
they are mass movements, not only because they are able to attract
tens of thousands to the strike meetings, but also by the active
participation of many workers in all sorts of activities; last
but not least they set new demands, not only in relation to sala-
ries, but also to the unions themselves and political demands.[19]
The new form of unionism is the result of long and arduous work
at the base since 1966, the starting point of the union opposi-
tion. The church contributed to it by providing its militants
formed in the JOC and ACO. The church reacted to the growing
strength of the unions and labour movement by organizing the La-
bour Pastoral (P.O.). This new branch of pastoral activity was
to represent the church in the world of labour.
Betto defines its aims as follows: 'P.O. is the presence of the
workers in the church and the presence of the church among the
workers'.[20] P.O. is not seen as a parallel movement to the union
nor as a Christian union: 'the workers act according to the orien-
tation of the unions. When the workers come to the P.O., they
reflect on their activities in the light of the Gospel'.[21] A clear
purpose of the P.O. is to increase the church's credibility among
the working class. It seems that the CEB movement is not enough
for the church to ensure its presence in the sphere of production.
In the pastoral plans of the major industrial dioceses special
attention is given to the pastoral among the workers. P.O. is also

seen as an advisory council to the bishop in labour matters and it coordinates the diocese's activities, its support and collaboration with the unions. P.O. is not only active on the level of the diocese but also on the parish level, nuclei of reflection are formed.

At the end of the seventies the new international economic order and its repercussions on Brazil, the end of the economic 'miracle', forced the regime to adapt forms of self-legitimation: the opening, '*abertura*' was the answer of Golbery. General amnesty for the exiled, reform of the political parties, abolition of censorship: these were all elements of a process, strictly under the control of the regime, to maintain and safeguard the essentials of socio-political domination. The decision of the most advanced sectors of the working class to organize their own political party did not fit in this scheme, but nevertheless the foundation of the workers party (PT) became a fact. This is not the place to analyze the origin and composition of this party. We will only give some attention to the consequences of the existence of this party for the church.

Until 77-78 the activities of the church were the most important form of mobilisation and organisation of the people. From then on new agents and new proposals arose. Pastoral agents became aware of the fact that the activities of the church pastoral are limited and that it is not the role of the church to be the vanguard in the process of social and political change. The struggle for political power cannot be the task of the CEB's but the commission of the political parties. The extensive discussions in specialized periodicals shows that this insight was not immediately clear and was to some agents a difficult and painful one.[22] Next to that, in many of the CEB's the traditional popular distrust of professional politics[23] showed itself again. According to Betto, the different categories of ecclesiastical leaders reacted in their own way to this new situation. Perhaps he generalizes too much and exaggerates a little, but he gives an interesting conceptual scheme. The bishops reacted by over-exaggerating the importance of the pastoral discourse, without

concretely indicating the ways forward. Priests and nuns tried
first to defend their flock against the outsiders by stressing
the importance of the religious and pastoral elements in the CEB
activities. The lay leaders tended to reduce the pastoral praxis
to political praxis. At the grass root level one tendency was to
stress specific Christian values exclusive to the believers. The
other, more frequent tendency, was dialectial combination: they
do not sense a conflict between prayer and action, faith and po-
litical struggle, pastoral activities and union action.[24]
The fourth national meeting of the CEB's movement dealt explicit-
ly with the problem of politics and the question of which politi-
cal party to support. In contrast with the idea broadcast by the
media, there was no clear option for the P.T. but a discussion
about the criteria for the choice of a political party. The par-
ticipants in this meeting agreed that every member of the CEB is
free to make his own political choice, but only after studying
their programmes, the interests they defend and the social change
which they opt for. It is interesting to diagnose that the bish-
ops, in their annual meeting of 1980 held in Brasilia on the po-
litical parties, showed a preference for the P.T.[25]
The elections of 1982 show that even in regions where the CEB was
strong its members did not necessarily vote for the P.T., but took
very much into account what could be realised by for instance the
election of PMDB candidates. We will conclude this section by sum-
marizing the relation between the official hierarchical church
and the popular movements. Brandão distinguished three categories:

1. Popular movements of the church. This means movements created
on the initiative of the hierarchy for lay activities or movements
created by laymen and legitimised by the hierarchy. Popular here
means committed to the popular liberation struggle. Not all popu-
lar movements of the church are in this line: e.g. 'curdilho de
cristiandade'; the Christianity courses are neo-Christian not
only in name but also in content.
2. Popular movements of the community. These are perhaps originat-
ed by initiatives of leaders or members of church movements, but
they are autonomous and active in the sphere of housing, water,
costs of living, etc.

3. Popular class movements. These are active in the sphere of
production and their members act according to their position in
the production process as working class e.g. industrial and rural
unions.[26]

What is the attitude of the church towards these three types of
movements ? In relation to the third category it is one of sup-
port; the unions are independent. In respect to the second type
the church's role is one of helping and here influence is sometimes
stronger because the leadership is often under its control. In
relation to the first category the church considers the work
among the popular classes as part of its ministry, too long neg-
lected, but essential for its task. The basic question: are the
CEB's ecclesiastical movements among the people or are they pop-
ular movements invading the church, affecting the traditional
hierarchical structure, still remains.
Brandão emphasizes the flexibility of the Roman church in compar-
ison with the Protestants and umbanda. These tend to split them-
selves up into small new communities every time there is disagree-
ment. The Catholic church has an immense power to maintain and
to preserve its structure, by accepting new movements, stressing
the 'communitas' into its midst.[27]
It is time to come into closer contact with concrete reality in
order to check the various theoretical points of view. In the next
part we will study the metalworkers' strike of 1980 which offers
a good case for the analysis of the relation between church and
unions. We will try to find an answer to some of the questions
that have arisen, for example:

What is the relation of the CEB in the large ABC region to the
unions there ? What is the relation with the workers pastoral ?
Does the church show respect for the unions' autonomy ? Further-
more, what is the attitude of the hierarchy, concretely Cardinal
Arnts of S. Paulo and bishop Hummes of S. André and their clergy
towards the laymen ? Finally, what is the influence of the new
church ideology, the theology of liberation, on the praxis of so-
cial movements in this period ?

IV. The Strike and its Actors

First we will reconstruct the events before and during the strike
of 1980, taking into account, especially, the role of the church at
its different levels. Then we will look at the analysis made by
the actors, union members and church leaders, of the events and
their own roles therein.[28]

IV.1. Development of the strike and the role of the church.

Humphrey describes the tension building up between the unions on
the one side and government and the industrial bosses on the other
towards the end of 1979 thus:[29] 'the attitude of the government
and some employers appeared to be that labour unrest could be
curtailed by a series of minor reforms that would demobilize the
working class and isolate the radical elements in the unions from
the mass of workers'.... 'At the end of 1979 there was little
sign of significant concessions from the management. On the con-
trary many firms believed that 1980 would provide the opportunity
for a definitive defeat of the union. The government, too, has
its reasons for wanting to inflict a defeat on the metalworkers
of São Bernardo'. The unions of the ABC knew about this. The gov-
ernment gave a warning by taking a tougher line against the mili-
tant union of Bankworkers in Porto Alegre. The unions started to
prepare for a confrontation. In the factories meetings were or-
ganized and after three months of intensive mobilisation the union
was able to form a committee of Mobilisation and Wages with re-
presentatives elected from all over the district. The unions also
organized in the districts in order to evaluate the strike of
1979, often on the initiative of local CEB's. In the workfloor
discussion a long list of demands for the 1980 negotiations was
produced, including a 15 percent wage rise based on an increase
in productivity, compensation for inflation, job security, a 40
hour week, the end of overtime and union delegates in every
factory.
During negotiations a compromise over the increase in real wages
seemed possible, but for the employers the security demand was
unacceptable, and negotiations broke down over this issue. In the

opinion of the union, wage rises were useless without a guarantee
of job security: workers would be dismissed before they would
benefit from them. The strike started on the first of April with-
out the use of pickets - so firm was the determination of the
workers. Initially the metalworkers'union had the support of 23
unions in the '*Unidade Sindical*'. Later on it became clear that
this coalition was dominated by the Communist Party, the PCB,
which found the strike too risky, in relation to the possible
dangers, for the opening of the political process.[30]
The Regional Labour Court of S. Paulo considered the legality
of the strike and for the first time in Brazilian history declared
itself incompetent to judge the case. This was in itself a victo-
ry for the union. Later on the Employers Federation of S. Paulo,
the FIESP (*Federação das Industrias do Estado de São Paulo*), asked
for a new judgement, and under clear pressure from the government
the Labour Court came to the verdict that the strike was illegal.
At this moment the way was open for the regime to intervene and
on April 17 the leadership of the metalworkers' union of the ABC
was replaced by bureaucrats appointed by the Ministry of Labour.
Early Saturday morning, April 19, 15 union leaders, including
Lula, and 14 members of the opposition, including members of the
Commission for Justice and Peace, were detained by the army.
The local bishops had already declared their solidarity with the
strikers. On Sunday, the 8th of April, an Easter Mass was cele-
brated for the workers on their request. The liturgy, prepared
by the P.O., made a comparison between the struggle of the strik-
ers and the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.
The bishops criticized openly the new discussion of the Labour
Tribunal, pointing to the injustice of the legal system. President
Figueiredo accused D. Paulo of 'inciting the strike', which ac-
cording to the existing laws was a criminal offence. In the same
interview the president declared that the support of the bishops
for the strike was not in accordance with the opinion of the majority
of the hierarchy. The next day Dom Paulo challenged Figueiredo to
give the names of bishops opposed to the church support of the strikers.
In the name of the bishops conference the secretary of the CNBB,
D. Ivo Lorscheiter, gave open support to D. Paulo. A new crisis

in the relations between church and State became a fact. On April
23, Dom Ivo and Dom Rocco, the papal nuncio, each visited Gol-
berry in order to smooth the tensions. In this conversation the
nuncio gave assurances that the visit of the Pope to Brazil would
start with a meeting of John Paul with the president. This leaked
out to the press and was seen as a victory for the regime.
In the meantime intimidation and repression of the mass of the
strikers was growing too. An impressive display of the armed forc-
es was organised. Helicopters were flying extremely low above S.
Bernardo. Meetings in public squares or in the football stadium
were prohibited, and only allowed inside the churches. The strik-
ers were not intimidated and the strike continued. The direction
had been taken over by the previously elected committee of 16.
The activities of the strikers were shifted from the factories
to their neighbourhoods. There, CEB's and other groups were ac-
tive in the collection of food supplies and money, the distri-
bution of supplies to strikers in financial problems, the visiting
of families and distribution of bulletins.
The pressure on the workers exercised by the mass media was very
intense. Radio and television broadcast only the point of view
of employers and government officials. In small factories with
personal relations between employer and worker strike participa-
tion petered out. In big factories strikers were replaced by the
unemployed and pickets became a necessity. In the formation of
these pickets CEB members and even priests were active.
On May 1, in spite of police prohibition, a mass meeting was or-
ganized on the square of San Bernardo's main church. Strikers
determined to celebrate labour day marched to the Stadium and were
confronted by the army. The danger of a bloody clash was real.
At the last minute General Milton Tavares, commander of the second
army and virtual ruler the S. Paulo state, withdrew his men. An
impressive march started in support of the strike, in which
120.000 people participated.
In spite of the fact that no concessions were made, some firms
suffered great losses during the strike. FIESP was not allowed
to negotiate and the State took full control of the conflict.

Delegations of the strikers, travelling to Brasilia, including
the bishop of S. Andre, were not received. Finally after forty-
one days of the strike the workers had to accept   defeat. The
outcome of the strike seemed an outright victory for the employ-
ers: there was no concession on wages and no return of the sacked
union leaders. Ex-leaders like Lula faced the threat of prosecu-
tion under the National Security Law, and many people, including
Lula's own brother, predicted that he would be transformed from
a prestigious union leader into an effective politician of the
Workers Party.

The impact of the strike can be seen in a different light, as for
example Moisés sees it.[31] He sees the importance of this strike
in its rupture with the labour legislation. The institution of
labour justice had lost the trust of the working masses in a com-
plete and absolute way, while before they believed in its objec-
tivity. The strike also clarified the limits of State control over
the workers movement. Finally, as we said before, the strike of
metal workers was the only break with the political process of
'*abertura*', controlled by the government.

The discussion about the success or failure of the April strike
is still going on in Brazil.[32] It is noteworthy that negative
judgement on the strike comes generally from members of the Com-
munist Party, who are active in the *pelegos*-unions, collaborating
with the Ministry of Labour. From this side too comes the rejec-
tion of church participation in the strike of 1930.

The absence of large scale strikes in recent years does not mean
that the Brazilian labour movement is in retreat or is defeated.
Smaller and shorter sit-down strikes in early 1982 were highly suc-
cessful. They established the practice of direct negotiations be-
tween company and union, breaking down the united front of em-
ployers. Important too is the establishment of a workers' commis-
sion at Ford. This assures effective shop floor representation.
They provide a forum for dealing with ongoing issues in a partic-
ular plant. Unlike the commission organized at Volkswagen at the
end of 1980, which was set up under the complete control of the
company, the commission at Ford resulted from negotiations be-
tween management and both the metalworkers' union and elected

representatives from the workfloor.[33]

<u>IV.2. The vision of the actors</u>.

For the purpose of this paper it is not important to study the
ideas of the employers or the State bureaucrats. Here we are in-
terested in the vision of the other side. There are reports by
D. Claudio, interviews with Friar Betto and Lula, and last but
not least an extensive interview with the members of the Workers
Pastoral in S. Bernardo. We will compare their statements on four
topics: the autonomy of the social movements; the relation of the
different movements with the church; the influence of the theolo-
gy of liberation; and their attitude to the State. Before pro-
ceeding further we will give some biographical data in so far
as it is of importance for the subject.

1. Dom Claudio Hummes, born in the most southern State, Rio Gran-
de do Sul, has been bishop of S. André since 1975. In his rural
background and past as a seminary professor he was not very well
prepared for his job. The diocese of S. André encloses the whole
area of the ABC, S. André, S. Bernardo de Campos and Caetano do
Sul, the most industrialized region of Brazil. Fifty-five per
cent of the active labour force, 406,000 persons, are working in
industry. Only 1% of the population has a rural occupation. This
farmer's son succeeded D. Jorge Marcos, the first and progressive
bishop of S. André, who early on had identified himself with the
social problems of the workers. In his own words, D. Claudio has
been converted by the workers to a different view on society and
a new pastoral attitude. This process of conversion was intensi-
fied by his participation in the strike of 1979. By request of
the union leaders, and after the explicit consent of the strikers'
assembly, D. Claudio became a member of the committee of represen-
tatives of the strikers, negotiating with the employers after in-
tervention in the unions. During the preparations for the 1980
strike Lula himself asked for the bishop's support. In an oral
report to the members of the P.O. the bishop related the fact
that he had consulted the fold about this request, and consented
only after their approval. For each town of his diocese a priest

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was chosen to maintain contant with the unions.
D. Claudio coordinated his line of action too with Cardinal Arnts
of São Paulo.
During the strike the bishop was present at the striker's meetings.
Later on he opened the churches for the strikers when meetings
elsewhere were prohibited. Special services for the workers were
organized also:On Sunday, April 8, where Lula spoke during the
mass, and on May 1, when a mass of workers was in the Main church
of S. Bernardo. The bishop himself, together with thirty priests,
went in front of the strikers' march when the threat of interven-
tion by the army became very dangerous. The church took respon-
sibility for the strike fund, but not as D. Claudio stresses, for
the financial administration. His participation in the strike
provoked the DEOPS, the security police, to threaten him with
prosecution.
After the strike the bishop of S. André felt obliged to justify
his behaviour to other members of the hierarchy in a report to
the CNBB. The emphasis on the peaceful and non-violent character
of the strike methods stands out. The report deals extensively
with the question of the legality of the strike. A distinction
is made between legality and legalisation. For the bishop the
fact that the strike was subsequently declared illegal does not
diminish the justice of the workers' demands and action. 'If the
law is unjust, there is no obligation to observe it'. The bishop
stresses the autonomy of the unions and the service character
of his support. He mentions in relation to the church structure
the parishes, but not the grass-root communities. The bishop
states further that if the strike has become political, this was
caused through the intervention of the State itself and its re-
pressive measures, which he condemns sharply. The theology of libera-
tion is not absent from his statements, but it was more explicit
both in the liturgy of religious ceremonies during the strike and
in his actual behaviour.

2. Because the person and the conduct of Lula have received at-
tention in the international media we can here omit biographical
data. For Lula faith is a question of roots: he was born a Catho-
lic and educated as such by his mother. He recognizes that in 1978
he made strong criticisms of the church, while now he seems to
be flattering the same institution. In Lula's oponion this is not
true. Traditionally the church was on the side of the oppressors
and even now not the whole church is an ally of the working class.
It shows two faces: there are bishops on the side of the rich and
the oppressors such as the cardinals of P. Alegre and Rio, and
others on the side of the people and the poor. Only the latter are
the true church, because they are doing what Jesus Christ did:
working for equality between men. Even as a political leader, pres-
ident of the P.T., he very much dislikes ideological debates.
The ex-union leader is very proud of the autonomy of the S. Bernar-
do union. It has no ties with the church, the government, employers,
communist Party nor other leftist organizations. The only respon-
sibility is to the working class, which elected it.
Certainly there was support from the church. 'The support from
the grassroot communities was extraordinary in the 1980 strike.
The church never intervened in the strike. The only thing the
church did was to open its doors for the protection of the workers
and offer its structure for the support of the strikers. D. Claudio
always said: what do you want to be done ? He never said, I will
do this'. The base communities of the church were points of funda-
mental support, not only here in São Paulo, but in Brazil as a
whole through their role of fundraising and solidarity. Lula is
conscious of the fact that the 1980 strike was not only a strug-
gle against employers, against Capital, but also against mili-
tary power. The strike became a conflict between workers and State
due to provocation by the government. Although the workers were
defeated, they know now, that the causes of their problems can be
found not only in the factory, but in the system of the economic
model applied in Brazil.

3. The third actor is Friar Betto, a Dominican but by his own
choice not a priest. He was born in Belo Horizonte and was active
there in the Union of College students and as a member of the

national direction of the JEC. Studying theology in Rio Grande
do Sul he was imprisoned in 1969 for helping persons wanted by
the police for political activities. He spent 4 years in prison.
From 1974 till 1978 he assisted in the organisation of CEB's in
the diocese of Victoria. Since 1979 he has lived in São Paulo.
He was invited by D. Claudio to become responsible for the Labour
Pastoral in S. Bernardo. He is a member of the International As-
sociation of Theologians of the Third World. Throughout this paper
we have already discussed the ideas of Betto, so we will now be
brief. It is important to deal with the relationship between Betto
and Lula. They have known each other since early 1980. They soon
became friends, so that Lula asked Betto to sleep in Lula's home
during the strike in order to accompany and protect Marisa, Lula's
wife and their children. No wonder that some people see Betto as
'the man behind Lula'. The friar is sharp in denying this. In his
opinion such an idea is the consequence of a colonialist idea
about workers: if a worker is intelligent, decisive and knows what
he wants, as in the case of Lula, it is because there is somebody
behind him, a petit-bourgeois orientating him. No. The workers
movement is autonomous and very conscious of its qualities and
capacities.[34]

4. The fourth vision comes from a collective, one of a group of
lay members of the Labour Pastoral of S. Bernardo, interviewed
together with Betto and a local priest, soon after the organisa-
tion of their group in June 1980.[35] The two ecclesiastica made
very few interventions and these were mostly of an informative
character. Of the eight lay members, four were active in grass
root communities, two also in the pastoral of youth, and one was an ac-
tive member of the P.T. All participated in some way in the strike.
One of them was even a member of the commission of 16, the deputy
strike leadership.
On the autonomy of the social movements, all agree that the union
determines the line, and where the people go the church follows.
The task of the church is to serve. In particular, the union of S.
Bernardo has a strong basis in the masses, and that is the reason
why they participated there in the strike. Elsewhere, in São Paulo

or in Osasco, there are more groups active on the grassroot level,
but the unions, those of the *'pelegos'*, are not the authentic ones.
The contribution of the political parties or groups in S. Bernar-
do was insignificant. The contribution of the church and the grass
root communities was important, but the Christians participating
in the organisation of the strike did this as members of the work-
ing class, not as members of the church. In the last part of the
interview a discussion between the workers starts about the func-
tion and aims of the Labour Pastoral. It does not seem very clear
for everybody, understandably so, because they have just started
their group. But finally after an intervention from Betto, they
agreed that the P.O. is not a parallel union, that it has a func-
tion of service in respect of the union and has its own function
of reflection in the light of faith.
How do these workers see the role of the church and their rela-
tion with the hierarchy ? For them the figure of the bishop is
very important: he represents the church and makes the church
visible. The only priest present has to remind them that the bish-
op can do anything without his priests (!). They mention the con-
version D. Claudio experienced too. But talking about the role
of the church they stress the importance of the grass root com-
munities. A difference is made between the western region of
São Paulo, where the base communities had existed longer and
S. Bernardo where they were a recent phenomenon. They called at-
tention to the fact that not all the priests supported the strike.
There were some parishes, the rich ones, where middleclass people
were living, which did not give support. One case is remembered
where the priest called the police in order to prevent a meeting
in his church.
There is agreement about the fact that the church also gained by
its participation in the strike. There was a barrier between the
average metalworker and the church; this is now disappearing.
Before the strike, if meetings in the quarters were organized
by Catholics, only a few people came, mostly housewives. After
intervention in the unions these small groups increased very much
in number. The fact that they started a Pastoral of Labour after
the strike again is proof that the church improved its image and

strengthened its influence.

Throughout the interview the strong influence of the theology of liberation is noticeable: for example, 'with that big struggle of Christ to liberate the oppressed during this life, he would stay on our side'. The workers also think that the church played an important role in changing the traditional faith of people from the countryside migrating to S. Bernardo: 'a backward religious mentality of conformism, of impossibility to struggle against the employer because he is God's child too'. It is important to have a 'different vision of Christianity, one related to the liberation of the working class and with a total commitment to the struggle'. In this interview no explicit statements are made about the attitude of the working class towards the State. But people agree, in contrast to their bishop, that a moment could come where the union should be forced to use violent means 'because I don't believe in societal change with lemonade'.

The vision of all these actors may be summarily presented thus:

1. The labour movement of S. Bernardo is autonomous.

2. They have a positive judgement on the church in so far as it is committed to the struggle of the working class, especially in the grass-root communities.

3. There is a visible influence of the theology of liberation except on the religious ideas of Lula.

4. Their attitude in relation to the state is antagonistic, but their ideas about the state are not very elaborated.

V. Conclusions and Questions

In this paper we have seen in a nutshell the changes that the Brazilian Catholic church has gone through in the last hundred years, from a church of laymen open for the culture of subaltern classes to a closed clerical institute, and opening up again in the last few years to the 'oppressed' and the 'poor'.

We have analysed the grass-root communities, their characteristics, their leadership and relations with other social movements, the importance of faith and cult as motives of social commitment.

Finally the collaboration between unions and church during the metalworkers strike in 1980 was analysed, especially the views of the actors. Now it is time to draw some conclusions.

1. It is very risky, if not impossible, to present generalized findings about the collaboration among the union, church movements and hierarchy during the metalworkers' strike. The situation in S. Bernardo is very specific. The workers themselves are conscious of the fact that the concentration of large masses of working people makes the exploitation more visible, and at the same time gives a sense of power in the case of strike action. The unions run the risk of forgetting the reality of the rest of Brazil. The reality of the majority of the unions too, which are official, falls under the control of the Ministry of Labour. Yet we share the opinion of Humphrey that the ABC metalworkers' unions may be trendsetters in giving shape to the forms of work conflict between labour and capital in Brazil.[36] The attempt to hold a one-day national strike in July 1983 might be another indication of this.

2. The events before and during the strike of S. Bernardo make clear that collaboration between unions and church movements is possible and fruitful. This is not necessarily a threat to the independence and autonomy of the labour movement. This collaboration can be advantageous for the church movements too: the church improves its image and its own organisations reach more people.
3. The collaboration of members of church movements in the strike proves that faith can play a positive role in motivating people into social commitment. At the same time the existence of basic church organisations is not a sufficient cause to explain the rise of a vigorous labour movement. On the contrary the differences between the union situations in S. Paulo and S. Bernardo indicate that.

4. The relations between the two levels of the church, base and hierarchy, need further investigation. Clearly the role of the bishop is important. But even when he is independent and autonomous in his diocese in relation to the pastoral approach, he is a member of the national hierarchy at the same time. Especially

in times of crisis confrontations with the State, the support of
his colleagues is very important. If in this moment the course
of the Brazilian hierarchy as a whole is progressive and critical
in relation to the State, history teaches us that this can easily
change.[37]

Via nominations of new bishops,'Rome' has effective means of in-
fluencing this course. The Curia excercises censorship over theo-
logians too as in the case of Boff.[38] Also the role of the nuncio
is important, especially in State-Church relations. Next to this
the Celam has a certain influence.

5. For the survival of the church,base communities are very im-
portant. The number of priests is decreasing every year by 0.4%.
The church has to deal with strong competition from the pente-
costal communities and Afro-religious cults, umbanda and batuque,
which are very popular among subaltern and even the middle classes
and they are becoming respectable. To what extent are the CEB's
able to force the hierarchical structure of the church in a more
democratic direction ? Up till now no case is known in which a
popular community clashed with the hierarchy. In the matter of
celibacy and functioning of married priests the communities had
to obey the official rules.[39]

6. In this paper we have not dealt with the relation of the CEB's
to politics. A new study is necessary in order to understand
how the church movement is dealing with the problem of power.
One very positive point is that the CEB movement did not fall into
the temptation of starting a CEB party.

The Scene of the Strike
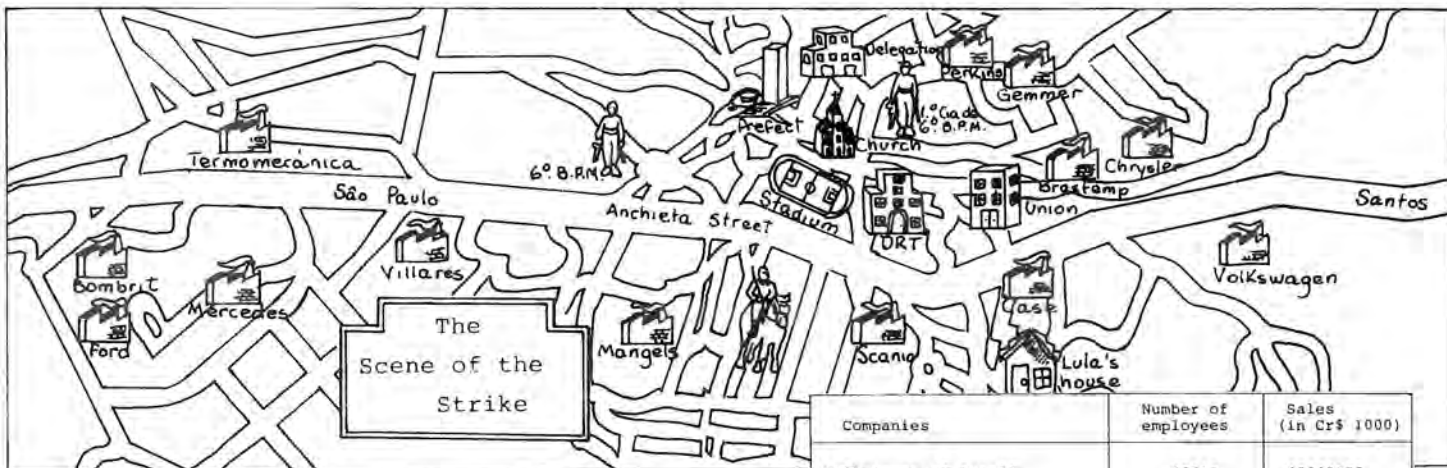
Companies	Number of employees	Sales (in Cr$ 1000)
Volkswagen of Brazil	42611	40643185
Ford Brazil	11793	24172277
Mercedes-Benz of Brazil	15084	21257665
Saab Scania of Brazil	2402	4204256
Brastemp	3533	3127793
Equipamentos Villares	2246	2698739
Perkins S.A. Motores	1850	2535718
Chrysler of Brazil	2068	2526163
TRW Gemmer Thompson	1680	2318748
Termomecânica São Paulo S.A.	1608	2073090
Bombril S.A.	829	1702698
J.T. Case of Brazil	692	1472468
Mangets Industrial	701	1215358

The Scene of the Strike

(source: Veja)

←—sales

number of employees

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URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA -
towards a critical understanding

Etienne Henry

The concept of urban social movements is a relatively new one in
relation to the analysis of Latin America. This is not to say that
the reality of urban social movements is a new one since the or-
ganization and mobilization of urban popular sectors to improve
their living conditions have been going on for several decades.
But for a long time, their significance was not appreciated as
a result of the impact made by two variants of the theory of urban
marginality: the radical variant which painted an optimistic pic-
ture of future mass uprisings, and an opposite variant which saw
only the structurally determined passivity of sectors that are un-
connected with key social, economic and political processes. The
significance of urban movements began to emerge when these theories
were put into question by collective practices that had developed
out of the dynamics of urban living: major contradictions surged
up from among the various types that are encountered in the city,
certain types of conflict became stabilized and old forms of ac-
tion and organization of the popular sectors found a new acceptan-
ce.

Fifteen years ago, given the circumstances of the 1968-1973 period,
the *pobladores* movements in Chile represented an important attempt
to mobilize the homeless, to organize the popular neighbourhoods
under the banner of class confrontation and to search for alter-
native projects at both the material and the ideological levels.
The movement was limited by its lack of articulation with other
expressions of the popular movement and by its dependence on the
political apparatus for implementing its strategy for the conquest
of power. However, this social force was seen to be acting in the
political arena with great vigour in various circumstances, and it

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represented a pole of reference which surely provoked many ex-
periences in other national contexts. Various other movements of
pobladores threatened to break the traditional channels through
which control over urban popular sectors was exercised.[1] Such sit-
uations led to a revision of the concept of urban movements and
to a renewed emphasis on the historical trajectories underlying
their strong conjunctural expressions. Their close connection with
the popular movement was recognized and there were references to
their multiplicity of objectives, which went further than the ur-
ban question as it is posed by sociologists.

This reality was then analyzed in terms of the concept of urban
social movement (USM) which had been put forward by a school of
European sociologists; the concept was then still being worked out
on the basis of specific experiences and no consensus existed around
its application.[2] The theoretical advances on USMs, which were bas-
ed mainly on an analysis of industrialized societies, gave rise to
contrasting analyses of dependent societies; these did not escape
a measure of reductionism whenever attempts were made to relate
concrete analyses to a normative formula derived from outside. It
is not so much that the specificity of dependent societies is of
a kind which requires separate analytical categories, but the so-
cial reality cannot be adequately understood in terms of global
generalizations. We must recognize that the concept of USM gave
rise to numerous articles in Latin America, even though the theory
was taken over in a way which often lacked the necessary creati-
vity and critical sense, especially in relation to urban policies
implemented by national states, to urban contradictions, to the
contradictions involved in the reproduction of the labour force,
and to the articulation of these movements with the dynamics of
social classes. The evolution of certain ideas put forward by
Manuel Castells illustrates these difficulties. In 1977 he saw
the experience of Santiago de Chile as a pole of reference for the
notion of USM in the full sense of the word, whereas he now argues
that the concept of USM cannot be applied to Latin American urban
movements because of their intrinsic heteronomy and their close
dependence on the political sphere.[3]

In order to come to grips with the phenomenon of Latin American urban movements, we must base our analysis on the problematic that we have just outlined and on the result of research done by individuals and local centres whose main objective, in recent years, has been to systematically examine national experiences. Rather than work from a limited definition which reduces urban movements to practices that are associated with urban contradictions, it would seem preferable to examine empirically the range of collective actions that can be observed in urban settings. Taking care to avoid generalizing about the situation in the sub-continent as a whole on the basis of particular experiences, and ensuring that individual experiences are always set in their particular historical contexts, we can divide the great variety of movements into five categories, complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

I. The Territorial Movements

Territorial movements correspond to the set of collective practices and behaviour which lead to the creation of popular neighbourhoods (*barrios populares*) in ways which depart from the established norms and the institutional mechanisms of the city. In a majority of the large cities of Latin America, the urban masses are confronted with an acute housing crisis to which they respond with collective action aimed at the conquest of urban space which makes up the territory of daily life. Land invasions are the main form of pressure against land rent and the housing market. These are forms of struggle which clash with the legal norms governing access to urban land, and they bring about changes in the rules and give rise to institutional responses; furthermore they substantially change the face of the city.

The invasions represent a primary level of collective practices carried out by the masses, with majority proletarian participation. But through this type of practice, it is territorial rather than class consciousness which is stimulated. Its popular connotation which derives from confrontation with the established order, is retained over a long period of time and may reemerge in the form of radical attitudes to other types of action.

The ambiguous nature of the invasions and their reappropriation
through the usual mechanisms of domination, given an adequate in-
tegrative response on the part of the State, have given rise to
much discussion. First there is a political ambivalence: it has
been demonstrated that the invasions have opened the way for cli-
entalistic relationships that have strengthened oligarchical
power.[4] The case of Lima illustrates the ways in which this type
of clientelism, which is designed to seek out a base of popular
support for particular regimes, tends to operate: a popular regime
would be content with a kind of immediate paternalism, seeking to
exercize direct vertical control over the coopted masses by ex-
pressing support for the invasions and using the masses as a coun-
terweight to the emerging working classes; a liberal regime would
delegate welfare and organizational functions to the dominant po-
litical parties; a corporatist regime would control the invasions
and strengthen the links between the territorial communities and
the State apparatus.[5] Then there is a spatial ambivalence: not all
of the invasions infringe the principle of land rent; some may even
have the support of landowners for whom invasions fit into a stra-
tegy of increasing land valuations. Finally ideological ambivalen-
ce: two authors have denounced the manner in which the invaders
are themselves invaded by philanthropic welfare institutions whose
objective is to dampen their radicalism and foster individualistic
values as an alternative to class antagonism.[6]

Recognition of this ambivalence does not imply agreement with the
proposition that the invasions are no more than a means of inte-
gration into the power structure. As the number of invasions grow,
the capacity of governments, state apparatuses, parties and wel-
fare institutions to control them become exhausted, and they are
torn by internal dissent as one political regime succeeds another.
The worsening of the urban crisis reduces the material goods avail-
able during the process of integration; after a time, popular mo-
bilization can no longer be contained by the channels of coopta-
tion and begins to recover its autonomy of action and organization.
These integrative mechanisms are less and less relevant to the dy-
namics of urban life in many parts of Latin America. The new in-

vasions which continue to take place do not seem to be providing a base of support for the political regimes.

Inversely, there are highly polarized invasions which fit into a strategy of popular mobilization in support of policies of radical opposition. In such a case, the invasion is presented as a radical break with the system; the community organization which then emerges shares in this radical outlook. There is a constant search for ways of widening the breach with the urban system and to develop alternative life practices and ideological referents with a clear revolutionary content. For example, certain 'proletarian neighbourhoods' in Mexico City are true territorial enclaves of a utopian character which only function whenever there is a strong militant leadership, usually students, and when the population is recruited from the weakest social and economic strata.[7]

Between these two extreme situations of cooptation and radicalism, both of them based on a common logic of integration and breakdown, most popular neighbourhoods follow a pendulum movement, moving from mobilization to retreat and back again in accordance with the shifting circumstances of the urban situation. Collectivisation of behaviour depends on the type of organization which emerges during or after the invasion and on the kinds of conflicts which divide the community.

A horizontal territorial organization operates at the level of the many problems of daily life and at best, manages to achieve a community-based solidarity. A vertical organization becomes legitimized through its capacity to negotiate with and apply pressure on the authorities; often it becomes a spingboard which enables a *cacique* leadership to achieve upward mobility. The mobilizing power of an organization does not seem to be guaranteed except within a democratic centralist structure. Once they are seen to be legitimate by the base, they acquire a greater degree of social representativity than local institutions and must therefore be taken into account by the public authorities.

At this stage, we must distinguish two dimensions of territorial movements. The first refers to the invasions as such which become politically significant as their number increases within particular sets of circumstances, forcing the system to give up a measure of political space. As had been demonstrated by the Peruvian and Chilean cases, repeated waves of invasions can seriously split the state apparatus. The second dimension relates to the stages which follow an invasion. There are no viable alternative projects, no breaks with the logic of the urban structure such as socio-spatial segregation. But they generate a social reality based on territory which is a potential source of conflict. The significance of such territorial movements is due in part to their role as collective mobilizers, not only of working class elements but also of various fractions of the subordinate classes that have no access to trade unions or other channels of popular participation.

II. Issue-oriented Movements (*movimientos reinvidicativos*)[8]

Following upon the territorial movements, the issue-oriented movements are concerned with urban consolidation and access to basic services and amenities. Demands for fresh water, electricity, public transport etc. give rise to continuing struggles waged by collective organizations in the face of poor planning and indifference on the part of the public authorities.

The neighbourhoods created as a result of invasions are not the only ones having to cope with these problems. Other types of popular neighbourhoods are involved in demand-oriented struggles: low cost housing estates planned by the State for the higher strata of the popular sectors; private urban developments (*urbanizaciones*) (there are more of these than of other types in such cities as Quito, La Paz or Montevideo) initiated on the basis of (often fraudulent) collective land purchases; inner-city slum-dwellers (*tugurios*) whose involvement in issue oriented movements remains limited because of their low level of group cohesion and their subproletarian social composition.[9]

Popular neighbourhoods express their needs through requests and demands[10]: we can distinguish between the two in terms of the de-

gree of conflict involved and in terms of the level of awareness
that the State is involved. A request is a commercial and/or po-
litical transaction between social needs and the public or private
institutions which provide services. The notion of demand on the
other hand implies that the relation with the state and with the
institutions which provide the services will be seen to involve
a contradiction of interests and a certain level of conflict.
Only rarely do demands openly clash with the capitalist and finan-
cial interests of the institutions which produce or manage urban
services. Thus the contradiction lies in the ideological and po-
litical sphere, although there are significant variations asso-
ciated with the specific content of each one. The need for water
can generate important issue-oriented movements which enjoy broad
support, stand in strong opposition to the State and crystallize
many aspects of daily life. The struggle for public transport,
on the other hand, has a more conjunctural character and quickly
moves towards a confrontation situation involving the transport
companies. However all of these demands can be seen as a popular
response to urban policies which, in spite of significant varia-
tions from one country to the other, tend to move towards a kind
of urban dualism according to which the central neighbourhoods are
well looked after while the popular ones are given little atten-
tion.

The organizers who actually carry out issue-oriented struggles
come from the various kinds of neighbourhood committees.
Territorial organizations begin to broaden the range of their
actions and divide themselves into committees dealing with specif-
ic issues such as water, electricity, education, health etc. The
formulation of demands, in turn, brings several neighbourhoods to-
gether and opens the way for the setting up of federations by zones
and by districts as well as nationally. In this way, the issue-
oriented movements speed up the process through which urban popu-
lar sectors, which represent a force within the popular movement
as a whole, acquire an organic character. The hegemonic struggles
for control of the neighbourhood federations reflect the signifi-
cance which is attributed to this force; they set limits to the

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trend towards autonomy and organic integration, as do the divisions which affect workers, peasant and student movements.[11]

The issue-oriented movements are interested in something more than urban services and amenities and the problems of collective consumption. They are also involved in issues of individual consumption and survival strategies for families, especially during times of crisis. A case in point is the spread of popular meals' services (especially in Pinochet's Chile), or women's organizations which set up solidarity networks to help look after children or coordinate shopping, the committees of the unemployed, or the attempts to take control of welfare programmes based on the principle of 'food in exchange for community work'. Individual consumption and survival can be supported by organizations that are not centralized but operate at the neighbourhood level: cultural and religious groups, women's and youth groups (it is particularly essential to analyze the role of the Church in the organizational life of Latin American neighbourhoods)*. Such organizations play an important role in giving structure to community activities and in training the leaders of the social movements.

The networks of neighbourhood associations and the demands which they formulate raises the problem of local power. The struggles in which neighbourhood associations become involved gives them a much higher degree of legitimacy and representativity than the municipal authorities (which make up the lowest level within a strongly hierarchical State, the Spanish *cabildo* combined with modern forms of the authoritarian State). It is significant, in this respect, that popular demands are usually directed towards the State rather than the municipalities. Several regimes in Latin America have tried to overcome these difficulties by setting up specialized structures designed to reach into the popular neighbourhoods, but these have always been governed by a logic of elite cooptation and bureaucratic control. Wrought by internal political divisions and confronted with the demands of the urban movements, these structures tend to become inactive. The State

*See Vink's chapter in this volume.

can then attempt to divert popular pressures by setting up new, formally democratic municipal institutions in an attempt to de-legitimize the popular institutions. The question of local power can also be revived through local elections and through allowing the popular forces a certain degree of representation on munici-pal bodies. We can see the beginning of a new dynamic of opposi-tion and complementarity between territorial organizations and municipal institutions, of a certain articulation between popu-lar demands and urban management, against the background of de-veloping strategies to guide the struggle against the central State. We do not yet have a clear appreciation of the role of neighbourhood associations in the context of local politics, whether in their new (Peru, Brazil) or their old (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico) forms; nor can we fully understand the dynamics which they generate or the political response of the State in defining the form and context of the relationship be-tween local and central power.

In all these aspects, one of the most important questions raised by the issue-oriented movements is the relationship between so-cial movements and their organic quality. We need to know in which cases these tendencies are either mutually reinforcing or mutually destructive.

III. Sectoral or Conjunctural Movements

Although popular neighbourhoods are most obviously affected by urban problems, they are not the only neighbourhoods to become mobilized in response to these problems. Other types of collec-tive processes develop from various aspects of the urban crisis in the large cities of Latin America.

First, there are forms of mobilization which affect social strata that cannot be regarded as belonging to the popular sectors, particularly the middle classes, as in the case of protest move-ments which oppose urbanization policies in Caracas, or the move-ment that rose up against a motorway construction project in Bogotá.[12] There are counter-revolutionary movements which cam-paign against popular objectives as for example in Chile.

These conjunctural actions are undertaken as a reaction against public
policies and the urban movement; they set the stage for direct
confrontation between social groups for control of space, ameni-
ties and services.

Sectoral transport problems give rise to more serious problems.
In Brazil, sudden strikes and spontaneous demonstrations called
'quebras-quebras' (literally 'breakages') are used by parts of
the labour force to protest against the state of public trans-
port. Trains are blockaded, buses destroyed and stations assault-
ed in protest actions whose regularity, repetition and impact
demonstrate that these are more than mere spontaneous outbursts.[13]
Moreover the whole range of people who use the public transport
system becomes involved. In Lima and in Peruvian provincial cities,
the response to a sudden deterioration in living standards is
crystallized around increases in public transport costs which lead
to uprisings and to the paralysis of the public transport system,
sometimes in alliance with the public transport operators. Every
time fares go up, student sponsored violent demonstrations erupt.
In Quito and Guayaquil the 'War of the four reales' was set off
by a sudden and substantial rise in public transport fares and
was marked by violent demonstrations involving students and popular
sector families, that had considerable political impact. This type
of action involving various levels of militancy is now quite com-
mon, to the point where public transport fares have become one
of the most sensitive issues which local governments have to deal
with.[14]

Conflict over issues of public transport can also be initiated
by the operators. Contrary to widespread belief, they are not
agents of a transport monopoly but represent a small, differen-
tiated emergent petty bourgeoisie, alternating between survival
and speculation, in the shadow of the system of public services.
Usually it is only the Chilean lorry drivers' strikes that spring
to mind when we think of large scale protests by transport ope-
rators, but the frequent strikes of the cooperatives and trans-
port firms of Quito, Lima, La Paz etc. are of a different nature;
here, the objective is to use the threat of paralyzing the entire

city in order to obtain subsidies, credits for importing new
vehicles... and measures of power. While the transport operators'
movements are defending their own interests before anything else,
they can sometimes enter into an alliance with popular forces,
or deal with parts of the State apparatus. In cities where com-
munication takes place mainly through displacement and trans-
portation, such movements have significant strength. They have
the capacity to bring the city to a halt in a way which is both
more visible and effective than anything the labour movement
can do.

Other segments of the petty bourgeoisie or the popular sectors
whose economic activities are also connected with urban life can
also become mobilized. This is frequently the case for school
teachers and municipal workers; their strikes create a climate
of insubordination and protest against low levels of public ser-
vices, a climate which is conducive to popular mobilization.
Street vendors who are constantly harassed in the city centre
areas and demand recognition and respect also become involved
in the mobilization process. This kind of sectoral mobilization
provides a base of support for urban movements insofar as they
go beyond the articulation of strictly professional interests,
and it promotes the voicing of demands associated with the or-
ganization and management of the city. Their principal activists
often come from the popular sectors, live or work in the popular
neighbourhoods and participate in local organizational networks.

Sectoral or conjunctural movements are made up of a variety of
activists who tend to act spontaneously: such movements are e-
phemeral and episodic and do not put forward a global project.
However in certain circumstances they can have a significant im-
pact; they can bring together many different social sectors and
increase the degree of social polarization in the city.

IV. Urban Revolts

The widespread mobilization of large parts of the urban masses
in Latin America tends to increase during periods of sudden and

intense pauperization which result from a worsening of the economic crisis. In such countries as Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia or Mexico, unexpected and irrational revolts - apparently doomed to failure from the start - tend to occur repeatedly whenever the State is not omnipotent and both employment and real wages are forced down as a result of international pressures. These revolts are seen by the press as spontaneous reactions against government and against a fall in living standards down to intolerable levels. However we can put forward the hypothesis that they have a significance which goes well beyond immediate circumstances and that they represent one dimension of urban movements in dependent countries.

The experience of Peru can serve as a useful illustration. An initial kind of revolt was that which took place in 1975 with great spontaneity. It involved *tugurio* dwellers who invaded the city to pillage and plunder at a time when the system of control of public order had been disrupted and the government's policy of redistribution had been blocked as a result of the crisis; this hastened the fall of the reformist military government. The movement was an in-organic one, similar to those that come under the category of uprisings by marginalized masses, but it was sporadic and, in the end, it was controlled by the authorities. The revolts that followed rested more clearly on the organizational base of the popular neighbourhoods as a reaction against government economic measures; demonstrations, blockades, hunger strikes etc.;-forms of action which demonstrated less spontaneity and greater clarity as class-based responses. Then, between 1977 and 1979, there were several nation-wide strikes called by the trade unions and supported by the popular neighbourhoods through their territorial and issue-oriented movements. During the most active period of the strike, when roads leading to the popular neighbourhood and all other means of communication were blocked, Lima and other provincial cities were paralyzed. There was more to these actions than opposition to the military regime since they have continued under the present civilian government as well as such political goals as the demand for representation of the dominated

classes. It is also possible to observe a gradual convergence of the various elements that make up the popular movement in the city. Territory thus ceases to have solely a residential conno- tation and becomes the point of convergence of various struggles.

It should be stressed, in relation to these national strikes, that there is a tendency towards convergence of the trade union move- ments and the mobilization of the urban masses, which raises the question of orientation for the labour federations and the po- litical parties. At times, urban revolts provide popular and lo- gistical support to strike movements (support given to miners', fishermens' and teachers' strikes) without which their actions could not be sustained. Such support generates a territorial dy- namics where demands related to employment are combined with consumer demands. The national strikes raise the question of articulation between trade union and neighbourhood organizations, as well as that of its dependence on a divided leadership.

These forms of revolt, less organic in character but clearly putting into question the legitimacy of power, have erupted in Bogotã, and more recently in Quito. There, the working class is largely in a minority and the greater degree of spontaneity which exists is associated with the fact that the popular movement is not as organic in character. In Bogotã on the other hand, the overwhelming weight of labour federations has limited the degree of participation of the urban masses.

Clearly, such actions go beyond the usual lines of demarcation between trade union and neighbourhood movements. What are the terms of the convergence between the trade union principle and the urban principle, between the concepts of workers' movement and popular movement, between professional (*gremial*) and terri- torial ? And what are the immediate (failure of a particular ac- tion) or structural (heterogeneity of the popular sectors) fac- tors which disrupt this convergence and slow down political polarization ?

Close study of the conditions and the impact of the urban revolts should allow us to answer these questions and to begin to speci-

fy the main features of the popular movement. It should also raise the question of the importance of the workers' movement in cities where it does not constitute the main nucleus of the popular movement, inasmuch as it is seen to be giving it a sense of direction. At the same time, the urban masses do not seem to be acting more autonomously except in the context of convergent actions towards other dimensions of the popular movement.

V. Regional and National Movements

Finally, it may be useful to discuss the question of urban movements in relation to the larger sociopolitical processes which characterize Latin America today. In a number of countries, the State is subject to attacks from movements which go beyond sectoral actions carried out by class blocs (*bloques de clases*) and must be seen in a perspective of social transformation, as in the case of Central America. It is difficult to recognize here the organic presence of urban movements acting autonomously; but neither can it be denied.

The regional movements, which assume an increasing importance in several countries, support the constitution of such class blocs : regional strikes and municipal stoppages in Argentina, in Bolivia and in countries where regional specificities are important.[15]

In the last five years, Peru has witnessed the emergence of a large number of regional movements. This is quite clear in the case of Amazonia where regionalist opposition to a centralized State has provoked a struggle for a better redistribution of national resources, of the economy and of political power in favour of the most neglected provinces. Important social movements have brought together the whole of the population of the Selva zone, asking for regional control of economic activities and an improved administrative infrastructure. They had a multiclass dimension and brought together local personalities, professional organizations and expressions of various class segments. In addition to their programmatic objectives, they represent a questioning of the structure of internal colonialism,

a demand that power should be regionally based and indigenous voices be listened to, and a defense of poverty stricken, exploited masses. In Amazonia, both these masses and the dominated elements of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy are concentrated in a few cities where there is a serious shortage of housing and of stable employment.

The participation of the urban masses in this sort of movement modifies their municipal or regionalist orientation, giving greater weight to the urban socio-economic problematic.

Regionalist movements have also emerged in certain Andean provinces where the regional dimension is less important; its leading elements are the peasant or mining unions and the neighbourhood federations. The motor of the popular dynamic comes from the urban neighbourhoods and includes students, professionals and shopkeepers. When cities or even entire provinces are paralyzed during relatively long periods of time, there are violent confrontations with the local bases of State power.

Finally, social movements develop around the main urban-industrial centres. Here the movements are more working class in character and it is the trade unions which provide the initiative for the formation of regional fronts. But its evolution is dependent upon its capacity to draw the urban masses and their representative organizations into the movement. The class blocs here are less multidimensional in character and these movements may engage predominantly in strike actions or popular protest.

There is more to these movements than opposition to central power and a celebration of regional power. To understand the vitality of their mobilization processes as well as the prospects for the emergence of regional power blocs, we must gain some insight into the configuration of local class segments. They do not constitute long term class alliances, neither are they the bearers of specific historical projects; however, they do constitute a social force which is able to impose partial

modifications to certain administrative and redistributive prac-
tices. To the degree that the impoverished masses concentrated in
the urban centres participate in these movements to a significant
extent - indeed they sometimes make up a majority of those invol-
ved - then we may legitimately see them as an expression of the
urban movement.

When dealing with national processes that are more advanced be-
cause they are oriented towards a historical transformation of
the society, we must examine the configuration of social move-
ments as they may be able to contribute to the overthrow of the
regime and the subsequent seizure of power.[16] Nicaragua is a par-
ticularly useful case where such an analysis can bear fruit, as
we find that during its struggle against the Somoza dictatorship,
the Sandinista army was able to obtain the support of the most
significant parts of the popular classes and of certain elements
of the dominant classes. If we recall that the general offensive
was launched shortly after the Managua earthquake, that this was
followed by a deep depression which sharply lowered living stand-
ards and by massive corruption which had an enormous impact on
the urban masses, we are in a better position to understand the
strong radicalization which took place in the popular neighbour-
hoods - particularly affecting the youth - and we can better ap-
preciate its importance in a context where the working class is
relatively small. Impoverishment, repression and urban scarcity
provided the ferment which allowed the participation of the urban
masses in the seizure of power.

El Salvador is more urbanized and industrialized than Nicaragua,
and it boasts a complex network of organizations and urban de-
mands which run parallel with the armed struggle.[17] As a result,
the popular neighbourhoods are in a position to play not only a
military role but also to sharpen the level of sociopolitical
polarization. In Bolivia, on the other hand, where a popular-
democratic government has set itself the goal of restoring eco-
nomic growth and reconstituting the State apparatus, while at the
same time trying to hold the social movements at bay, it is worth
paying close attention to the behaviour of the urban masses as

they have demonstrated a strong capacity for mobilization in the past during times of political crisis.

In all these situations, the urban masses are an integral part of those processes which govern the formation of class blocs, the mode of opposition to conservative political power and the emergence of new projects of social transformation. Far from being passive observers, they play a role which makes it possible to speak of the urban dimensions of regional and national processes and the social movements associated with them.

This discussion of social movements based on an identification of five types of movements provides the beginning of an analysis but leaves many questions unanswered.

What, we may ask, is the continuity between these different forms of mobilization of the urban masses? The subjects of the action are the same, whether they are participating in land invasions, formulating urban demands, responding to the economic or the urban crisis through higher levels of mobilization or engaging in political struggles. But this is by no means a normative sequence. These actions all have different significance. And awareness of engaging in a common popular struggle does not fit in with fragmented sociopolitical processes.

In what sense are these urban movements? First, in the sense that they imply active participation by the urban masses. Secondly in that their territorially based organizations are involved in determining the direction of the struggle. Third, because of the mobilizing effects of urban contradictions, or at least of social contradictions which become more visible in an urban context. Having said that, it remains extremely difficult to sort out the specific character of the various forms assumed by the popular movement. To understand its objectives and modes of operation, we must go beyond sectoral analysis and look at the dynamics of the process as a whole. In any case, it is no longer possible to discuss the urban movement in terms solely of opposition to the urban policies of Latin American States.[18]

To what degree are they social movements? It seems that we are

witnessing the emergence of subjects who are endowed with their
own base of support within the social dynamics, and whose actions
are articulated with other dimensions of the popular movement.
Their organic character varies from one to the other. However
these movements seem to be responding to crisis situations rather
than acting as the bearers of a project of historical transforma-
tion.[19]

NOTES

1. I have had direct experience of the Chilean and Peruvian si-
   tuations.

2. See in particular the arguments put forward by Manuel Cas-
   tells, Jordi Borja and others based on French, Italian, Spa-
   nish and Canadian experiences as well as those of dependent
   countries.

3. Manuel Castells, *Luttes urbaines* (1972) and *Changer la ville*,
   Elements pour une théorie.

4. See in particular David Collier, *Barriadas y elites: de Odria
   a Velasco*, I.E.P., 1978.

5. These differences have been analyzed by Etienne Henry, *Urba-
   nisation dépendante et mouvements sociaux urbains*: analyse
   comparative des expériences de Lima et Santiago-du-Chili,
   doctoral thesis (3e cycle), EHESS/Paris V, June 1974.

6. Alfredo Rodriguez and Gustavo Riofrio, *De invasores a invadi-
   dos*, I y II, Lima, DESCO, 1970 and 1978.

7. See the works of Jorge Montano, Diana Villareal, Oscar Nuñez
   and others.

8. (translator's note) *"Movimientos reivindicativos"* can be
   translated as movements that make insistent demands. In prac-
   tice however, what distinguishes them from territorial move-
   ments is that they are issue-oriented, as defined by the
   author, usually in relation to urban services and amenities.
   We have therefore used the term "issue-oriented movements".

9. On the topic of private urban development (*urbanizaciones*),
   see Gonzalo Bravo, *Movimientos sociales urbanos en Quito:
   el Comité del Pueblo*, FLACSO, 1980.

10. (translator's note) In order to differentiate between *"deman-
    da"* and *"reivindicación"*, we have translated the former as
    "request" and the latter as "demand" which in English has an
    imperative, insistent connotation.

11. See CIDAP, *Movimiento de Pobladores y Centralización*, Lima,
    1980.

12. See Grupo José Raimundo Rossi, *Lucha de clases y derecho a la
    ciudad*, Ediciones 8 de junio, Bogotá.

13. This has been demonstrated by Jose Alvaro Moises in *Čontradi-
    çao urbana e movimentos sociais*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra/
    CEDES, 1977.

14. For a detailed description of those events, see *La guerra de
    los cuatro reales*, Ediciones El Conejo, Quito, 1980.

15. See for example the analysis of the Cordobazo put forward by
    Francisco Delich in *Crisis y Protesta Social*, Buenos Aires,
    Siglo XXI, 1970, for a discussion of the Argentinian case.
    For Bolivia, see CERES, *Formaciones y movimientos regionales
    en Bolivia*, La Paz, 1982.

16. See Daniel Camacho, *Les mouvements populaires et la tâche des sciences sociales dans le développement de l'Amérique latine*, colloque NOM, 1983.

17. See Mario Lungo, *Las reivindicaciones urbanas de El Salvador*, CIUDAD, Quito, 1980.

18. As I had advocated in *La escena urbana*, Lima, PUCP, 1978.

19. This is a way of reformulating the criteria for analyzing social movements suggested by Alain Touraine in various texts.

THE PERUVIAN STATE AND REGIONAL CRISES - THE DEVELOPMENT OF
REGIONAL MOVEMENTS, 1968-1980

David Slater

I. Some points of departure.

A basic overview of the main features and varying determinants
of the new social movements [1] to have emerged in Latin America
'in recent years has yet to be undertaken. Evers (1983) in his
thought provoking paper in this volume attempts to draw out
some of the key elements and in so doing raises many fundamen-
tal issues. One of the central problems to emerge from Evers'
approach is not only our relative lack of knowledge of the na-
ture of these new social movements - in Evers' phrase the rib-
bon connecting social movements to social knowledge has been
torn - but equally crucially the validity and applicability of
our categories of social knowledge continue to be brought into
question - or at least placed on an agenda of needed re-evaluat-
ion. A very clear reflection of this new questioning may be found
in Kärner's (1983) recent article which can give us one or two
useful discussion points for further examination.

Kärner contends that social movements, whether emerging in the
so-called industrialized countries or in the developing countries,
are not essentially brought into being by 'economic causes' (p.26),
but rather by a process of alienation, whereby social subjects
are reified or objectified through the imposition of the dominant
structures of exploitation. According to Kärner, when collective
consciousness acquires a level that permits a recognition of the
reality of alienation social movements may be born. In this con-
text, social movements may be understood in terms of a collective
and communicative process of protest, led by individuals engaged
in a struggle against existing social relations. For Kärner the
necessary minimum conditions for the formation of a social move-
ment are the existence of possibilities for collective communic-
ation and expression.

Now, although we can readily accept these necessary minimum cond-
itions, taken together with the emergence of a collective awareness
of alienation, in its varied forms of existence, I would like to
suggest that Kärner's downgrading of the role of 'economic caus-
es', without those causes being specified, raises a number of
difficulties. Above all perhaps it brings our attention back
to the problematic issue of the materiality of social questions
and to the vexed discussion of the possible material roots of
social protest and action within specific societies during given
historical periods. Furthermore, material changes, in particular
the deepening and diversification of the contemporary economic
crisis, and their social and political effects need to be link-
ed to the reality of state interventionism. Social movements do
not emerge in a context devoid of materiality or state power,
even though their genesis, orientations and impact cannot be
simply situated within the traditional marxist schema of 'base'
and 'superstructure'. In addition, although the level of organiz-
ation and combativity reached at a certain moment by the popular
classes and sectors may appear to be an immediately 'new' pheno-
menon, with an attendant variety of spontaneous expressions, the
historical context, or more precisely the formation of a specific
political conjuncture, needs to be taken into account.

Examining some of these themes, Vergopoulos (1981), in a recent
article on social democracy and new types of popular mobilization
in Latin America, emphasizes the specificity of the new social
movements in relation to two contrasts with the earlier popular
movements of the Inter-War period. Firstly, he suggests that the
present movements have much less confidence in the posssibilities
of national capitalism, and instead are seeking to discover new
possibilities of social development, without *étatisme*. Secondly,
in contrast to the populist model of the 1930's, the politicizat-
ion of these contemporary movements does not reflect the dominan-
ce of a centralized or charismatic form of direction and organiz-
ation, but rather results from a variety of conditions determined
at the base level. In other words, politicization does not emerge
'from above', but spreads out from communal, collective base units,
whereby the norms of hierarchy and centralist command, so charac-

teristic of the *foquista* guerrilla movements of the 1960's and
the 'mass-line' politics of the orthodox communist parties of
Latin America, are replaced by a much more fluid, unstructured,
and democratic approach to making politics in everyday life.

Vergopoulos' argument intersects at this point with some of
Kärner's observations on the traditional definition of socialism,
whereby very considerable emphasis has always been placed on the
need for the centralized planning of the productive forces, al-
ready developed under capitalism. Kärner argues that this parti-
cular political disposition limits the possibilities for a much
broader and more liberating approach to socialism wherein the
democratization of all spheres of social life can prepare the
way for an *alternative* society, rather than the perfection of
capitalism. The Brazilian economist Paul Singer has expressed
the point in the following way:

> 'the socialism of our epoch demands a broader content, put-
> ting less emphasis on the enlargement of material consump-
> tion and stressing instead the democratization of decision-
> making processes in both the economic and social spheres,
> as well as, in general terms, the diminution of authoritarian-
> ism in all fields of human life: from the family, school and
> factory to the larger national institutions of parties, trade
> unions and armed forces...'[2]

In the Peruvian case, and especially post-1975, one can discern
evidence of a political tendency, often only embryonically present,
which mirrors the major thrust of Singer's approach to socialism,
and this tendency can be found in the new popular movements, which
must not be conflated with the more structured organizational en-
tities of the established left.

II. Structure and Content.

In concentrating my attention on the emergence of regional social
movements in Peru, during the military period (1968-1980) and es-
pecially the latter phase of that period, I do not wish to imply
that this particular type of movement has acquired a significance
greater than other related forms of social organization and protest.

It is rather that these regional social movements do express a
'newness' and an orientation which is partially reflected in
other modalities of socio-political protest. Hence, an examinat-
ion of such movements can present us with some possible indica-
tors for a more general discussion of the emergence of new forms
of socio-political opposition to the state and the reproduction
of capitalist social relations.

After signalling the importance of situating regionalism and the
development of regional social movements within particular histo-
rical conjunctures, the analysis of regional crises in Peru during
the 1968-1980 period is divided into three major parts. First, a
brief evalutaion of the socio-political background is presented,
and in this section I attempt to pinpoint some of the salient
contradictions of the military regime's socio-economic strategy
during the *docenio*. Second, a few general remarks are advanced
with respect to the overall nature of regional social movements
in Peru. And, thirdly, by taking two examples - Arequipa and Pu-
callpa - I sketch out some more details of the specific trajectory
of regional movements in the period under review, especially the
latter phase of the "Peruvian Revolution" - i.e. the years from
1975 to 1980. Finally, in the concluding part of the paper, I
make one or two connections with the more recent phase of civilian
rule (post-1980) emphasizing the continuous development of region-
alist struggles. The paper as a whole may be regarded as highly
preliminary since much further research needs to be done on the
issues brought forward for discussion. The essay thus represents
no more than a so-called 'first statement'.

III. Periodization and Regionalism - A Note

Not infrequently, one does tend to find an assumption that in
LatinAmerica regionalism is predominantly a feature of the nine-
teenth and early twentieth centuries, and whilst in Love's (1974)
case this assumption might well be a reflection of disciplinary
background, in other cases (Balán 1978 and Roberts 1981) one is
left with the impression that regionalism somehow belongs to the

past. I am not suggesting that these authors are denying the contemporary relevance of regional conflict but nevertheless what *is* absent is a sense of periodization.

Certainly, regionalism is not a new phenomenon (Mariátegui 1952, pp. 204-241) but its modalities continually change and it is therefore important to signal these changes and to try and anchor them within specific phases of capitalist development and state-society relations. As will be immediately apparent, this is not an easy task, and it can only be approached, in my view, with reference to a given social formation during a specific historical period, not forgetting of course that certain general tendencies may well be in evidence in a number of such formations during the same period.

In the case of Peru, the 1968-1980 period was characterized by military rule of a highly specific form, and I would argue that during this period we have the emergence of a number of 'regional problems' and conflicts which, despite exhibiting traits from previous historical phases, do express something quite new. I do not have the space in this paper to establish, in any detail, the specificity of military intervention,[3] nor will it be possible to deal comprehensively with the variegated nature of all the regional expressions of social conflict relevant to the 1968-1980 period. However, through concentrating on two examples I hope to shed some light on the regional character of social struggle and state interventionism during the 1968-1980 period.

IV. Regions in Crisis - Peru, 1968-1980

1. The Socio-Political Background

When launching any discussion of the problems involved in characterizing the 1968-1980 period of military rule, we must always begin by distinguishing two phases: 1968-1975 and 1975-1980. In the first phase which is commonly referred to as the Velasco period, the military introduced a wide series of structural reforms and set in train an ambitious programme of modernization and

state capitalist development. Subsequently, in the second phase, post-1975, there were far fewer innovations and under the exigencies of economic and political crisis, there was a noticeable return to more orthodox social and economic policies, reflecting an overall trend of retrenchment and realignment.

The changes that took place between these two phases provide a necessary backdrop to any examination of regional social conflict and before analysing two 'regions in crisis' I want to mention some of the most determinant features of these two phases.

In the first place, we must remember that on the eve of the 1968 military coup d'etat, the dynamic contradictions of capital accumulation within the Peruvian social formation had reached a level of intensity that demanded a new form of state intervention.

For example, the contradiction between capital and wage-labour, particularly evident within the rapidly growing coastal cities, especially in the metropolitan agglomeration of Lima-Callao, manifested itself in an increasingly sharp incidence of strike action. Also, contradictions and conflicts between the agro-commercial and industrial fractions of capital had reached a point of serious stalemate which the conventional political parties were unable to effectively resolve or mediate. Furthermore, the well-known heterogeneity of class structure, the absence of any territorial universalization of capitalist relations of production, and the continuing backwardness of the agricultural economy, within which non-capitalist forms of production still persisted, defined a socio-economic context within which peasant movements and struggles around the agrarian question were acquiring an increasingly explosive character. It was due to the acuteness of these problems, and their apparent intractability within the traditional framework of the political system, that some form of state intervention was called for so as to preserve the long-term interests of Peruvian capitalist development.

As far as the class basis or context of military intervention was concerned, it should be noted that the industrial bourgeoisie in pre-1968 Peru had no political party through which it could direct-

ly express its interests and objectives. Moreover, since it was clearly antagonistic towards the so-called 'oligarchic bourgeoisie' which had its material basis in the agricultural export sector, the initial orientation of the Velasco regime with its emphasis on the need for industrialization, modernization of infrastructure and eradication of inefficient forms of production in the agricultural sector, was met with cautious optimism by Peru's industrial class.

Nonetheless, it would be quite wrong to assume from this that the military take-over was carried out at the behest of the industrial bourgeoisie, not only because of the later emergence of hostility towards the regime on the part of the industrialists, but because such an argument fails to explain the specificities of the regime's overall strategy and its accompanying ideological discourse, which cannot be simply designated as 'bourgeois'.

If we remain within the 'sphere of the national', then it is feasible to talk of the existence of a 'hegemonic stalemate' - a declining agro-commercial class, a developing, but still politically weak, industrial bourgeoisie, a relatively small and poorly-organized urban proletariat, and a backward so-called 'peasant sector' - where no single force within civil society was in a position to push through its own political project. In this historical moment, not only did the military seize power, but a specific group or fraction within the army, which had a particularly distinctive ideological conception of Peruvian development, was able to initiate a series of completely new structural reforms. But, equally, we must bear in mind that the reforms and new political initiatives were not carried out by an independent or autonomous state, certainly not within an international frame of reference, for the state remained dependent on foreign capital. In addition, the military's ideological project of attempting to dissipate the consciousness and autonomous organization of the dominated classes was not successful. On the contrary, the project boomeranged with the growth of working-class resistance to corporatism and peasant opposition to state administered agrarian reform.[4]

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Although the Velasco regime established and developed a state enterprise sector, the profitable industrial branches were left open to foreign and private domestic capital and, in fact, many of the state enterprises accumulated large debts. However, at the same time, the expansion of state capital, and attempts at bringing sections of the labour force into management participation were regarded by both small and medium-scale Peruvian industrialists as dangerous encroachments on their economic and political position.[5]

On the one hand, a major limitation of the military's project in the first phase was that it could not create the independent base necessary for rapid industrialization unless it nationalised the profitable sectors of the economy. But, to do so would have required massive political mobilization of the dominated classes. This in turn would have menaced the interests of domestic and international capital and signalled the beginning of a real revolution. On the other hand, the encroachments and increased control exercised by the state alienated important sections of national and international capital, whilst the military's corporatist ideology did not quell the development of more radical forms of consciousness within the dominated classes. Finally, the crisis at the international level and the need for greater austerity in the interests of capital led to international pressure on the Peruvian regime to return to a more 'orthodox' pattern of dependent capitalist development.

In the second phase (1975-1980), the primary emphasis of economic policy fell on the export promotion of non-traditional products (export-processing industries). By the latter part of the 1970's it became clear that the dominant industrial groups in Peru were those whose major interests lay in production for the external market, and these groups were closely linked to foreign firms. Thus efforts to develop the domestic market met more sustained opposition, and furthermore Velasco's economic projects brought in their train a burgeoning public debt, so that by 1975, service payments amounted to 36.7% of the value of total exports.

Under the tutelage of the IMF, Morales-Bermúdez introduced cut-
backs in public expenditure, privatization of state-sector firms,
devaluation of the currency, reductions in subsidies and wage
and salary freezes. Similarly, since the exigencies of capital-
ist crisis required a more assertive and repressive approach to
the dominated classes, the Morales-Bermúdez regime began to elabor-
ate an ideological discourse, which although not shorn of all popul-
ist elements, did conform, in increasing measure, to a more author-
itarian, non-participatory vision of socio-political development.

2. Regional Social Movements

With the above-mentioned remarks in mind, we must now formulate
some guidelines for our treatment of regional struggles.

Apart from the well-known case of the Arequipa region, to which
I shall return shortly, the period immediately prior to the mil-
itary coup d'état of 1968 witnessed no significant emergence of
specifically *regional* movements, that is to say, movements which
articulated their demands within a regional rather than specific-
ally urban or rural framework.

In the first phase of military rule, a number of disconnected
conflicts arose and although these social disputes have sometimes
been placed within a wider framework of regional social movements,
the social protests that emerged in the province of Huanta (Aya-
cucho) in 1969 or in Cuzco in 1971 and 1972 crystallized around
highly-restricted demands. In the former case, the origin of the
protests against the central state lay in local objections to
restrictive legal changes in the free provision of education, and
in the Cuzco example, the disputes focussed on specific organizat-
ional problems in the local university. Thus, in these instances,
one did not see the coalescence of variegated demands and protests
around a wider regional objective.

On the other hand, in 1973, in the department of Moquegua, situat-
ed towards the frontier with Chile, a front for the defense of
the interests of the whole area was formed (*El Frente Unico de
Defensa de los Intereses de Moquegua*). In that year, the regional

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front organized a twenty-four hour stoppage, and promulgated a
series of demands, including a call for the construction of the
Ilo-Moquegua-Desaguadero-La Paz highway, the re-instatement of
the dismissed construction workers attached to the Cuajone
project , and educational reforms (Ballón and Filomeno 1981).
This particular zone is characterized by the localized dominance
of the Southern Peru Copper Corporation and the struggles that
take place in Moquegua have always to be linked to the central
role played by the mineworkers.[6]

Subsequently, in the second phase (1975-1980) of military rule,
other regional movements emerged, and as Ballón and Filomeno
remind us such relatively new forms of social protest followed
on from the development of widespread national opposition to the
austerity measures introduced in 1977 by the Morales-Bermúdez
regime. The national one-day stoppage of 19 July represented the
culmination of a territorially broad range of demonstrations,
strikes, protests and actions against the return to a more regres-
sive economic strategy.[7] At the end of 1977, the committee of the
popular organizations of Cuzco submitted to the central govern-
ment a series of regional demands, which were followed up and
reinforced by strike-action and stoppages. Similarly, in Iquitos,
Pucallpa, and Tarapoto protests of a regional character erupted
and several fronts for the defense of regional interests were
formed.[8]

As several authors have already noted, it is extremely difficult
to discern a common thread running through these disparate region-
al movements, no least due to their highly specific and polymor-
phous nature. Nevertheless, it is still possible to follow the
suggestions of Ballón and Filomeno (p. 102) who extract some sig-
nificant political conclusions from their survey of regional
social movements. They argue, not surprisingly, that the 'region-
al problem' is interpreted in different ways by different social
classes, and that in the Peruvian case, one has a double content
or character to regional struggles. The dominant social classes,
and often those groups most closely connected to local commerce,
limit their regional demands to an emphasis on the need for

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economic expansion and state encouragement of new productive activities. Hence, in this political context, the articulation of regional protest is addressed to the central state which is called upon to mediate in a manner whereby both 'parties' to the dispute accept and maintain the prevailing order of social relations and political power, but through which the regionally-based commercial groups seek to reform or rationalize a given aspect of the socio-economic structure in accordance with their own interests.

Conversely, the popular sectors - workers, peasants, public employees, students, teachers and some small-scale traders address the state from the point of view of demanding improvements in the provision of social services, economic infrastructure and overall socio-economic development, but in a manner that expresses a qualitatively different form of opposition. The prevailing pattern of social relations and political power is contested, and what is more, (within a regional movement) there often unfolds an antagonism towards the dominant social classes of a specific zone. Hence one has present not only the well-known heterogeneity of social composition, but also an embedded class contradiction determined by capitalist relations of production and the associated disposition of political power.

Consequently, there also exists a potential conflict concerning the political leadership of a given movement - a struggle over ideological hegemony. In this sense, the formation of broadly based social movements at the regional level offers the left new opportunities to develop a presence and a project which can define the content of democratic change under a socialist rubric.

The appearance and consolidation of numerous regional social movements during the Morales-Bermúdez phase of military rule must be linked to key political and ideological changes during the earlier *velasquista* phase. In these formative years, the popular sectors developed new forms of political expression and organization, and, in the absence of concerted state repression, the subordinated classes began to question the automatic nature of the relation that the state was trying to establish with civil society.

The peasantry augmented its mobilization and strengthened its
organization on a departmental basis; the proletariat increased
its degree of sindicalization and began to articulate more au-
tonomous modes of political expression; the *'pueblos jóvenes'*
became the foci of new forms of social organization and popular
expression; and certain layers of the middle-classes (teachers,
state employees) registered advances in the level and scope of
their organization (Tovar 1982). These new modalities of popular
social expression, movement and organization emerged during a
very specific political phase - a kind of political *intermezzo*
within which the dominant social classes were no longer assured
of a state that expressed their interests in an unequivocal and
unambiguous manner.

As a way of lending these above comments a greater degree of
concreteness, I now want to consider the situation in two quite
different regions. In both cases I shall attempt to link an
awareness of the material constraints or contexts of the emergence
of regional social movements with a 'localization' of the nature
of regional conflicts in the related but not necessarily deter-
mined context of state-society relations. In this latter sphere,
the struggle against political and administrative centralism has
been quite crucial.

3. The 'Regional Question' in Two Instances - a brief sketch

i. Arequipa

The city of Arequipa is usually viewed as the socio-economic
pivot of the southern region, and previous manifestations of
southern regionalism have always been closely associated with
the key influence of the Arequipeño bourgeoisie. In the 1968-
1980 period there have been new evidences of regional conflict
and protest and although the dominant urban-industrial groups
of Arequipa have played a role in this context, the subordinate
classes have also emerged as a central element in the formula-
tion and prosecution of regional social demands. The emergence
of the working class as a primary force in the articulation of
regional protest can be partly linked to the relative incapacity

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of the import-substitution industrialization strategy to
create the necessary foundation for expanding employment op-
portunities.[9] In addition, however, several other factors
must be mentioned.

1. The evidence shows that not only has the industrial structure
   of the Arequipa department been heavily orientated around text-
   iles, food and beverages (c. 60 per cent of gross value of in-
   dustrial production in 1975) but that a small number of trans-
   national companies (*Leche Gloria*, *Sidsur*, *Perulac* and *Compañía
   Cervecera del Sur*)[10] dominate this consumergoods production.
   Further, one can see an association between this pattern of
   concentration and external, i.e. extra-regional, control of the
   industrial sector with internally-generated value being re-
   directed outside the Arequipa zone (Jameson 1976). In other
   words, within the industrial sector, re-investment within the
   Arequipa region has been limited.

2. The definition of 'region' is more problematical than is often
   assumed in writings on Arequipa and the southern zone, for in
   some instances related struggles evolved in different urban
   nuclei (e.g. Arequipa, Cusco, Puno, Tacna and Moquegua), which,
   within a broad definition, all fall within the southern region
   of Peru. On the other hand, struggles in the countryside, and
   in particular in the rural areas of the department of Arequipa,
   did not assume the same importance as in other regions, such
   as, for example in Cuzco.

3. The policies of the Velasco regime concentrated on developing
   the economic resources (agricultural, mineral) of the Arequipa
   department, in conjunction with improvements in associated
   infrastructure. Similarly, in the contiguous departments of
   Moquegua and Tacna large-scale investments in the mining sec-
   tor created new centres of working class concentration, and as
   Lombardi (1981 p. 27) points out such new concentrations led
   not only to the establishment of new labour organizations (e.g.
   the mineworkers union of Cerro Verde) but to the subsequent

alliance of these new groups with working-class organizations
in other branches of the industrial sector. Thus, in 1972 and
1973 general stoppages in the southern region as a whole were
characterized by a new link or articulation between urban
workers and workers in the mining sector. According to Durand
(1979, p. 103) it was in these movements that the dynamic of
the popular movement presented itself in a regionally unified
manner.

4. In the second phase of military rule, the exacerbation of the
   economic crisis stimulated a much more militant response from
   the dominated classes. During these years, the capital-wage/
   labour contradiction became more acute, and in Arequipa, as
   also in Moquegua, Puno and Cuzco, regional demands came to be
   increasingly delineated by the growing class consciousness
   and combativity of the urban and mining proletariat. Equally,
   sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, especially teachers
   and state employees, were involved in strike action, but, as
   Lajo (1981) intimates a broad urban-rural combination or coal-
   ition of urban and rural forces dit no materialize.

5. In the Morales-Bermúdez phase the military gave added weight
   to new organs of regional development and in the case of ORDE-
   AREQUIPA the regime attempted to incorporate representatives
   of the locally-dominant groups as a way of preventing the pos-
   sible formation of a unified regional bloc. But the state's
   intervention in this form was not the only source of division,
   for as both Lombardi (1981) and Durand (1979) show ideological
   conflicts among the various left-wing parties and tendencies
   worked against the coalescence of radical forces in the region.

In attempting any analytical synthesis of the explanatory factors
responsible for the generation of social protests and conflicts
within the Arequipa region it is necessary to bear in mind that
historically the city of Arequipa has always acted as a nucleus
for anti-centralist social forces located in the southern zone
as a whole (i.e. including the departments of Moquegua, Puno,
Tacna and also, to a certain extento, Cuzco). In this sense, one

has a rather complex pattern of social struggles that largely
reflects the heterogeneous socio-economic structure of the
southern region. At the same time, the social forces present in
the city of Arequipa have tended to play a regionally coales-
cent role, helping to bring together other social groupings and
tendencies located in different parts of the southern region,
and articulating their various demands within a broader region-
alist framework. In the past, the dominant industrial and com-
mercial groups based in Arequipa (the so-called Arequipeño bour-
geoisie) attempted to fulfill such a role, and more recently the
popular sectors have been attempting to develop a similar region-
alist function, although rooted in quite different social demands.

As far as the popular struggle is concerned, we can identify
three basis issues:

a) opposition to Lima centralism and demands for a greater degree
   of regional control over public administration and the course
   of socio-economic development;

b) opposition to the role of foreign capital in the southern
   region in general, linked to demands for national and regional
   control of the planning and utilization of the area's use
   values, and

c) struggles at the point of production, which can perhaps be
   best defined in terms of capital-labour conflicts embedded in
   the valorization process.

ii. Pucallpa

   What has been referred to as the *'Pucallpazo'* of June 1980
   and the events leading up to this highly significant outbreak
   of sustained regional protest provides us with our second
   example of a 'regional question'. The formation of the *Frente
   de Defensa de la Provincia de Coronel Portillo* (FREDECOP)
   represented a remarkable fusion of social forces located with-
   in the city of Pucallpa and its adjacent rural hinterland. The
   vitality, heterogeneity and territorial sphere of influence of
   the social struggles in Pucallpa and its surrounding selva

province of Coronel Portillo opened up a new phase in the
history of regional movements in Peru and in these brief
notes it is only possible to sketch out, in the barest de-
tail, some of the essential features of those developments.

At the outset, it must be born in mind that the city of Pu-
callpa, which had an estimated population of just over 90,000
in 1981, has experienced a totally different social and eco-
nomic history to the much larger urban agglomeration of Are-
quipa, and that Pucallpa's rural hinterland and geographical
location make any detailed comparison with our first 'case-
study' exceedingly tenuous. I do not wish to imply adherence
to the 'uniqueness' view of regional history, nor do I sub-
scribe to that tradition of studying regions as though they
were entities somehow divorced from socio-economic trends
operating at the wider international and national levels.
But, the economic and socio-political specificities of regions
in crisis ought not to be swept aside by the tide of general
theory. By way of synthesis the following observations may be
made.

1. During the 1970's Pucallpa and its region experienced a
   marked economic expansion – industrial production, for
   example, increasing by 25.4 per cent between 1974 and 1979
   (María Salcedo 1980 p. 106) – but by the end of the decade
   deficiencies in social and economic infrastructure had be-
   come even more pronounced. Problems with the availability
   of running water and electricity were compounded by wholly
   unsatisfactory health and educational facilities. In ad-
   dition, the prices of basic consumer items was a further
   source of regional grievance. Therefore, although the region
   witnessed an increasing utilization of its use values – the
   growth in forestry was particularly strong – the concomitant
   social and economic benefits appeared to be extremely limi-
   ted, plus the fact that, politically, the provincial popul-
   ation had no control over the administrative structure of
   the area.

2. In the years of the Velasco phase, the incipient bases of
   future regional struggle can be traced back to the organiz-
   ation of the teacher's union (SUTEP) and to the activities
   of the Federation of Bank Employees.
   These two sectors exerted a much more dynamic influence
   than the pro-*aprista* working class of the area, and together
   with new forms of popular organization in the *pueblos jóve-
   nes*, the activities of these social groupings heralded the
   emergence of a more structured regional consciousness.

3. In 1975, a front for the defence of the interests of the
   people of Pucallpa was formed (*Frente de Defensa de los In-
   tereses del Pueblo de Pucallpa*) and a key factor in the es-
   tablishment of this front was the widespread dissatisfaction
   with the municipal authorities, who were appointed and con-
   trolled by the central state in Lima, and who remained in-
   sensitive to the demands of the local population. This in-
   itial front combined sections of the left wiht the Chamber
   of Commerce and other representatives of provincially-based
   industrial and banking groups.

4. From 1975 to 1977 the changes at national level, the deepening
   of the crisis, gave a stimulus to the regional forces of the
   left and when workers involved in the July 1977 stoppage were
   dismissed, a committee for their defence was established.
   Gradually, this committee came to amplify its aims and in
   1978 it was transformed into the *Frente de la Defensa de la
   Provincia de Coronel Portillo*. The front's demands were mul-
   tifaceted, reflecting its social composition, and included
   such things as immediate improvement in urban water supplies,
   and electricity supply, the establishment of a national uni-
   versity in Pucallpa, the setting up of a new hospital, the
   construction of a new river terminal, re-instatement of dis-
   missed workers, the granting of land titles to the peasant
   communities, and the creation of a new department as recog-
   nition of the importance of the area. The front was composed
   of industrial workers, teachers, neighbourhood organizations
   (*pueblos jóvenes*), peasants, taxi drivers, professional groups

and representatives of provincial commerce and small to
medium-scale businesses.

5. The culmination of the front's political activity came
   with the general strike of June 1980 and the paralysis
   of the region's economic and social functions. Popular as-
   semblies were organized, roads were blocked, food was col-
   lectively distributed, through the active cooperation of
   the peasant communities of the area, free medical care was
   given to those in need, and the local police force was
   obliged to subordinate its authority to that of the region-
   al popular front.

6. The state intervened in a reformist guise and in June of
   1980 Morales-Bermúdez promulgated a decree which created
   the legal basis for the establishment of the new department
   of Ucayali; one of the central demands of the regional move-
   ment was thus officially recognized and accepted.

7. Subsequently, the political heterogeneity of the regional
   bloc reasserted itself and the reformist limitations of the
   movement became more visible. The inevitable duality or
   ambivalence of any movement composed of dialectically-op-
   posed social forces re-expressed itself within the confines
   of regionalist politics. Equally, however, new opportunities
   and forms of political organization were opened up and new
   levels of consciousness evolved.

V. The Continuance and Accentuation of Regional Social Conflicts,
   post-1980 - a few concluding notes.

No matter how much political importance may be attached to the
issues of democracy, popular participation and possible openings
for socialist development, the continuing generalization of social
conflict and struggle in post-1980 Peru cannot be understood *out-
side* the material implications of the world crisis and the varied
implications of that crisis within the economic and political
structure of Peruvian society. In other words, one key driving
force of the continued development of social protest in the post-

1980 phase emanates from the severe material constraints placed
upon economic expansion and social improvement by conditions of
capitalist crisis and state-administered monetarist policies.
Furthermore, it is the concrete reality of the capitalist econo-
mic crisis which underlines the political importance of discus-
sions of democracy, popular participation and struggle, as well
as the related and difficult issue of the possible connections
and interaction of the new social movements with existing pol-
itical organizations and parties. Thus, the recent interest in
new forms of social protest in contemporary Peru ought not to be di-
vorced from the material roots of those new forms of protest,
and the relation between these material roots and the global tend-
encies of capitalist development.

At another level, the qualitatively distinct political expressions
and perspectives of *velasquismo*, coupled with the introduction of
a series of relatively progressive structural reforms, helped to
generate new forms of consciousness within the popular classes,
even if, at the same time, state-administered reforms from above
were often met with demands for further radicalization and freedom
from corporatist control. In the sphere of regional social strug-
gles, the importance given by the Peruvian military to 'decentral-
ized development', especially by the Velasco regime but also to
a lesser extent by Moralez-Bermúdez, helped to generate a greater
popular awareness of this particular issue, while, in reality, the
actualized policies of both regimes led to an *increase* in uneven
regional development. In addition, Lima centralism continued un-
abated, so that the provincial and departmental levels of the ad-
ministrative structure remained largely devoid of effective finan-
cial and political power. As a consequence, a key demand of the
post-1980 regional movements, concretized in the political form
of regional stoppages, has been that of greater decentralization
of political power away from the capital. However, as in the cases
of the Cerro de Pasco, Tingo María, Morropón and Ayacucho regional
protests in 1982, as well as that of Puno in 1983, anti-centralist
demands were linked to grievances concerning social services,
economic infrastructure, labour relations and state productive in-
vestment, or the lack of it.

These recent regional movements have not, of course, confronted
the capitalist state in any directly revolutionary way, but equal-
ly it would be inappropriateto designate such socio-political
tendencies as being 'reformist' in character, and in need of 'cor-
rect' political guidance. The emergence, or in some cases erupt-
ion, of broadly-constituted movements of social protest and action
poses new questions for the political organizations of the left -
questions which reveal, in a highly stark fashion, the gap be-
tween empirical reality and theoretical knowledge, and perhaps,
above all, the need for new approaches to the theoretical and
practical content and direction of socialism and democracy in
the capitalist societies of the periphery.

NOTES

1. Under this general rubric we can mention, as one possible selection, the following: the new workers' movement in Brazil (PT), the urban and regional movements of Peru, developing at the level of the urban neighbourhood and at a much wider level, in the form of fronts for the defense of popular interests and rights in specific regions, indigenous social movements (Colombia), environmental and ecology movements (Venezuela), peasant land seizures and autonomous peasant movements (Mexico), human rights associations and groups, the feminist movement, and in Central America new kinds of guerrilla movements.

2. Quoted in Kärner (1983, p. 29).

3. For a recent and stimulating discussion of the 1968-1980 period, see Booth and Sorj (1983); in a previous paper I have attempted to draw out some broader issues - see Slater (1981).

4. For a good discussion of the relations between the military and the working class, see Haworth (1983, pp.94-116); on the agrarian question, see Havens et al (1983, pp.14-39).

5. The social property sector was repeatedly attacked by the National Society of Industries and in general the Velasco model of 'economic pluralism' did not correspond to the vision of Peruvian economic development held by the dominant domestic industrial groups. As Stepan (1978, p.121) reveals, the *Sociedad Nacional de Industrias* complained in 1974 that it had never faced so serious a problem in its entire institutional life as was now being created by the Velasco government's policies toward industrial development.

6. Some useful discussion of the impact of foreign capital on the socio-economic structure of the department of Moquegua may be found in Lopez (1981); see also the document on Moquegua published in the same issue of *Tareas*.

7. As Sulmont (1981, p.62) indicates the 1970's witnessed a concomitant growth in the number of recognized labour organizations, the figure rising from 2,331 in 1968 to 4,536 by 1977.

8. Henríquez (1982) has provided a useful list of the various regional stoppages and popular actions to emerge at the regional level - her data are for the years from 1977 to 1981.

9. As a specific measure of the industrial decline of the department of Arequipa, we may note that during the Velasco phase, Arequipa's share of the nation's total gross value of industrial production declined from 3.7 percent in 1969 to 2.0 percent in 1975 (Cabieses et al 1982, p.111).

10. *Leche Gloria* is a subsidiary of the Northamerican transnational Carnation, *Sidsur* belongs to the transnational Bunge and Born, *Perulac* is controlled by Nestlé and Cervecera del Sur is part of a larger brewery firm operating across national frontiers (Pilsen, Cristal). By the end of the 1970's, the

companies of Leche Gloria, Sidsur and Cervecera del Sur accounted for 46% of the total value of industrial production in Arequipa.

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THE IMPACT OF *SENDERO LUMINOSO* ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLITICS IN PERU

Vera Gianotten, Ton de Wit and Hans de Wit

I. Three years of *Sendero Luminoso* and armed struggle in Peru: an Introduction.

On May 18, 1983 Fernando Belaúnde Terry was elected for the se-
cond time as President of Peru, after having being replaced in
1968 by a military government. The elections, in which the pre-
sident's party, *Acción Popular*, became the largest, passed with-
out any serious problems. In the news about the elections prac-
tically no attention was paid to an event in the small village
of Chuschi-Cangallo in the department of Ayacucho in the central-
south Andean region of Peru. In this village a group of masked
armed men destroyed the ballot papers and blew up the voting box-
es with dynamite, while screaming slogans against the elections
and in favour of the armed struggle.

This was the first armed action of the'*Partido Comunista del
Perú*, por el *Sendero Luminoso* de José Carlos Mariátegui', as
this Maoist Communist Party, generally known as *Sendero Luminoso*
(Shining Path), is called in full.

The operation in Chuschi-Cangallo and the following actions of
Sendero in the department of Ayacucho, received very little at-
tention at the national level. The movement itself was hardly known at
the moment of its creation towards the end of the sixties. Sende-
ro was at most known as a rather folkloristic leftist group with-
in the communist movement of Peru; its radical and threatening
slogans only evoked reactions such as "if they are calling so
loudly for armed struggle, just let them do it", something that
Sendero did in 1980 amid   a general horrified reaction.[1]

It was only at the end of 1980 that the national newspapers start-

ed to publish information, although rather sensational and not
always reliable, about the up until then rather harmless actions
of the movement-actions that caused some material but still no
personal damage. The most publicity was given to an action in the
capital of Peru, Lima, where one night Sendero hanged dogs on
lampposts; tied to their necks these dogs had slogans directed
against the actual leaders of the People's Republic of China,
such as Deng Xiao Peng. This operation received special atten-
tion for its gruesome originality. In any event it clarified Sende-
ro's position within the international communist movement: namely,
that of the line of the so called 'Gang of Four'. But in general,
the actions of Sendero in Ayacucho, growing day by day, were not
given too much attention.

When in the beginning of 1981 the operations of Sendero became
really threatening, the government proclaimed a decree aimed at
combating terrorism, the so-called decree 46, which was accepted
in Parliament in April 1981. Most of the leftist parties were of
the opinion that the government utilized the actions of Sendero
to attempt to break the power of the popular movement by way of
this decree. But although this certainly constituted a side-effect
of the decree, this leftist standpoint, together with the theory
that Sendero was infiltrated by the intelligence services of the
armed forces and/or was connected with the cocaine mafia, was
rather naive. Thus, especially in the progressive media, Sendero
was at the beginning of 1981 still an underestimated movement.

The anti-terrorism decree did not succeed in stopping the opera-
tions of Sendero; on the contrary, there was a growth of actions
from 261 in 1980 to 701 in 1981. So, in October 1981 the government
declared a state of emergency in seven provinces around the town
of Ayacucho. The direct reason was that on October 2nd the first
armed attack of Sendero had taken place on a police station in
a village about one hour away from Ayacucho. In this action one
policeman and some citizens were killed. Special police forces,
trained in anti-guerrilla operations, the so called 'sinchis',
were sent to Ayacucho to make the state of emergency effective.
This caused an increase of the repression in both the town and

the department.

At the beginning of 1982, Sendero stepped up the number of its operations in the capital, Lima, and attacked electricity pylons, factories and a luxury shopping centre in Miraflores. This led José María Salcedo to write:

> 'Perhaps the cutting-off of the electricity supply and the throwing of molotov cocktails in the centre of Miraflores have confirmed - in the heart of the town - the violent existence of *'Sendero Luminoso'*. Because, if for some people Ayacucho may seem to be exotic and far away, Miraflores is seen to be very close and real, although for the Senderistas Miraflores is pre-eminently exotic and far away'.[2]

After these actions Sendero finally had to be taken seriously in the national political arena, as their daily actions increasingly assumed the form of a serious armed struggle. That became clear on March 2nd 1982, when a Sendero commando group attacked the prison (CRAS) of Ayacucho; in this operation 247 prisoners, of whom 75 were accused of terrorism, were liberated at the cost of fourteen deaths among the guards and Senderistas.

With this action Sendero also acquired international fame. The movement had proved to be capable of directly confronting the armed forces. By way of revenge and in front of doctors and nurses policemen shot dead three prisoners who were patients in the hospital of Ayacucho. This was one of many examples of blind repression in the struggle against Sendero; a repression that caused growing sympathy for the movement at that time in Ayacucho.

On August 3rd 1982 the experimental farm of the University of Huamanga, Allpachaca, near Ayacucho town, was attacked and burned down by Senderistas. It became clear that the University - seen by the rightist media and government as being the bastion of Sendero - also belonged in Sendero's vision, to the old society against which Sendero claimed to be fighting.[3] On August 1982 new and extended operations were also carried out in Lima.

In the second half of 1982 Sendero's operations became more agressive. Local authorities, 'traitors' and 'collaborators' were exe-

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cuted after being condemned by so-called popular tribunals.

An armed confrontation took place in September 1982 between
the police and Senderistas, in which Edith Lagos, a Lima student,
born in Ayacucho,was arrested. She was liberated on 2nd March 1982
from the prison of Ayacucho and was considered as one of the lead-
ing figures in the movement. After being arrested again Edith
Lagos was killed by policemen. Her funeral ended as a manifesta-
tion of the power of Sendero in Ayacucho : some thousands of
people participated in the funeral and turned it into an open de-
monstration against the repression of the 'sinchis' and the poli-
cy of the government with respect to the department.

The motive for participating in this demonstration was not expli-
citly an expression of sympathy for Sendero. Local feelings ('she
was one of us, whatever she may have done'), personal ties, which
in a provincial town like Ayacucho are very strong ('I went to
school with her'), indignation at the repression carried out by
the 'sinchis'),and a certain sympathy for the fact that Sendero's
actions, until then, had not resulted in casualties in the town
but only in the countryside were all factors that explained the
sizeable crowd at the funeral of Edith Lagos. The demonstration
showed that Sendero could count on an organized cadre and some
support in the town of Ayacucho.

The growth in the number of Sendero operations pressurized the
government to send the army to Ayacucho.[4] In an interview with
the magazine *Qué Hacer* , the Minister of War, General Luis Cisne-
ros Vizquerra, said:

  '(Sending the army) will be the last option of the government
  to restore order in the country... Because then we shall take
  control of this area and start to take action, for it is a
  fact that we are professional warriors and have been trained
  to kill : that is the way war is'.[5]

On December 28th 1982, after heavy debates within the govern-
ment, the decision was made to use 'the last option' and the army
was sent to Ayacucho. The deparment was virtually cut off from the
rest of the world.

On January 26th 1983 the world awoke to the news that eight Peru-
vian journalists had been killed by peasants in Uchuraccay (depart-
ment of Ayacucho), probably encouraged by the army, which like Sen-
dero, forced the peasants to take sides. Three days before the kil-
ling of the journalists, the President had initiated a 'dirty
war' of propaganda within Peru as a whole. During his weekly press
conference on January 23rd he expressed his support for the pea-
sants of San José Secce, who, according to an official report, had
killed seven Senderistas.[6]

On the other hand Sendero started to interpret the terms 'traitor'
and 'collaborator' so widely that even leaders of peasant communi-
ties and peasant unions who didnot want to take the side of the
movement, were threatened with death and in some cases executed.

On May 30th 1983, after a new wave of actions by Sendero, the go-
vernment decreed a State of emergency for the whole of Peru for
three months : the 'dirty war', which had been limited to Ayacucho
and surroundings and Lima, had become total. Thousands of people
were imprisoned on the accusation that they were terrorists, whilst
many of them were innocent. Disappearances and torture became more
and more common, as Amnesty International wrote in a letter of Au-
gust 29th 1983 to the President, who reacted by saying that he
always threw away Amnesty letters without reading them. In the first
two years of armed struggle there were more than a thousand deaths.
After the army took over control of the area, very little informa-
tion - only the official news - has come out on what is going on
in the region. It is not only the government that does not give
any information, but Sendero also keeps silent.

It seems that the armed struggle of Sendero is still in its ini-
tial phase and the army is not able to stop it in the short term.
In this article we want to place Sendero in the historical con-
text of the communist movement in Peru, comparing it with the
guerrilla movements of the sixties and with the other leftist
parties in the country, now united for the major part in the elec-
toral front *Izquierda Unida* (United Left). After this historical
explanation of the Sendero phenomenon, we shall try to answer the
question of why Sendero had its origin and its base in the depart-

ment of Ayacucho. Then we shall provide a critical overview of the ideology, strategy and tactics of Sendero. At the end we shall criticise some of the interpretations that have been offered before formulating our own interpretation.

II. *Sendero Luminoso* : origin and situation within the Left.

In order to develop a better picture of *Sendero Luminoso* and its position in relation to the leftist movement in Peru, it is necessary to go into the history of the Left, which forms the basis for the rise of Sendero.

The Left in Peru totals around twenty parties, groups and movements, who have as their origin four basic parties. The least important for the understanding of Sendero was the *Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (FIR, Front of the Revolutionary Left), a front that was formed in 1962 by some small Trotskyist parties. This front did not survive long and Trotskyism stayed divided in the long-term, playing only occasionally and then mostly for reasons of personal charisma - Hugo Blanco and Ricardo Napuri - an important role in the Peruvian leftist movement. More or less the same can be said of two other basic parties : *Vanguardia Revolucionaria* (VR, Revolutionary Vanguard), created in 1965 by a group of leftist intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the policy of the Peruvian Communist Party, and the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR, Movement of the Revolutionary Left), that arose in 1961 out of the left wing of the APRA and began in 1965 a guerrilla campaign that was soon defeated by the army. These three basic parties were the start of many divisions, splits and internal feuds, and although some of the parties that came out of these internal struggles sometimes played a certain role and had some political influence in some social sectors and in some regions, in general they have not been able to make their mark as a political movement at the national level.[7]

More important and decisive for the rise of *Sendero Luminoso* - were the developments within the fourth basic party : the *Partido Comunista Peruano* (PCP, Peruvian Communist Party), that was created in 1930. Perhaps, with the exception of the MIR, all the other leftist parties in Peru have had their origin in a critique of the po-

licy of the PCP both within the national and international con-
texts and especially in relation to the strong connection with
the Soviet Union.

Apart from national factors, a different view on tactics, dif-
ferent interpretations of the national reality, etc., interna-
tional factors - the division between Moscow-oriented, Maoist,
Trotskyist and other tendencies - have played an important role
in dividing the Peruvian Left. Overall, the leftist parties fol-
low the ideological leadership of Marx, Engels, Lenin and espe-
cially José Carlos Mariátegui. All the leftist parties, including
Sendero Luminoso, consider Mariátegui as their spiritual father.
He was a Peruvian philosopher and political leader, who had an
ideological debate in the twenties with the founder of APRA, Vic-
tor Raúl Haya de la Torre, a debate that still occupies a central
place within contemporary Peruvian politics.[8]

Mariátegui was the founder of the predecessor of the PCP, the
Socialist Party, and of the trade union federation CGTP. He died
in 1930 and his thoughts, united in twenty volumes of complete
works, form the basis for every leftist group in the country, al-
though like so many others they contain sufficient interpreta-
tions to give every group its own distinctive orientation.

During the early sixties the most important contradiction within
the PCP was that between the Moscow-oriented and the Maoist com-
munists. In 1964 - after a national liberation front (FLN)had al-
ready split in 1963 from the PCP without gaining much influence -
there was an open confrontation between the two positions at the
Fourth National Congress of the Party. The Maoists, who had strong
influence within the youth movement of the PCP and in some regional
committees, accused the central committee of the abandonment of
revolutionary practice, opportunism and reformism, the rejection
of the armed struggle and the abandonment of the thesis that Peru
had a semi-feudal character. The PCP split after this congress in-
to the Moscow-oriented PCP-*Unidad* and the Maoist PCP-*Bandera Roja*,
both named after their party magazines 'Unity' and 'Red Flag'.

The PCP-*Unidad* remained rather stable after this division, although

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regularly individual members left the party to join one of the other movements.[9] But within the PCP-*Bandera Roja* there were new divisions. In 1965 the PCP-ML left but this group had little importance. In 1967 the internal tensions came into the open with conflicts between the leader Saturnino Paredes and a group that finally left the organization to create its own PCP called after its magazine *Patria Roja* (Red Fatherland).

Among those active within the PCP-*Bandera Roja* was Abimael Guzmán, born on the Southcoast of Peru in 1931. He studied Law and Philosophy at the University of Arequipa, where he finished his studies with the essays : 'Kant and the theory of space' and 'The State and bourgeois law'. In 1963 he went to Ayacucho to teach philosophy at the *Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanaa*; later he also became director of staff affairs of the University. Guzmán was an active member of the PCP and joined *Bandera Roja* in 1967. Even after the division of *Patria Roja* he stayed loyal to Saturnino Paredes, although there were conflicts between both men. Guzmán was a declared Maoist and some sources say that he and other members of the party visited Peking in the context of a cultural exchange.[10]

Abimael Guzmán was within *Bandera Roja* responsible for the section AGIPROP, agitation and propaganda, and for the publications of the party, among others the periodical *'Bandera Roja'*. The tensions between Saturnino Paredes and Abimael Guzmán became more acute and at the end of the sixties both wings went their own way. Abimael Guzmán concentrated his political activities in his bastion Ayacucho, where he united many activists in the University. His wing of *Bandera Roja* became more and more a separate Communist Party, that acquired the addition *Sendero Luminoso* from the title of a document of the student union FER in Ayacucho : *"Por el Sendero Luminoso de José Carlos Mariátegui"*.

In the first half of the seventies Sendero succeeded in spreading its support especially to the regional section of the teachers union SUTEP, while at the same time the movement won a minority position in the Universities of San Marcos, UNI (National Engineer-

ing) and San Martin de Porres in Lima. But Sendero stayed concentrated mainly in Ayacucho. Within the University its main bastion was the Department of Education. After their study the students of this department went to work as teachers in schools in the countryside. This explains why Sendero had its influence in the SUTEP, and how Sendero was able to spread its ideas among the peasants, as we shall explain later in more detail.[11]

Outside Ayacucho, Sendero was an unimportant group, which, because of its radical position, was rather isolated from the other leftist parties. Under the government of Morales Bermúdez (1975-1980) the leftist parties were able to mobilize a great popular movement against the military dictatorship, which resulted in a democratic opening in 1978. With the exception of the Maoist parties the left participated in the elections for a Constituent Assembly in 1978 and received one third of the votes. *Sendero Luminoso*, which considered the governments of Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) and Morales Bermúdez as one and the same and called them fascist regimes - in contrast to most other leftist parties [12] - considered this participation in the electoral process as reformist and a betrayal of the revolution. When the PCP-*Patria Roja*, by way of the electoral front UNIR, turned reformist and participated in the elections for Parliament and Presidency in 1980, the gulf between Sendero and the rest of the Left became unbridgeable.[13]

For Sendero the only alternative was to take power through armed struggle, encircling the cities from the countryside. Peru was still, according to the ideas of José Carlos Mariátegui in the twenties, a semi-feudal society. Starting from this thesis - which we shall treat more deeply later on -, Abimael Guzmán worked with a well prepared plan to prepare the armed struggle. The first phase was the reconstruction of the Party according to the ideas of Mariátegui; a phase that Sendero considered to be completed in 1978. With this reconstruction of the Party the principles were laid down on which in 1980 Sendero could initiate the armed struggle, thus distinguishing itself very clearly from the other leftish groups. This can be clearly seen from the

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following quotation taken from the daily newspaper *'El Diario'*
in April 1980; it concerns a speech given by Abimael Guzmán:

> 'Comrades, the hour has struck, there is nothing left to
> talk about, the debate is closed. It is time to take action,
> it is the moment for the rupture, and we shall make that rup-
> ture, not by way of long and slow reflections, not by long
> walks or in silent rooms. We shall realize it in the noise
> of guerrilla actions, which will be the form to reach our
> goal, a good and adequate form, the only form'.[14]

Guerrilla warfare during the sixties was a reaction to national
and international developments. The revolution in Cuba was an
important international source of inspiration, with Che Guevara
being the foremost personal example. Important national factors
were : the peasant movements in the South-East of Peru, in their
resistance against the feudal landlords; the radicalisation of
the middle class, particularly the intellectuals, inspired by
the Cuban revolution; and the formation of a new left, partly
arising out of the APRA - the MIR -, partly in reaction to the
traditional Left - VR en ELN -.[15]

As we have already said, the MIR had its base in the APRA but
also included new radicalized intellectuals. The ELN was formed
mainly by members of the youth movement of the PCP, who no longer
accepted the bureaucratic control of the central committee and
wanted more revolutionary practice. In 1963 the ELN started an
insurrection in the department of Madre de Dios, which failed.
In 1965 the ELN and the MIR opened three fronts of armed guerri-
lla actions.[16] Only on September 9th 1965, when both movements
were already nearly defeated, were the two guerrilla movements
able to achieve national coordination. They differed in origin
as we have seen, but also in tactical concepts. The ELN had as its
strategy to concentrate first and foremost on military operations,
while the MIR tried to combine peasant mobilisation and guerrilla
actions. The following factors, which applied more or less equally
to both groups, were the main causes for their quick defeat : the
intellectual and urban origin of the members; the consequent cul-
tural differences and lack of knowledge of the Quechua language

of the indigenous population; and a lack of knowledge of the area
and of guerrilla tactics.[17]

Sendero learned from the errors of the guerrilla movement of the
sixties and - as we shall explain more deeply later on - had the
following characteristics:

- a party cadre that came from the region itself and that had
  good knowledge of, and were often even members of the Quechua
  culture, so that customs and language were no secret or barrier
  for them;
- a lengthy building up of the Party - a reconstruction accor-
  ding to the ideas of Mariátegui, as Guzmán called it -, and a
  long experience of spreading the ideas of Sendero among the
  peasant population.

Abimael Guzmán and his party seem to have been well aware of the
causes for the failure of the guerrilla movement of the sixties.
On the basis of Sendero's own material the review *Qué Hacer* adds
the following differences between the two guerrilla movements:

  'For Sendero the guerrilla actions of the MIR and ELN made
  two major mistakes: their *foquismo*, which made it easier for
  them to be repressed, and the chosen moment, that did not go
  together with a growth of the peasant movement. Also they
  criticized the methods that were used to disseminate propa-
  ganda for their armed struggle, "methods of ballerinas", for
  example, announcing that they were going to take up arms
  and even organizing press conferences. "Propaganda takes place
  through actions", is the conviction of Sendero and for that
  reason they have not yet given any interview and it does not
  look as though they are going to give one in the near future'.[18]

From all this it will be clear that Sendero distinguishes itself
from the rest of the leftist parties through its radical and ru-
ral stand. Sendero considers the other leftist parties as refor-
mist and electorally oriented. It has been confirmed in this opi-
nion by the participation of *Patria Roja* in the elections of 1980
and by the unification of all leftist parties - with the exception
of most Trotskyist groups - in the leftist electoral front, *Iz-*

quierda Unida. Sendero claims to be a revolutionary alternative
to these reformist groups and appeals especially to those who
are disappointed in the inadequacies and reformism of *Izquierda
Unida*. However, we shall explain in the next sections of this
chapter that this does not mean that Sendero was able to validate
its claims in practice.

III. *Sendero Luminoso* and the regional problem in Ayacucho.

The social-economic situation of Ayacucho has without doubt been
a very fertile soil for the emergence of *Sendero Luminoso*. Although
the department of Ayacucho is one of the three poorest areas of
Peru, the extreme poverty, the underdevelopment and the fact that
in the eyes of the central government the department hardly exists,
are too superficial as explanations for the presence of Sendero in
the region. If the economically precarious situation of the area
is not enough to explain the development of Sendero, a related
question arises as to why Sendero has not yet been able to build up
a strong base in other regions of Peru with the same economic cha-
racteristics.

Ayacucho is an area where the Incas forcibly implanted settlements
for different ethnic groups in a geographically delimited region.
That then formed the basis for permanent conflicts among the dif-
ferent communities. In the 13th and 14th centuries several groups
lived in the region; the most important were the 'Wankas', 'Po-
kras' and 'Chankas'. These ethnic groups united in the 'Chanka
Confederation'. In the beginning of the 15th century the Chankas
resisted the power of Cusco and were defeated by the Inca Pachacu-
tec. The Incas were thus able to spread their power over the re-
gion. The vanquished groups were transported to other areas (the
mitimaes) by the Incas and the present day department was popula-
ted by *mitimaes* from other parts of the empire. This mass trans-
portation of people left behind considerable traumas of cultural
dislocation, which have not yet been solved.[19]

To defend their cultural identity the *mitimaes*, and later the
communities, closed themselves off from the wider society and
started a struggle to define the frontiers of the different com-

munities. This struggle for the possession of the land went on in
the colonial period and was even intensified by the Spanish colo-
nialists through the arbitrary distribution of documents relating
to the ownership of the land. From the Republican period, up un-
til now, the communities have continued fighting among themselves
for the frontiers of their communal land. In the majority of cases,
it is a question of areas that are not fertile; i.e. the puna plains at
a height of around 3800 metres where agriculture and cattle-breed-
ing are impossible, and only extensive cattle-breeding on fallow
land is to some extent feasible.

So it was not the economic value of the land, but the defense of
their cultural identity that caused the communities to continually
reopen hostilities. These conflicts among the communities led to
the development of a strong communal organization that did not,
however, have the power to evolve into a wider mass organization
of the peasant population, because the peasants of the region saw
the nearby village, not the regional and national power elites as
their primary enemy. Because of the low fertility of the land
the area was not attractive to colonial landlords and therefore
in Ayacucho an agrarian oligarchy of national importance has never
developed. This also explains why there was no homogeneous peasant
movement and revolt, as for instance in Cusco.

This made Ayacucho then and now an uninteresting area for the na-
tional authorities, political parties and unions. The agrarian re-
form of the military government of Velasco Alvarado had virtually
no influence in Ayacucho. One SAIS and eleven agrarian cooperatives
have been created mainly in the provinces of Huamanga and La Mar.
The department has 329 officially-recognized peasant communities,
mainly concentrated in the provinces Cangallo, Víctor Fajardo and
Lucanas, provinces where Sendero has been particularly active up
to now.[20]

Ayacucho is a predominantly agrarian department, as is clear from
the figures for the distribution of the economically active popu-
lation : 76,5% in the agrarian sector, 4% in industry (including
domestic industry) and 19% in the service sector.[21] Although
66,5 % of the peasants are *comuneros*, organized in peasant com-

munities, this economic organization is systematically neglected. Out of 23.641 hectares of agrarian land with irrigation, only 3.946 has. belong to the peasant communities. [22]

We shall give some more figures to show that not only the agrarian sector but the department as a whole has been neglected : the average life expectancy in Ayacucho is 45 years (in Peru as a whole it is 58 years); child mortality is 19,7%; there is only one doctor for every 17,800 inhabitants; and 55,5% of the population is illiterate. The population of Ayacucho is rather young; 74% can be considered to be of school age, but only 38% of them can make use of the insufficient infrastructure for education. [23]

In the period 1968-1980 Ayacucho received only 0,3% of national public investment. In 93.4% of the houses there is no drinking-water; in 94.4% no electricity. [24] Neither in the towns nor in the rural areas are there possibilities for the students of the schools and the University to find jobs. There is practically no work in agriculture and industry. The lack of infrastructure, credit and technical assistance block regional development and freeze the economic, social, cultural and political aspirations of the youth completely. [25]

The peasant unions in the area are, with a few exceptions, of little importance, due to the historical development of the country-side, mentioned above, which did not permit the creation of a powerful agrarian oligarchy and made the peasant communities the basic organization of the peasants. Nor are the political parties active. The same is true of the urban areas. The greatest part of the population of Ayacucho works in services, followed by trade and small industry, especially domestic industry. There is no urban industrial proletariat. The unions that exist are virtually confined to civil sevants in the ministries, municipal service workers, teachers and University lecturers and bank employees. The national political parties do not work in these organizations of the population.

It is not only the youth that considers its situation to be frozen. The lower middle class population of Ayacucho, that managed

to get the University reopened in the second half of the fifties ,
feels the same frustation at the attitude of the central govern-
ment. Deficient infrastructure, the permanent shortage of drinking-
water, the absolutely insufficient production of energy and ina-
dequate means of communication, completely block the already limi-
ted possibilities. For more than a century the candidates for Par-
liament from the department of Ayacucho have been elected on the
promise of providing drinking-water for the city, but they have
never succeeded in realizing this goal. These accumulated frus-
tations have stimulated a strong regional ideology and have in-
creased the resistance towards people from outside the depart-
ment.

The reopening of the *Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Hua
manga* in 1959 had a great influence in the city.[26] In an inter-
view with *Qué Hacer* Enrique Moya Bendezú, ex-rector of the Uni-
versity, said :

> 'Ayacucho was in 1960 a rather small, closed, religious city
> and particularly provincial... When the University started to
> function, Ayacucho saw all its schemes broken : University lec-
> turers wake up late, go in the evening to the cinema and speak
> in their classes about anatomy, reproduction and sexual rela-
> tions. I would almost say that the city so to speak was raped
> (...) the students and with them the rest of the community dis-
> covered that there are rights such as justice and freedom, and
> that something like the right to health care exists - something
> they receive very little of -, etc. The lecturers too were speak-
> ing about events such as the Cuban revolution. So we can say
> that the University gave to the population a social conscious-
> ness'.[27]

This influence was greatest among the lower middle class. It was
this same lower middle class that in the sixties formed the base
for Sendero's recruitment. In the second half of that decade, when
Sendero took shape, the movement found a strong base in the lectu-
rers and administrative staff of Ayacuchan origin, especially the
lower middle class. The University disseminated a strong regional
ideology and lecturers with ideas from outside the region came in

conflict with this regional ideological orientation. In particu-
lar, Sendero gained control of the departments of education and
social sciences, especially anthropology and social assistance
work, as well as in the administrative sector of the University.[28]
In this period the student union FER was controlled by Sendero
and was the strongest student union in the University. Ideologi-
cal conflicts mainly took place within the University, which in
the beginning of the seventies was controlled almost completely
by Sendero.

From 1973 on opposition to Sendero grew, especially from lecturers
who came from Lima and from the second student union, FUE. The po-
wer of Sendero started to crumble and the movement lost its hege-
mony around 1975. When a new central committee of the University
was chosen in October 1977, this meant the start of a new phase
in the life of the University and a consolidation of the groups
who had taken over power from Sendero. The Universtiy started
with a remarkable new policy. New agreements were made on the na-
tional and international level; the University participated in a
great number of regional institutions; it started activities which
were related to the social-economic development of the region and
some research projects which had a high relevance for regional de-
velopment achieved a wide reputation. Nevertheless this did not
mean that the University lost its critical function, and the go-
vernment, then as now, sees the University as a bastion of Sende-
ro, where as conversely the Senderistas consider it as an exten-
sion or, even as a centre of imperialism.[29]

The final victory over Sendero in 1977 was claimed by the UDP,
the leftist electoral front of the MIR and VR, that from this time
on also carried out political work outside the University. But
they could not prevent Sendero from acquiring influence outside
the University too. As we have mentioned already, Sendero captured
the strong and important teachers union in the department of Aya-
cucho, SUTEP. Political life in Ayacucho was now divided into two
Frentes de Defensa del Pueblo (Popular Defence Fronts) : one con-
trolled by Sendero and one by the other leftist parties, mainly
UDP. At the end of the seventies there were several popular mobi-

lisations in which the two fronts tried to ignore each other as much as possible. When the elections of 1978 took place, the Left succeeded in winning many votes in Ayacucho, but Sendero, who had called for a boycott of the elections, claimed the large number of abstentions for itself.

In the period before the elections of 1980 Sendero decided that the objective conditions existed for the initiation of armed struggle. The cadres of the other lefist groups also retired, not to join the armed struggle but to concentrate again on political work in Lima. This was completely in line with the warnings of Sendero that the leftist parties had mainly electoral intentions and that once they participated in the parliamentary system, they would turn their backs on the popular struggle. For Sendero the other leftist parties are just one more component of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

During the elections for the municipalities in November 1980 the leftist parties,now united in *Izquierda Unida*, were able to strengthen their position, and although their campaign was short and not very well organized, they received nearly as many votes as *Acción Popular*. But again, after the elections, the Left retired to Lima.

Sendero on the other hand intensified its armed attacks in the town and countryside of Ayacucho. The weakness of the regional administration and its corruption were a stimulus for Sendero. The same was true of the actions of the first representative of the government party, *Acción Popular*, in Ayacucho, a man of Ayacuchan origin but without any prestige within the lower middle class of the town. Also, the mayor, not only lacked Ayacuchan origin but was a man without any moral, political or cultural prestige. Their actions were strongly condemned by the base of *Acción Popular* itself; some of the members of this party even publicly demanded their resignation.

In this context support for Sendero grew quickly. Moreover, until March 1982 no citizens of the town had been intended victims of the operations of Sendero. The military actions of the movement,

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compared to the arbitrary arrest and even torture of many citizens, opened the way for passive support for Sendero. It fired the imagination of the youth and the movement succeeded in recruiting many militants from the school population of the town. Consequently most people did not have any faith in government promises of an emergency plan for the department, after the attack on the prison of Ayacucho town in March 1982. This political response had come too late.

After June 1982 peasants became victims of Sendero actions, for reasons that we shall explain below, leading to passive resistance against Sendero by the peasant population. Half a year later this passive resistance was utilized by the police to encourage the peasants into more active opposition. This was not the case in the town, where the selective elimination of citizens was supported by many inhabitants. Also there was a total lack of knowledge among the urban population about the rural area of Ayacucho and in general about Andean life. This, combined with a lack of information about the military operations of Sendero against the police and army, narrowed the view of the urban population, which tended towards a favorable opinion of Sendero, based on its spectacular actions.[30]

The national strike of peasants in 1982, organized by the peasant unions CCP and CNA, and the national strikes of the trade-union federation CGTP in March and September 1983 showed that the Left was still able to organize mass mobilisations, especially in those sectors that were of national significance : the organized industrial work-force and peasants. In Ayacucho, however where both sectors did not have much importance, the support for Sendero grew among the urban youth and lower middle class. This change formed a response to the culture of Lima, where political and economic power was concentrated. At the same time there was a reinforcement of a regional ideology.

IV. *Sendero Luminoso*: ideology, strategy and tactics.

The ideological debate between Senderistas and other leftist groups at the University of Ayacucho was oriented mainly around the characterization of Peruvian society. Sendero has always defended the

thesis of the semi-feudal nature of the country against the other
leftist groups, who characterize Peru as a capitalist country, in-
fluenced as they are by dependency theory and traditional marxism.[31]
The semi-feudal character of Peru, according to Sendero, was in
Ayacucho not so much expressed through the presence of landlords
(the agrarian oligarchy) as through the existence of the pheno-
menon *gamonalismo*, and the oppression of peasants within all the
differing spheres of regional society.

Another important thesis of Sendero is that there exists in Peru,
in the final analysis, only one fundamental problem : the owner-
ship of land. The agrarian reform of Velasco Alvarado was, accord-
ing to Sendero, a reformist act of a fascist government. The *gamo-
nales* were the main collaborators in this process. In Ayacucho
where, as we have seen, the majority of the peasant population
belongs to the communities, Sendero gave a rather specific expla-
nation of the well known fourfold division : rural bourgeoisie,
rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants. In the sixties
studies were made of the different communities and, from the ab-
sence of a rural bourgeoisie and a larger group of rich peasants,
each peasant who had a little more than the average amount of land,
was classified as a rich peasant. When a peasant had a small shop
or a truck, then he belonged to the rural bourgeoisie. Many of
these peasants were threatened by the so-called popular tribunals
of Sendero or even executed.

Completely in line with Maoist principles, Sendero started from
a strategy of armed struggle, encircling the cities from the coun-
tryside. According to Sendero, the world revolution started with
the armed struggle in Ayacucho, and *Sendero Luminoso* will be the
only movement, capable of completely destroying the old society.
The revolutionary government of peasants and workers who will
create the new society will be formed on the ruins of this old
society. This destruction of the old society is taken very lite-
rally by Sendero. In the first place there is no other struggle
apart from the armed struggle, and in the second place everything
that now exists belongs to the old society. On the basis of this
strategy of total destruction Sendero arrives at three essential

points, which will be dealt with now :
- the place and function of teachers in the struggle;
- the policy of non-alliance; and
- an extreme'*Campesinismo*.'

For many years students learned at the University that political
work at the base, literacy programmes, strikes for economic objec-
tives, actions for better education, etc. were of no use, because
these activities took place in the old society and did not destroy
this old society; on the contrary, they helped to maintain it.
The teachers, among whom Sendero was very active, subscribed to the
principle that they worked in an institution of the ideological
superstructure and that from this institution it was impossible
to undertake an adequate struggle. First the economic base had to
be changed, i.e. first the problem of the ownership of the land
had to be solved by way of the armed struggle, which would auto-
matically create the new society. Then the class struggle would
have been won and only then would it be useful to work in the
area of education, or rather, would the problem of education then
be solved.

Most of the students in the department of education had to go
back to their communities after ending their studies. Children of
peasants, who had worked themselves upwards with many financial
difficulties, and become teachers, had to go back to the poverty
from which they came, with a very low salary which was not enough
to support themselves. They went back to villages where there was
no drinking-water, no electricity and where the distance to the
town was a half or a whole day on foot or by horse.[32] Working con-
ditions were very bad; schools without even a minimum of infra-
structure, no means of education and children who had not even
enough money to buy a pencil.

Although the teachers had almost no identification with the pea-
sants and were not basing themselves on a recovery of Andean va-
lues and the old pre-Colombian Quechua culture, they came to a
position in which everything that came from the outside, from the
town, from the centralist and bureaucratic educational system,
had to be destroyed, because when these old structures were main-

tained, only marginal changes could be realized and there could
never be real change.The people's war which would encircle the ci-
ties from the countryside became for the teachers who worked in
the countryside the only genuine solution for Peruvian society.
The deep frustation of blocked aspirations and a future pers-
pective without any hope of improvement, led to a growing mili-
tancy among the teachers. This also meant that Sendero could gain
easy access to a new generation, the students of these teachers,
and win them over to their ideology and policy.

The non-alliance policy of Sendero can be seen in the light of
the strategy of total destruction, but its origin can also be
situated in the ideological debate with the other leftist parties.
This debate led around 1975 to a victory for the groups outside
Sendero. Sendero lost its hegemony, but kept its influence in the
SUTEP. As we have seen, this led to the foundation of two separa-
te fronts of popular defence, with different tactics and strate-
gies. This local struggle between the members and non-members of
Sendero took place on all fronts and left behind deeps feelings of
hatred. For this reason it was understandable that Sendero should
in the first instance reject any cooperation with other leftist
parties and trade unions. But besides this local historical expla-
nation the principle of non-alliance of Sendero must be explained
in particular in terms of its ideological and strategic principles.

In the first place, Sendero rejects any cooperation with non-Maoist
Communist Parties. Sendero believes it is taking part in a greater
international struggle between 'Russian Social Imperialism' and
'Maoism'. As faithful followers of the 'Gang of Four' they also
reject the other Maoist parties in Peru who, they believe like the
present Chinese regime, have fallen into a reformist policy.

Another ideological conflict between Sendero and the other left-
ist parties was the polemic, mentioned earlier,on the characteriza-
tion of Peru. For Sendero the thesis of the semi-feudal character
of Peruvian society meant that the revolution had to be guided by
the peasants and, although they always speak about the future re-
volutionary government of peasants and workers, this urban prole-
tariat has up until now not played a great role in the strategy of

Sendero. In contrast to the other parties, who have worked pre-
dominantly among the urban population, Sendero, through the tea-
chers, has concentrated on the youth of the schools in the country-
side. But the role that Sendero gives to the peasants in the re-
volution has led to an extreme *campesinismo*, that does not tolera-
te any cooperation with urban-oriented parties and movements. As
we shall see later on, this is based on the well known Maoist con-
tradiction between city and countryside ; thus Sendero is not a
movement based on the old cultural values of the Andes, as many
analysts of the movement want us to believe.

However, this still keeps the question open of why Sendero also
rejects any cooperation with the two peasant unions, CNA and CCP.
This can also be explained in terms of ideological discrepancies
The CNA was seen as a manipulatory device of the military go-
vernment of Velasco Alvarado to control the peasants. According to
Sendero this fascist regime and its followers have given imperia-
lism the chance to put the Alliance for Progress into practice in
the countryside; an Alliance that according to Sendero is still
active. The ideological discrepancy with the CCP follows from the
fact that the CCP supports the thesis of a peasantry that does not
funcion independently of the global society and that is situated
in the capitalist system. *Vanguardia Revolucionaria*, the party
that has exercized hegemony in the CCP for many years, a hegemony
related to some extent its succesful operation in the occupations
of land in Andahuaylas at the beginning of the seventies, is criti-
cized because of its reformist ideas and its actions, such as
strikes to improve the economic situation of the peasants.

All these ideological discrepancies find their expression in the
strategy that Sendero articulates. From the thesis that the old
society has to be destroyed Sendero arrives at the total rejection
of any policy of cooperation.[33] Strikes, organized by the CCP and
CNA, political work in the cities, programmes oriented to conscious-
ness-raising, primary health actions, demonstrations and activities
for higher salaries, parliamentary activities, etc. are for Sendero
only marginal activities that do not affect the old system. They
are reformist and pro-imperialist actions that hold the peasants

back from the real struggle. The right and the left offer pallia-
tives, that only alleviate symptoms, while it is necessary to des-
troy the whole society by way of the armed struggle.

In this plan of total destruction not only are representatives of
government institutions and members of the government parties to
be killed, but also peasant leaders of the CCP and CNA, authori-
ties of the communities and leaders of the agrarian cooperatives.
This is so because Sendero accuses these leaders of cooperating
with imperialism or considers them as traitors to the revolution.

Although all the details are not known, it is a public secret
that Sendero went through several internal conflicts between 1980
and 1982. The most important conflict was around the discussion
of whether, apart from the armed struggle, political work at the
base was necessary or not. For Sendero the armed struggle is by
definition a political struggle and it will stimulate the peasants
to awaken from their inert condition. Those who left Sendero in
these years argued that political work at the base and activities
to make the people more conscious were necessary; they were of
the opinion that the armed struggle would fail when it was not
combined with work in mass organizations.[34]

In most of the analyses that try to explain the origin and growth
of Sendero the so called 'Andean character' of the movement is
emphasized. In other words it is argued that Sendero has its sup-
port among the peasant population because it adapts to and starts
from the old cultural values of the Quechua population, values
whose prestige they seek to restore. The struggle of Sendero is
then seen as a struggle of the *indígenas*, who have at last found
in Sendero an interpreter of their culture. After centuries of
economic repression and cultural humiliation, the peasants would
have found in Sendero a vanguard that provides them with an ex-
pression of their hostility to cultural humiliation and loss of
identity.[35]

The hatred of the city, the frustation of not getting on, falling
back into the poverty of the countryside, all provide, as we have
seen, grounds for explaining the support that Sendero has received,

especially from the peasant youth. But to place these feelings
on the same level as the struggle for recovery of the old Inca
values and a so-called collectivistic Inca economy is, like the
analysis of Sendero itself, to start from an incorrect interpre-
tation of the economic function of the peasant communities in
contemporary Peruvian society.

In a recent study of the peasant economy, Figueroa shows, on the
basis of an empirical study of eight communities, that half of
the peasant income in the most traditional regions of Peru is the
result of exchange on the market and that therefore, there are
no grounds on which to justify the thesis of self-sufficiency. In
the Ayacucho region, from the early 20th century on, peasants
have been migrating even as far as the coastal area to work on
cotton plantations. Ever since, peasants have had to depend on
society at large in order to satisfy the requirements of family
consumption.[36]

It is exactly because of this peasant economy that the proposals
of Sendero do not find the response that Sendero had hoped for
and that its ideology is not understood by the adult population.
The tactic of Sendero starts from the premise that the communi-
ties have to become self-sufficient and that every relation with
the town has to be broken. Sendero wants this for several ideolo-
gical and tactical reasons, whose extreme *campesinismo* is closer
to the positions of the Khmer Rouge of Pol Pot in Cambodia than to
the reality of the still lively and rich Quechua culture.

Sendero holds the view that the communities have to cut themsel-
ves off from every imperialist influence. Technological change
in the countryside is an imperialist danger. For instance, they
explain to the peasants that they should not buy medicines, but
must use their own herbs and plants. Although the peasants always
have made use of existing medicinal herbs and plants of the area,
they also know that certain diseases can only be cured by 'modern'
medicines. Year after year the peasants have struggled for better
health services in their communities, tried to build up medical
posts and tried to gain financial support to improve their drink-

inq-water conditions. But according to Sendero these are all im-
perialist influences that have to be eradicated.

For the same reasons the peasants have to end their communal cat-
tle enterprises. The cattle of these small enterprises would only
be for the benefit of the rich people in the towns. The peasant
must create an economy that makes any tie with the town unnecessa-
ry. In some villages the peasants have already started to put an
end to their communal dairy cattle enterprises, in the fear that
Sendero would prevent them from carrying on.

This tactic of self-sufficiency of the communities, which is seen
by many analysts as an indigenous return to the so-called Inca
economy and collectivism, has above all to be explained in terms of
the Maoist principle that the city must be isolated. The popular war
of encirclement of the town from the countryside will eventually
force the city to surrender because of its lack of resources.
But then the peasants must first have broken relations with that
town.

The fact that Sendero is not so much interested in the restoration
of the old Inca values and structures becomes clear when we look
at their attempts to break with the existing political and econo-
mic structures of the peasant communities. In the area that Sen-
dero considers as the rural base of the movement, communal autho-
rities – chosen or appointed by the peasants in their *asambleas
comunales* or by way of established traditions – are put under pres-
sure to resign and, are threatened with execution. In many com-
munities this has caused a rapid collapse of the communal autho-
rity and the gaps have been filled up by young militants of Sen-
dero. As a consequence of the lack of horizontal intercommunal
relations through organizational structures and of the renewed in-
ternal struggle between communities, Sendero was able to gain a
certain control over the area in a relatively short time.

It is thus evident that the extreme form of anti-imperialist and
anti-urban tactics used by Sendero raises many problems for the
peasants. Because of the mode of functioning of the peasant econo-
my, it is impossible for the peasants to apply the tactics and

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ideology of Sendero and follow a total economy of self-sufficien-
cy.[37]

V. *Sendero Luminoso* : interpretations and perspectives.

We have given an overview of the history of Sendero, in the con-
text of the Peruvian leftist movement and also of the regional
base of Sendero, Ayacucho. Very few analyses of Sendero have been
written ; most publications are sensational articles in the daily
or weekly Peruvian press. An exception is formed by the articles
in the review *Qué Hacer* (DESCO, Lima), which have frequently been
cited here. At the international level there have been very few
analyses of the phenomenon of Sendero, perhaps with the exception
of the special issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* of July 16, 1983.
But from the many articles and declarations in Peru it is possi-
ble to give an overview of the different interpretations of the
origin and ideology of Sendero, which we will summarize here.

We do not have to take too seriously the explanations by right-
wing political groups and media according to which Sendero is
only an extension of the national and/or international leftist
movement. These accusations are extended even to supposed con-
nections of Sendero with ex-Velasquistas (former supporters and
militants of the Velasco regime)[38], progressive priests, and most
recently to fundgiving organizations.[39] These accusations are very
vague, with reference being made to 'international terrorism',
which is never based on concrete evidence.

A second interpretation, which we have already mentioned, is the
popular explanation in progressive groups and media that Sendero
has been infiltrated by the military intelligence services to
create a climate for a coup d'état, or by the cocaine mafia to
draw attention away from their own activities. But no serious
concrete proof has been given for the supposed relation with the
cocaine mafia or with the intelligence services. These interpre-
tations seem to serve more as an excuse for not being able to ex-
plain the rise and influence of Sendero.[40]

More attention should be given to the thesis of some leftist par-

ties who agree with Sendero that the revolution can only be won by armed struggle but disagree on the moment and on the interpretation of the national reality. This explanation starts from the same revolutionary concept but differs in tactics. This position contains an implicit critique of *Izquierda Unida*, that has chosen the combination of parliamentary and mass mobilisation work and denies the relevance of armed struggle in the actual context. The leftist parties united in *Izquierda Unida* did not succeed in converting the wide support they had in the mass mobilisation against the military regime and in the mass mobilisations by the unions against the economic policies of the last period into political power and a strong opposition. This explains why Sendero could present a revolutionary alternative. As we have said, the growing support for Sendero among the urbanized peasant youth and youth of the squatter setlements in Lima, can be largely accounted for in the context of disillusionment with the other leftist parties. But this disillusionment is not sufficient to explain the rise and development of Sendero; it only explains the current rise in support for Sendero in the squatter areas.

As we have already made clear, this emergence and growth of the movement can not be explained by the thesis that Sendero is a messianic movement that reverts to the old culture of the Andes. Although the ideology, strategy and tactics of Sendero are rather complex, it seems more logical to conclude that the support for Sendero in the countryside must be sought among the peasant youth and those people who have returned from the cities where their aspirations were not realised (the teachers). Both groups felt themselves attracted by the *campesinismo* of Sendero, not out of a conviction that the old Inca culture and society had to be restored, but out of an anti-urban feeling. Moreover, Sendero found its support in the city where there exists a similar frustation among the lower middle class, which is defending itself by falling back on an extreme regionalism and by rejecting everything that is coming from outside.

These different groups found an answer in Sendero, because Sendero translated their feelings into an anti-imperialist popular

struggle.

In arguing this, one should not forget that Ayacucho was characterized as a provincial University town with a large lower middle class and without an organized peasant and labour movement, factors that are neglected in most analyses of Sendero. Only Julio Cotler explicitly mentions them in a commentary on Sendero :

> 'The absence of unions and of a varied and democratic political practice among the different social groups, and the climate of Huamanga· as a University town have stimulated the rise of Maoism in this city'.[41]

Although these factors are seldom mentioned in the different analyses of Sendero, we consider them to be central in the explanation of the rise of this movement, while on the other hand they also explain the limits to the development of Sendero at the national level. We can see a clear shift in the sympathy for Sendero in the last period. Owing to the extreme *campesinismo* of the movement Sendero did not succeed in acquiring effective support in the peasant communities. In the review *Qué Hacer* seven reasons are given why Sendero was not able to win over the well organized communities of the marginal provinces of Ayacucho, where they had to withdraw after the entrance of the army in 1982 ; Sendero's contempt for the actual problems of the peasant communities, especially the occupations of land; the embargo on doing business with the merchants; the demand to concentrate agriculture and cattle-raising on self-sufficiency instead of commerce; the rejection of larger union organizations in which the communities participate; Sendero's resistance to existing communal enterprises of the communities; the opposition of Sendero to formal education for the peasant youth, and Sendero's intolerance of religious activities by the peasants.[42] These reasons coincide with what we have characterized as resistance among the peasants to the radical *campesinismo* of Sendero.

The support for Sendero came until recently mainly from the urbanized peasant youth, the teachers in the countryside and the lower middle class of Ayacucho, but this support seems to be shift-

ing more and more to the population in the 'shanty towns' of Lima. This shift, which is largely to be explained by a reaction to the failure of *Izquierda Unida* - may force Sendero to break open its closed party structure. The intensive building up of a party cadre in the period from the late sixties to the late seventies in Ayacucho, will not be as easy in Lima. The fast and complex growth of militancy, combined with the fact that Sendero has to operate in an open society - and not in a closed provincial town like Ayacucho and an isolated area such as the department of Ayacucho - and in competition with existing mass movements such as trade unions and popular neighbourhood committees, will force Sendero to change the structure of the movement and even to break with its non-alliance policy. And all this can then become the Achilles heel of *Sendero Luminoso* in the future.

NOTES

1. *Qué Hacer*, no. 19, October 1982, page 54, DESCO, Lima.

2. *Qué Hacer*, no. 16, 'Sendero: conciencia de la Izquierda', April 1982, page 14.

3. One year later, on July 22, 1983, the same happened with the experimental farm of San Marcos University in La Raya (Cusco) the IITA.

4. The president was hesitating because of earlier experiences of sending the army to fight against guerrilleros in 1965.

5. *Qué Hacer*, no. 20, Raúl González, 'Ayacucho: la espera del gaucho, entrevista', January 1983, page 46-58.

6. *El Diario*, 24-1-1983, page 3. Much has been written about the murder of the eight journalists. An internationally known article is that of the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, who was a member of the commision that investigated the murder. His report is published in the New York Times Magazine of July 31, 1983, 'Inquest in the Andes'. It can be criticized for its rather naive commentary on the way of life in the Peruvian Andes and for its intention to absolve the government from responsibility for the murder.

7. See for an overview of the Peruvian Left, Ricardo Letts, *La Izquierda Peruana, organizaciones y tendencias*, Lima, 1981, especially pages 55-67.

8. See for instance César Germaná, 'La polémica Haya de la Torre-Mariátegui: Reforma o Revolución en el Perú', *Cuadernos de Sociedad y Política*, Lima, November 1977.

9. It was only in 1977 that there was a new important division within the PCP-*Unidad*, when the PCP-*Mayoría* left in protest against the bureaucratic leadership.

10. Some sources say that Guzmán worked for the Spanish edition of *Peking Review* during his stay in China.

11. Because of the support in SUTEP and FER, Ricardo Letts classifies Sendero in the category of parties who "control local organizations with 5 to 10 thousand members", idem., page 66.

12. The attitude of the leftist parties to the Velasco regime varied from 'opposition to the reformist character', for instance the position of the PCP-*Patria Roja*, to support for "the anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical character" of the regime, for instance the position of the PCP-*Unidad*. It was not until 1976 that the different leftist groups were unified against the politics of the regime of Morales Bermúdez. See also Ricardo Letts, idem., page 65.

13. The PCP-*Bandera Roja* of Saturnino Paredes lost its influence and no longer plays an important role in the leftist movement.

14. Taken from the French translation in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1983, page 17, 'La Pensée Gonzalo, le parti, lumière de l'univers.

15. See Héctor Béjar, *'Peru 1965: notes on a guerrilla experien-ce'*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1970, pages 35-60.

16. Idem., page 75. The MIR had two operative fronts, one in "la Convención' (Cusco) and one in 'Concepción/Jauja' (Junín) plus a non-operative front in 'Ayabaca' (Piura); and one ELN-front was in 'La Mar' (Ayacucho).

17. Idem., page 109-111.

18. *Qué Hacer*, no. 19, October 1982, page 67: 'El Partido'.

19. See for instance the article of Carlos I. Degregori in *El Diario* edición especial 13-1-1983: 'Ayacucho: la guerra ha comenzado', page 11-12.

20. *Oficina de Reforma Agraria*, Región Agraria XIII, Ayacucho.

21. *Oficina de Planificación*, ORDE-Ayacucho, 1981.

22. J. Valladolid and G. Girón, *Importancia de las comunidades campesinas en el departamento de Ayacucho*, Ayacucho, 1981.

23. C. Amat y León, *La desigualdad interior en el Perú*, Lima, 1981. ORDE-Ayacucho, *Plan de Desarrollo 1981-1982*, Ayacucho.

24. *Qué Hacer*, no. 19, October 1982, pages 61 and 70-1.

25. See also V. Gianotten and T. de Wit, *Centro de capacitación campesina 1977-1982. Trayectoria de un programa de educación popular y desarrollo rural en comunidades campesinas andinas*, Ayacucho, 1983.

26. The University was founded in 1677 and, mainly for economic reasons, closed in 1886, especially because of the financial crisis after the Pacific war. It was reopened in 1959.

27. *Qué Hacer*, no. 19, October 1982, 'Entrevista con el rector de la Universidad', page 59.

28. As has already been said, the leader of Sendero, Abimael Guzmán, was director of the section of staff affairs of the University.

29. The irony is that the same authorities of the University who are responsible for the initiative in 1977 for an anti-Sendero policy, are now accused by the government and police of being the leaders of Sendero.

30. A clear example of this 'discovery' of the 'other' Peru is that of Mario Vargas Llosa in his already cited article "Inquest in the Andes".

31. For a critique of the thesis of the semi-feudal character of Peru see among others Diego García Sayán, 'Perú: la cuestión agraria y las clases sociales en debate', in *Agro: clases, campesinado y revolución* (together with Fernando Eguren), DESCO, Lima, 1980. In this publication he starts from the central thesis that Peruvian society is characterized by its predominantly capitalist character.

32. Mario Vargas Llosa, already cited, gives the impression that these long distances only account for the Iquichanos but it

is a rather general problem in the department.

33. The cooperation of Sendero with the strong arm boys of the APRA, the so called 'buffalos', during the election campaign of 1980, was only incidental and purely for tactical reasons.

34. Sendero was hard on its dissidents. Executions of traitors seem to have been common. It is known that some leaders of the dissident group have been arrested and are in the prison 'El Frontón'. See also R. Mercado, *El Partido Comunista del Perú: Sendero Luminoso*, Ediciones de Cultura Popular, Lima, 1982, pages 24-25.

35. See for instance Manuel Scorza, 'Le coin des morts', in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 16, 1983. And Pablo Macera in an interview in *Qué Hacer*, no. 15, february 1982, page 52. Maceras' combining of Sendero with a "movimiento mesiánico, milenarista, andino", was for a long time influential in progressive circles in Lima.

36. A. Figueroa, *La economía campesina de la Sierra del Perú*, PUC, Lima, 1982.

37. See for an analysis of the functioning of the peasant economy and the possibilities of peasant organization in Ayacucho, V. Gianotten and T. de Wit, *Participatory research and popular education in a context of peasant economy*, The Hague/Amersfoort, December 1982, pages 20-26.

38. See María Salcedo for accusations of ties between Sendero and the rest of the national left, 'El papel del terrorismo y el terrorismo del papel', *Qué Hacer*, no. 9, February 1981, pages 38-45. The attacks on ex-Velasquistas concentrate on the institute which supports self-management enterprises, INPET. A clear example of this type of accusation was that by the chief of the army, general Carlos Briceño, in August 1983, against former military officers who were supposed to have collaborated with Sendero; when asked for names and evidence he had no reply.

39. For an analysis of the attacks on foreign fundgiving organizations see *Qué Hacer*, no. 23, June 1983, 'Porqué se ataca a las fundaciones'. See also F. Wils, 'Politiek en ontwikkelingssamenwerking in Peru : Nederlandse medefinanciering in het geding' (Politics and developmentcooperation in Peru: Dutch fundgiving organizations questioned), in *Internationale Spectator*, September 1983, jrg. 37, no.9, pages 576-581.

40. Recently also the rightist media and spokesmen of the government are using the argument of the link between Sendero and the cocaine mafia, but only for opportunistic reasons.

41. Julio Cotler, 'Respuesta de una encuesta sobre Sendero Luminoso', in *Qué Hacer*, no. 20, January 1983, pages 65-67.

42. *Qué Hacer*, no. 24, September 1983, page 24-26, 'Lo que ata a los campesinos, reportaje especial'.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND REVOLUTION:

THE CASE OF NICARAGUA

José Luis Coraggio*

I. Theorizing about social movements and social struggle.

The decade of the 1960's witnessed the emergence of new ideas a-
bout social struggle. These ideas were inspired by the new orga-
nizational practices and forms of development which social forces
in Europe and the United States were adopting. These forces or 'so-
cial movements' as they are usually referred to, are organized
around specific demands (housing, urban services, the liberation of
women, environmental conservation, the anti-nuclear struggle etc.).
In many cases, these movements are engaged in a struggle with State
institutions; sometimes however, their actions are directed at
other types of organizations.

The multi-class nature of these movements, their great mobilizing
capacity plus the fact that their demands were acquiring a radical
character - and could therefore not be met without a profound trans-
formation of the existing social system - all these things attrac-
ted the attention of political parties and social theorists alike.

The political parties saw a challenge which consisted of trying to
articulate, to strengthen, and to regulate these forces in line
with traditional forms of political struggle. The theorists were
faced with the need to understand the consequences of these deve-
lopments for political theory, in particular for theories of a
revolutionary character which claimed to be providing a scientific
basis for the practice of social transformation. In some cases,
pressing political circumstances have led researchers to reach

theoretically questionable conclusions, based perhaps more on ideological predispositions than on scientific analysis.[1]

In both instances, the fact that social movements became fashionable led to their proliferation at the conceptual level. Classification systems were developed and various attributes of given populations (gender, age, territorial situation, consumption of particular goods, ethnic identity, nationality, fiscal status etc.) were measured and categorized in order to nourish speculation on their 'agitational or anti-system potential'. Simultaneously, these ideas, along with their corresponding political practices, spread to other continents, particularly to Latin America where in some situations - by no means in all of them - they were in line with local developments.[2]

This process can be characterized as an *analytical moment* when societies are 'pulverized' - in conceptual as well as in organizational terms - into these simple determinations situated in a variety of social contradictions. However just as theoretical analyticism represents a failure of scientific practice if the movement towards *synthesis and reconstruction of the object* is not completed, so practical-organizational analyticism rapidly leads to a waste of energy and loses its effectiveness, in the absence of a *conjunctural accumulation of social forces* able to effectively challenge the existing system.

From this perspective, it becomes theoretically necessary, on the one hand, to reconstruct the concepts of *'people'* as a synthesis (articulation) of a multiplicity of determinations and, on the other hand, politically necessary to critically reconsider the role of the *revolutionary party* as the articulator (synthesizer) of the various social forces which demonstrate a potential for action directed against the system.

To characterize the 'people' as a social class with a theoretically pre-determined 'historical destiny', and to assign to a particular party, viewed as the vehicle of this 'objective conscience', the role of *subject* of the social revolution, can now be done in a way which brings new elements to the discussion of the social revo-

lution. Nevertheless, as long as the 'problem of the people' continues to be seen as a mere question of conceptual definition, separate from the real problem of self-perpetuation of the vanguards, our progress would still remain limited. It should also be said that the need for a vanguard cannot be put into question without falling into the trap of spontaneism.

In our opinion, a real break takes place when the concept of 'people' is redefined in terms of identity and organizational factors, and when this is coupled with the idea of a *complex subject* which corresponds neither to a class, a party or a movement, but rather to a *hegemonic system*.[3] Here, the concept of 'people' does not rest on what is basically an economistic theory of the inevitable tendenciesof capitalist society which, in any case, would be accelerated by the actions of the vanguards. On the contrary, the concrete contradictions which run through the State and civil society, the differential positions of the *social agents* in material, ideological or organizational terms, will provide the 'objective' basis for an analysis which - from the perspective of power relations - will make it possible to develop a strategy of popular hegemony. This primacy of the political in relation to revolutionary practice does not make it any less necessary - quite the contrary - to take account of class oppositions and to move towards an eventual theoretical reconstruction of economic laws and their historical tendencies.

By observing practice as such, we see the impossibility of establishing one-to-one correspondences between concrete agents and specific identities (determination of gender, class, age, ethnic identity etc.). Given that the diverse contradictions underlying these identities do not necessarily converge, neither in a single individual-agent or organization nor at the level of the people as a whole, it becomes impossible to reduce the identification of the 'popular' to a single determination. At the same time, an effective hegemonic practice does not presuppose a given complex subject but sets out to reconstitute the people. This, in turn, requires the elaboration of an articulated discourse, the *popular project*, which makes explicit in concrete terms the content of

the new society yet to be constructed. Far from being a utopia, the popular project is a viable proposal for a struggle waged in solidarity against an oppressive system, where effectiveness of action and possible outcomes can be foreseen, and where conjunctural analysis and prospective allow popular ideologies to advance. This must take place in a climate of respect for existing autonomies and identities where there is a simultaneous articulation and development of these same identities.

Moreover, insofar as power relations are not reduced to relations 'between' the State and Civil Society, but are seen to be present in various instances and institutions of society as a whole, the liberation project of the people cannot be reduced to the idea of 'seizure' of governmental power by a given oppositional social entity; rather it presupposes a permanent *revolution of civil society* and thus a continuous *transformation of the subject*, that is, the people.

In this paper, we shall attempt to discuss the question of whether the perspective described so far can have universal application, basing our discussion on the experience of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, some of whose specific features are described further on. Then, towards the end of the article, we shall return to the theoretical problematic.

IL The practice of social transformation in Nicaragua.

IL1. Armed struggle, contrahegemonic practice and insurrection

Popular insurrection, involving a breakdown of the economic system, a permanent state of siege directed at the enemy and the coming together of all the identities of a population rising against an oppressive regime, represents a moment in the history of a people. Specifically, it is a moment when contradictions become fused together and social forces have but a single objective : the overthrow of a regime.

In Nicaragua, this moment would not have arrived in 1979 had it not been for the long standing presence of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) on the political scene. Its very survival

as a guerrilla force, through good and bad times, served as a
constant reminder of the possibility of challenging the Somoza
regime. But its organic ties with the masses only became fully
developed during the two years before its triumph. Until that
time, the FSLN conducted military actions as well as partial con-
trahegemonic practices through becoming involved in organizing
students, women, workers, neighbourhoods, in what could be called
a passive accumulation of forces.[4] 'Accumulation of forces is
only possible in specific conjunctural situations, otherwise it
cannot take place'.[5] A strategy of insurrection implies that or-
ganization no longer precedes action since the challenge to all
of the institutions which reproduce the system of repression is
simultaneous, involving unequal forces, growing as events unfold,
establishing spontaneous solidarities against a common enemy, one
which is so obvious that it does not require any form of codifi-
cation. To have shown up the repressive and exploitative nature
of the regime, dooming to failure any attempt at camouflaging or
reforming it, to have demonstrated its political and military vul-
nerability, these are undoubted achievements of the FSLN acting
as vanguard. However, in the context of the insurrection, the
FSLN often follows and acts in support of the masses rather than
the opposite.[6]

Even were the FSLN to have had a more global vision of the secon-
dary contradictions and their possible articulation, at the mo-
ment of insurrection the various identities of the people came
together and the common objective was seen to predominate : to
destroy the regime and its various politico-military agents. The
popular organizations have served more as a network of communi-
cation than as a channel for conducting specific struggles. It
is important to understand that even though organizations with
specific demands conducting the struggle in particular ways were
present, this was not a universal phenomenon and, in any event,
tended to vary according to the conjunctural situation. For exam-
ple, the main demands underlying the struggle of AMPRONAC (Associa-
tion of Women concerned with the National Problem) were related
to the question of human rights, of the disappeared and of support
for the mothers of victims of the National Guard, rather than

typical feminist demands. Again, while students and workers did
organize within their places of study and work, as the struggle
developed unemployment increased dramatically and the schools
were closed down. Students and workers then moved back into
their neighbourhoods and the CDC (Civil Defence Committees) be-
nefitted from this new organizational capacity coming to supple-
ment the neighbourhoods' existing organizational base. In fact,
the various mass organizations did not so much affirm and defend
specific interests on the basis of their particular identities
but rather they used these identities as a means of mobilizing
social forces for a frontal struggle against the Somoza regime.
Thus, the student organizations came to play a fundamental role
by providing cadres for the rural guerrilla struggle.

We are thus faced with a momentary universalization, a massifi-
cation of the people, and a contradiction in the attempt to organize
specific social movements and to salvage their differentiate
demands; one which was to continue after the triumph, in some
cases - as that of the Association of Nicaraguan Women Luisa A-
manda Espinoza (AMLAE)- leading to differences in outlook between
the Nicaraguan organizations and equivalent organizations abroad.[7]
Moreover, when the FSLN reached the moment of triumph with the
people, it was at the centre of a broad anti-Somocista front,
something which would apparently imply a *fading out of the class
content* of the revolutionary project. Nevertheless the concrete
conditions of the triumph, involving the total dismantling of
the National Guard and the creation of the Popular Revolutionary
Army as well as unceasing efforts to consolidate the popular or-
ganizations, were to ensure the defeat of an emergency project
articulated by the financial bourgeosie designed to convert it
into a hegemonic or 'dictatorial force without Somoza'.[8] At the
same time, by ensuring the unity of a broad range of social for-
ces struggling against *somocismo* and its substitutes - supported
until the last moment by the United States Administration - the
FSLN succeeded in neutralizing the imperialist project in all of
its variants, in such a way as to ensure that the class content
of the revolution could not be put into question, given the cha-

racteristics of its social base.

II.2. Popular hegemony as revolutionary practice.

The experience of the Popular Unity government in Chile is often
quoted to support the thesis that it is impossible to 'have power'
if control of government structures is not coupled with control of
the repressive apparatus. According to this vision, the revolutio-
nary forces in Nicaragua have indeed 'taken power'. The difficul-
ty is that this vision is based on a rather limited definition of
power which is seen to reside in one part or another of the State
apparatus.

This vision, which makes a sharp distinction between political
and civil society and which views power relations as belonging to
the sphere of the former (and not that of relations between it
and civil society), has been criticized by those who point to the
political content of relations which take place inside various
institutions of society (thefactory, the school, the family, the
Church, corporate organizations etc.). Again according to this
view, far from having achieved popular power, the triumphant re-
volution against the *somocista* regime is only now beginning to
build this power. The slow destructuring of the inherited power
relations had to be done simultaneously with the construction of
a new system of social power. As long as this is not achieved,
the old relations will tend to be reproduced and with them, the
corresponding ideology of domination, within the revolutionary
process. From this perspective, the process of building popular
power implies that the masses must deny their own existence through
a process of organization, of self-transformation, of developing
its identities and creating new identities while others disappear.
Having been 'massified' by generations of repression and ideolo-
gical domination, the masses also carry identities which must be
overcome and transformed (racism, machismo, authoritarianism and
individualism are not exclusive qualities of the dominant classes).

While the FSLN was again to play a fundamental role in this pro-
cess, the masses with their incipient organizations and their day
to day struggles would continue to have the same kind of variable,

dialectical relation with the vanguard that it had before the
triumph ; at times under the guidance of the FSLN, at other times
ahead of and autonomous from it, generally without a neatly defi-
ned formula specifying the relationship between revolutionary par-
ty and mass organization. And in this process, both terms of the
relationship between mass organizations and revolutionary party
were to undergo modifications in both form and content.

Just as it did during the insurrection, the role of the FSLN was
to point towards the strategic objective. In this case, to build
a new society based on a *negation of the global logic of capital*
ensuring that the imperatives of social accumulation remain sub-
ordinate to the satisfaction of the basic needs of the population,
achieving an effective democracy, popular sovereignty and national
self-determination. At the same time, it was to indicate the imme-
diate priority task : the *consolidation of revolutionary power*
which is necessary to face up to external and internal enemies
and leave open the possibility of transforming society. However
within this broad orientation, the masses, increasingly organized,
were to put forward their own answers, thus enriching and giving
concrete content to the revolutionary project and translating the
idea of *popular power* into reality. This, in turn, was to produce
changes in the very structure of the revolutionary party.

This task required certain material conditions as well as a poli-
tico-ideological framework. Through oral and written discourse,
but more fundamentally through its actions, the FSLN showed the
political nature of the revolution ; this was not the path lead-
ing to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat - nationalization of
the means of production, single party system - but another road
leading to 'popular hegemony'.[9] But this was a hegemony still
being constructed along with the historical subject of the Revo-
lution : the Nicaraguan People. Rather than moving towards homo-
geneity of the popular sectors, differences were acknowledged
and indeed reflected within the various mass organizations, indi-
cating the principal liberating demands ; the peasantry, rural
and urban salaried workers, women, youth, indigenous communities
and, at the same time, consolidation of a new identity which, in

embryonic form, will be found in revolutionary struggles, and the Sandinista Defence Committees representing the possibility of self-government, of *direct* social relations in community work, without mercantile mediations.[10]

The accumulation of forces is only possible in particular conjunctural situations. The revolution sets up tasks that are assumed by the masses, though not without contradictions. Throughout this process, new identities are created and others that lay dormant and oppressed are transformed and liberated. For example, the literacy campaign gives great social influence to the July 19th Sandinista Youth Movement as a political organization under the direction of the FSLN, through a process which is transforming the traditional relations between city and countryside, family relations and relations inside the schools. The resistance which develops in the wake of the National Literacy Campaign leads to an accumulation of this new social force. Then new identities begin to emerge ; the popular teachers - there are 19,000 voluntary organizations in Nicaragua - the fundamental subjects of the post-literacy period, demonstrate the possibility of breaking with professionalism and educational monopoly while at the same time showing the people's capacity for innovation and autonomous action in relation to the State apparatus.[11] When they had to take charge of local government, the new Municipal Councils for Reconstruction provided another example of this process of discovering the people's capacity for selfgovernment ; 136 municipalities previously under the control of local *caudillos* or representatives of local economic interests were taken over, after the revolution, by agricultural workers, peasants or urban workers, many of whom did not even have a primary education.[12] The task of defending the Revolution has given rise to the Sandinista Popular Militias, probably the best example of the same process, though one that cannot be appreciated by those who continue to see power as residing by definition in certain parts of the State apparatus. The transfer and subsequent consolidation of the capacity for combat to the masses was not limited to weekly training courses but also involved real struggle against the counter-revolutionaries constantly being infiltrated

from Honduras. In fact, during a first phase, the armed struggle against the *somocistas* - supported by the Reagan Administration and the Central American oligarchies - was conducted mainly by the militias and not by the Sandinista Popular Army. An organized people learnt how to defend itself, first by organizing extrate-rritorial batallions, then by setting up territorial militias, again breaking a professional monopoly which the capitalist Sta-te guards jealously.[13]

In other cases, the revolutionary context has made it possible for an identity that had previously been subjected and alienated to become qualitatively transformed and come to play a crucial role in the revolutionary process. Under *somocismo*, Nicaraguan peasants had not been allowed to organize in defence of their interests. Until the end of 1980, a year after the triumph, their interests were still 'represented' by agricultural corporations controlled by the large producers. Then in December 1980, the small producers of the Department of Matagalpa decided to break with the Central Cooperative of Coffee Producers and to set up a provisional com-mittee of small and medium producers which then set out to orga-nize meetings of small producers in other departments. These meet-ings provided the impetus for the formation of the National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG). Not only did UNAG immediately begin to put economic demands to the government, but it also ask-ed to be represented on the Council of State and on various bo-dies dealing with problems of the agricultural sector. From then on, this mass organization has gained increasing political space, maintaining a critical attitude to what it considered to be de-viations from the policy of agrarian reform. During the first year of the revolution, there was a discussion of the *choice* which would have to be made between the cooperative model or a Statist management model based on socialization of the productive forces. The development of a peasant identity made possible by the revolutionary process has had an impact on the agrarian strategy until the year 2000 : both models would be implemented in equal measures.[14] However it has been the coming together of production and defence needs as a result of increasing external agression which has given UNAG an enormous impulse and set it firmly at the

centre of the revolutionary process. The agrarian reform in fa-
vour of the peasantry is being accelerated, and it involves much
more than simple technical criteria. Peasants are demanding and
being given both land and arms, and this is taking place within
an irreversible process of class consolidation in the context
of an authentic social and political revolution.[15]
In July 1984, UNAG took another step which consolidated its pos-
ition as a significant social force within the revolutionary pro-
cess. It decided to incorporate agricultural producers *regardless
of the size of their holdings*, with the only condition that they
should productively support the process of national liberation.[16]
In other situations, such a measure would have undoubtedly led
to a situation where a few large landowners came to dominate the
mass of small producers and to use the organization for their
own benefit. In the context of a social revolution however, it
implies the reverse : *popular hegemony presupposes the integra-
tion of the minorities under the direction of the majorities.*

The case of the Association of Nicaraguan Women Luisa Amanda Es-
pinoza is a different one. This organization has been especial-
ly active whenever issues mainly concerning women were being
discussed, such as the law on the family or more recently the law
on compulsory military service which made service optional for
women. In general, however, the association has not enjoyed the
kind of increasing political influence which European feminist
movements in particular had hoped for and expected. This can be
attributed to the difficulties involved in breaking the ideolo-
gical and material structures which perpetuate women's subordi-
nation in comparison with demands voiced by youth and workers'
organizations. However, as the leaders of AMLAE have themselves
stated, their priority task is to contribute to the defence of
the revolution by other means, and thus prepare the grounds for
the subsequent struggle for women's liberation.[17]

To be sure, the government – in this case the Revolutionary go-
vernment – is in a position to regulate, block or promote de-
mands voiced by various groups. Going beyond that, however, our
hypothesis is that the *conjunctural situation, through a dialec-*

tical relation between revolutionary party and mass organizations
determines which identities will be developed, at what speed and
in which direction. The advance of the peasant sector can be ex-
plained in terms of the fact that their specific demands coincide
with the material and ideological needs of the revolution (planning
alternatives to capitalist sectors that are reluctant to produce,
placing restraints on the State bureaucracy, developing production
and consolidating defence against external invasions). In the case
of the specific demands put forward by women, on the other hand,
a new and complex area of struggle would have been opened up, not
only against opposition forces such as the Church hierarchy but
also within the popular front. The party sees this, and the orga-
nization itself is prepared to voice only limited demands while
waiting for more favourable circumstances to develop when the
'general interest' will no longer clash with its specific interest.
Thus, there is nothing structural about the revolutionary project
which is likely to prevent the full liberation of Nicaraguan women.

One mass organization which is not generally regarded as such is
the Catholic Church. It also corresponds to a deeply rooted ident-
ity of the Nicaraguan people. What we shall have to say about the
Church also applies to other mass organizations. Pluralism and de-
mocracy are not just features of the external linkages of various
organizations, they also have something to do with what happens
inside these organizations. In the case of the Church, we have an
institution which existed before the revolution and which in prin-
ciple, is governed internally in accordance with strict rules of
hierarchy. In fact it would be difficult to imagine a more verti-
cally oriented organization than the Catholic Church. However in
practice, there is a certain degree of pluralism within the Church,
and different currents representing secondary contradictions within
Christian thought co-exist. In the context of a country struggling
against imperialism, these come to assume great significance for
the conjunctural situation of the Church. With a Catholic population
engaged in a process of liberation ready to fight to the death
against its oppressors, the internal equilibria of the Catholic
hierarchy cannot be dealt with out of context without alienating

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its own popular base.

In reality, while the highest authority of the Church states explicitly that it disagrees with the development of the revolution, the Christian and the revolutionary identities have entered into a special relationship, to the point where several obviously Christian principles have been incorporated as revolutionary ideology by the FSLN; at the same time many priests and many of the faithful are prepared to challenge the counter-revolutionary political orientations of their own hierarchy without abandoning their apostolic mission or their Christian faith. The counter-revolution has tried by every possible means to break this unity and to use the Church as the ideological platform which the weak bourgeois opposition is unable to provide.[18] Paradoxically, it is the FSLN which is involved in maintaining the unity of Christianity and the Revolution and which sees no contradictions between the two identities.

The clearest evidence that the identities of the masses do not automatically develop in a way which contributes to the consolidation of the revolution is offered by the case of the indigenous communities (Miskitos, Sumos and Ramas) and the *criollos* of the Atlantic coast. In 1981, the FSLN and the government issued a statement of principles by which they pledged themselves to support the maintenance of indigenous cultural traditions, to guarantee participation in the affairs of the nation as a whole (the Misurasata organization immediately took its place on the Council of State) and in those of the Atlantic coast in particular, to provide legal guarantees of ownership of their landholdings, either as communal lands or in the form of cooperatives, and to 'support the organizational forms coming from the communities themselves in order to achieve the degree of representation which is necessary in the social, political and economic institutions which direct the affairs of the Atlantic zone'.[19] However these principles were not taken to heart by a community whose relations with the State had always been marginal, whose dealings with multinationals had led to exploitation and loss of resources, and who were used to see the inhabitants of the rest of the country

as 'the Spaniards'. Another negative inheritance from the past
was the fact that their participation in the struggle against
Somoza had been marginal. Moreover a revolutionary transforma-
tion of the indigenous identity implied not only a change in
the communities' articulation with the outside world but also
a change in outlook on the part of the revolutionary forces,
something which is very difficult to achieve when judged by the
long series of unsuccessful attempts to deal with the ethnic
question, not only in Latin America but in other parts of the
world as well. The fact that contra infiltration takes place
via the Atlantic zone while, at the same time, certain religious
leaders of the communities began to identify the revolution with
'the devil', gave rise to situations in which the response of the
FSLN or the government cannot always be seen as an 'error'. In
many cases, this response was the inevitable result of the real
contradiction between the need to defend territorial integrity
against external aggression and the desire to allow self-deter-
mination and a gradual re-articulation of the indigenous communi-
ties to the society-in-revolution.[20]

The case of the indigenous communities illustrates how the *process
of liberation of identities requires a transformation of the rela-
tion (in this case inter-ethnic) by both parts*, and how its evo-
lution is not exclusively dependent upon the decisions of a govern-
ment or a revolutionary party.

One case where the FSLN has played an important role in placing
limits on the 'natural' development of a popular identity is that
of the salaried workers. The economic difficulties inherited from
the past as well as those which emerged as a result of a deterior-
ation in the terms of trade and the rise in interest rates, the
obvious weaknesses of a State which is being constructed, the
natural disasters plus the economic and financial boycott imposed
by the Reagan Administration, all these factors to which must be
added the political decision to maintain a broad internal front
under popular hegemony, required that certain forms of the class
struggle had to be slowed down. These forms included the old eco-
nomic demands by the trade unions that had been suppressed before

the revolution and a generalized demand for workers' control of
the means of production. These limits placed upon the forms of
struggle were also made to apply to land occupations by the pea-
santry.[21]

The decision to opt for popular hegemony implied the maintenance
of a pluralist social system which, in turn, had to accomodate
the demands of private proprietors for property guarantees as
well as for the chance to make a profit without being stigmati-
zed as exploiters. The revolutionary government provided these
guarantees on condition that private property should fulfil its
social function: to produce under acceptable conditions of effi-
ciency.[22]

Thus the class struggle was not arrested, it simply took other
forms; workers' control of the *use* of property [23], demands for
improved working conditions, demands for an indirect salary on
the part of the State and, fundamentally, something which work-
ers' organizations still had to delegate to parts of the govern-
ment apparatus: control of the economic surplus through economic
policy as well as through the State monopoly of both the finan-
cial system and the commercialization of major products. This
new expression of workers' identity required an understanding of
the conjunctural situation and a clarity of vision with respect
to the revolutionary project which not all workers possessed.
The situation was made worse by the general crisis of the indus-
trial sector in Central America which also hit Nicaragua and
slowed down the planned expansion of urban employment. It is
not surpising, therefore, that the government had to resort to
legal measures in order to suppress certain strikes, given the
emergency conditions which affected the country, even though the
principle of trade union pluralism had allowed the survival of
certain trade unions who tended to voice demands of a classical
kind, as well as that of certain opposition unions who were now
waving banners which they had never raised during the Somoza
dictatorship.[24]

In the absence of seasonal migratory movements from outside the

country and thanks to unprecedented levels of coffee production
and a recovery of cotton production, rural workers were in a po-
sition to achieve some of their traditional demands (improved
working conditions, a social wage, fair payment for the work
done etc.) and even to place limits on the progress of mechani-
zation of the cotton harvest whenever there was availability of
labour. The identity of the rural worker as proletarian was main-
tained and the possibility of organizing a movement back to the
land (reconstitution of the peasantry) was never raised. One
thing which did affect the availability of wage labour over the
short term was the external aggression, not only because it gave
rise to a strong migratory movement towards the cities, but also
since it resulted in the movement of soldiers and members of the
militias for the purpose of defending the country. These labour
shortages were constantly being filled through voluntary work.[25]
Given the importance of the Area of Public Ownership (AOO) for
permanent rural employment, one of the increasingly widespread
demands was in favour of effective worker participation, which
gave rise to a contradiction with the bureaucratic tendencies of
certain government officials.[26]

The construction of popular hegemony presupposes not only the
development but also the articulation of the identities of the
people as subject of the revolution. Moreover, and in contradic-
tion to this, it also involves the reproduction-transformation-
rearticulation of identities which, historically, had been con-
sidered antagonistic to the popular project. In the particular
case of the first phase of the Sandinista revolution, the figure
of the rentier was hit hard by the new revolutionary laws because
of the impact of what they were doing to both agricultural and
urban property.[27] The popular project would find no place for
that identity except in a form under which it had lost most of
its economic significance. In 1984, it is the shopkeeper given
to speculation who is most affected by the new mechanisms and
regulations designed to ensure the supply of food and other goods
to the population.

On the other hand, from the very beginning the revolutionary dis-

course has referred to the idea of a 'patriotic bourgeoisie' as
a fundamental element of the hegemonic system and of economic,
political and ideological pluralism. Independently of the fact
that members of the government may be of bourgeois origin and
that they may even continue to enjoy the ownership and use of
means of production, the question is whether it will be possible
to maintain the identity of the bourgeoisie as a class, or whether
the changes which it will have to undergo before becoming inte-
grated into the hegemonic system will in effect lead to the dis-
solution of its class identity. The Sandinista project involves
setting up a system of relations (identities) within which the
private ownership of the means of production may be regulated by
the profit motive in terms of particular decisions, while
at the same time, when taken globally, remains subordinate to
the satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of the people
and to the maintenance of popular sovereignty. In this context
the process of accumulation is regarded as a means rather than an
end. This is by no means impossible, particularly in view of the
history of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. It could therefore repro-
duce itself as an *economic class*, putting forward its own parti-
cular demands on questions of public policy regarding the economy
or industrial relations etc. However *in actuality*, the popular
hegemonic project, that is the new system of social and political
relations,would prevent the bourgeoisie from achieving its class
project of imposing its own particular intersts over those of the
majority. It would thus be an 'alienated' *political class*.[28] This
would not prevent the bourgeoisie from participating in various
government bodies, either as individuals or as representatives of
a class which is organized corporatively, or else through the
political parties. The pluralist project which is part and parcel
of popular hegemony makes it legally possible for the bourgeoisie
to seek governmental power. However the development and consoli-
dation of popular power are such that this objective cannot be
achieved as a result of a correlation of forces which ensures
that the interests of the majority remain dominant.

Theory tells us that capital, as it develops, invades every sphere

of society, transforming all relations into mercantile ones and using the liberal State and parliamentary democracy as instruments of ideological and political domination over the masses, thus ensuring the atomization of the masses into individuals-citizens. The challenge to which Nicaragua is responding is that of arresting these global tendencies while at the same time ensuring the continued existence of private capital, albeit in a 'deformed' state as a result of its subordinate situation within the hegemonic system.

Another issue which must be raised and which applies to the so-called non-capitalist middle sectors is the question of conspicuous consumption. In a certain sense the 'achievement' of much of the bourgeoisie has been associated with the maintenance of privileged levels of consumption rather than with accumulation as such. This aspect of the identity of the bourgeoisie should perhaps be controlled, in view of the need to further the general interest; however a certain degree of *inequality* may be allowed (though not related to a project of domination).[29]

II.3. The open character of the hegemonic system.

A few decades ago, we were told in Latin America that economic theories based on the notion of a closed economy were not applicable to our societies, showing as they do an exaggerated degree of openness and dependence upon shifts in external markets and in the distribution of transnational power, as well as in the economic policies of the centre (as opposed to the periphery) States. However openness and dependency also affect political systems. To think of hegemonic relations 'as if' the national society were a closed system in which one can calculate correlations of forces on the basis of their social importance, their degree of organization and the ideological relations among social sectors, is to deny the reality of our societies.

The case of Nicaragua is an obvious one. Faced with the popular project expressed by the FSLN and the mass organizations, the domestic bourgeoisie had no opportunity of competing for a hegemonic role. With limited control of the means of mass communica-

tion, with no possibility of obtaining support from the armed
forces, lacking any strategy for economic development and for
pulling the country out of the crisis other than continued de-
pendence on the United States, the bourgeoisie was unable to
put forward a real political alternative. The two possibilities
open to it were either to leave the country or to become acti-
vely incorporated - with all the contradictions implied by such
a move - into the 'patriotic bourgeoisie' within the popular
hegemonic system.

However the Somocista system of domination had not been a 'natio-
nal' system but a sub-system operating within a network of im-
perialist relations of domination; here, Central America was
regarded as the 'back-yard' of 'Uncle Sam' and Somoza was made
to play a policing role in the region on behalf of the United
States. Moreover a defeat for *somocismo* did not necessarily imply
a defeat for imperialism. Once the battle was lost, the U.S. Ad-
ministration *immediately* began to lay siege, economically and
politically, around the revolutionary government, with the intent-
ion of influencing the way in which power was distributed in the
country. Economic aid from the United States flowed towards
sectors of the bourgeoisie and their allies in order to promote
their activities and their organizations. The aid ceased when the
revolutionary government decided to put a stop to these direct
relations. The obvious consolidation of the popular forces in Ni-
caragua soon persuaded the Americans that the only way to stop
the revolution in its tracks was to reactivate the Somocista Na-
tional Guard, which had already been expelled from the country.
Washington set out to do this with the support of the regional
oligarchies. Finally the aggression took the form of a relent-
less process of U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Ni-
caragua. It is difficult to say what the popular hegemonic pro-
ject might have yielded under other conditions, but the fact is
that imperialist initiatives helped to determine the subsequent
development of events and to define with greater clarity the
anti-imperialist ideology of the Nicaraguan people.[30]

II.4.Parties and movements: the problem of articulation.

The social project which is emerging in Nicaragua is being developed on the basis of popular hegemony. The central elements of this project are the mass organizations and their dialectical relations with the FSLN and with the revolutionary government. These relations have been mediated by laws and institutions - often of a provisional nature - that have facilitated the regulation of conflict, the establishment of instruments of participation and the anticipation of the consequences of specific types of behaviour.

Nicaragua is now on the verge of taking an important step towards institutionalization[31] by organizing elections to a National Assembly which will be made up of 90 representatives elected on the basis of territorial constituencies.*

A Law on Political Parties has already been approved. The electoral system will be based on universal suffrage, electoral competition among *political parties* and pluralism through a system of proportional representation. The question which arises is this: how will the social movements be represented in these political structures ? Or rather, which other structures must be created in order to ensure that some of these social forces will be able to participate in the political process at the level of government ? At the present time, political parties and social movements are both represented on the Council of State. By establishing suffrage as the instrument of representation, it no longer seems possible to treat parties and movements within a common dimension, competing for social representation. This becomes obvious, not only because of the multiple identity of the social agents but also so because of the need to maintain the specificity of movements and parties. The former are more oriented towards the expression

*This was written before the Nicaraguan general elections which were held on November 4th, 1984. The results of the elections to the National Assembly were as follows: FSLN 61 seats; Democratic Conservatives 14; Independent Liberals 9; Social Christians 6; Communists 2; Socialists 2; Marxist Leninists 2. The FSLN obtained just under 67 per cent of the vote in both the Assembly and the **Pres**idential elections.

of partial demands while the latter have the function of synthes-
izing demands and integrating them into a national project which,
in turn, involves many dimensions which do not take the form of
identities and of social movements.[32]

One possibility is that the political parties should include on
their lists representatives of various mass organizations which,
in a system of proportional representation, involves a process
of negotiating the order of names on the lists and the incorpora-
tion of the movements' demands into the party programmes. However
if the social movements and their leadership are transformed into
vote catchers for the political parties, there could be a tenden-
cy towards something which can be observed in its extreme form
in the United States. A party can become overloaded with contra-
dictions and particular interests that are translated into a
salad of partial promises which, taken together, not only fail
to make up a proper national project but are also incompatible
with each other and not viable as a package, with the result
that they tend to slow down social change rather than inject
into the social situation the dynamism which it requires.

On the other hand, while organizational autonomy of the social
movements as the expression of certain social forces seems to
be desirable in a popular democracy, at the same time, given
the open-ended nature of the process of construction/transform-
ation of popular identities, it becomes difficult for these to
crystallize in clearly defined qualitative and quantitative situ-
ations.

Another institutional alternative that might be considered is
that of a second Chamber of a consultative-deliberative charac-
ter, where issues of national significance would be debated and
where the principal social forces of the country could express
their points of view. In any case, direct participation by the
mass organizations in various decision-making bodies would not
be incompatible with these new forms of government.

This problematic has also other consequences. The dialectical
relation between the revolutionary party and the mass organiza-

tions, in the context of a pluralist system, can take two forms: either the party is maintained as a *cadre party*, made up of selected cadres who, in many cases, emerge from the practice of the mass organizations, or else it becomes transformed into a *mass party*. This has important implications for the question of the articulation of the People. The cadre party does not only set tactical and strategic objectives but it is also physically present in the *leadership* of the mass organizations through the process of incorporating the outstanding leaders who wish to become militants of the party. The mass party is present among, and in symbiosis with, the masses, seeing and absorbing their contradictions and achievements, where the figure of the "representative of the people" is doubly articulated with the party and with its specific bases. We must then ask ourselves whether - given a prolongation of imperialist pressure on Nicaraguan society - the first model, which could be represented in the form of a tree with the FSLN at the top and the mass organizations lower down, might not be more vulnerable than the second, which would allow direct horizontal contacts among the various social movements.[33]

As a final observation, it is possible that the Church, as a current and also as an organization rather than as a social movement standing "next to" all the others, should be seen as an articulator of social movements, to be found at the base of the movements as well as among various levels of the leadership. In this sense, the FSLN and Christianity could converge (or compete) in the task of consolidating and giving form to the subject of the new Nicaraguan society.

III. Epilogue: some theoretical questions arising out of revolutionary practice in Nicaragua

We have tried, in the introduction, to present a theoretical discussion of social movements based on developments in Europe. Then in the second part of the paper, we discussed the experience of the Nicaraguan revolution from this perspective and in doing so, we pointed to a number of limitations of the original conceptual framework, sometimes explicity and sometimes only implicity. In

what follows, we shall consider some of the theoretical issues
raised by the Nicaraguan revolution which theories of social
movements must take into account.

In the first place, the identities referred to in the concep-
tual framework cannot be viewed as 'attributes' which permit
us to classify (or organize) individuals into groups (social
movements). It is much more productive to think of them as
interpersonal or social *relations*. In addition, they must not
be seen as oppressed or alienated 'essences' that must be liber-
ated but rather as situations that are constantly transformed
by the revolutionary process. Moreover, these identities are not
given, either in an embryonic or in a fully developed form, in-
deed new identities can spring up and others disappear as a re-
sult of the process.

Just as a correct theoretical outlook must move towards a synthe-
sis and reconstruction of the object, which in this case means
that the concept to be determined is that of *people*, this move-
ment is incomplete unless it is coupled with the perception of
a complex subject, incorporating contradictions and brought to-
gether by an internal hegemonic system. The fact that the work-
ing classes make up a majority determines the class content of
this system, and the people emerge as *revolutionary subject*
through a complex network of organizations and institutions.
At the level of political practice, where the objective is not
to wipe out all forms of power but rather to ensure that social
power is exercized by the people, the movement towards synthesis
referred to earlier correlates with the process of articulation
of social movements in which the political parties have histori-
cally played a central role. In particular, in reflecting on the
process of achieving a correlation of power which would lead to
a break with the structures which subjugate the people, we must
reintroduce the role of the *revolutionary party*. Not only because
it articulates specific movements into a front of social forces
but also because in many cases, it is a product of these move-
ments and of the way in which they operate. And this is no less
true of situations that are as different from that of Nicaragua

as the European societies, where political parties have not been di-
vorced, either in the past or in the present, from the process of
creating and giving content to social movements.

In that sense, the people sees itself as a *historically deter-
mined category*, changing in line with the structural develop-
ment of society and with changing circumstances, which is not
to be reduced to a pre-determined class nor to a collection of
universally determined identities. And its internal structure
as a hegemonic system includes articulation between part(y)ies
and social movements and leaves no room for 'choosing' between
one or another form of collective action. The historicity and
the conjunctural character of the movements (and identities)
leave open the possibility that they might disappear, lose their
effectiveness, become rearticulated as a result of these same
processes of transformation. Should this be the case, it becomes
difficult to come to terms with the tendency that can be ob-
served in certain authors to predict (or indeed wish) that the
political party system will be replaced by the social movements.
Neither can we sustain the idea that the former might provide
a favourable and exclusive access to democracy or might have a
greater capacity for developing the people as a subject. It is
far more useful to think in terms of a hypothesis which would
posit that the presence of social movements on the political
scene is indicative of a genuine critique of the parties' abil-
ity to provide a channel for the expression of contradictory
social developments, and that their actions will, of necessity,
result in a transformation of this political system. In the con-
text of an authentic social revolution, in a society where the
civil sphere has another kind of density, these dialectical re-
lations can take other forms, also historically determined. We
begin to see this when we raise the issue of moving from a cadre
party to a mass party, as we move from a phase of organization
and accumulation of forces against the dominant regime to a phase
of building popular power in the presence of a revolutionary
government.

Finally as we have accepted that political parties must be incorporated into the analysis, we must examine in particular the *form of articulation* between parties and movements. Here, we find a 'verticalist' option which places the mass organizations in a subordinate position vis-a-vis the parties, even when they feed it ideas and information, and we have the option of a party which articulates the various identities and their corresponding popular organizations 'horizontally'.

The preceding discussion does not represent an attempt to innovate in the area of theories of social movements. However we have tried particularly to touch on certain aspects of the question that have not received the attention they deserve in recent forums. We also believe that Nicaragua is a unique laboratory that might allow us to test whether certain propositions - sometimes extrapolated from other societies to Latin America rather precipitously - have universal application, while still keeping in mind that this comparative analysis can also put into question the validity of certain academic views with regard to Europe itself.

NOTES

1. See the pioneering work of Manuel Castells and J. Lojkine on urban social movements and their 'explanation' on the basis of the concepts of reproduction of the labour force or of the general conditions of production.

2. To the point where we have asked ourselves during this Workshop whether *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru is a 'social movement'.

3. See: Ernesto Laclau, 'Socialisme et transformation des logiques hégémoniques', in C. Buci-Glucksmann (ed.), *La gauche, le pouvoir, le socialisme*, Paris, PUF, 1983; Chantal Mouffe, 'Socialisme, démocratie et nouveaux mouvements sociaux', in the same work; Laclau and Mouffe, 'Socialist Strategy - where next ?' in *Marxism Today*, January 1981; Bob Jessop, 'The Political Indeterminacy of Democracy', in A. Hunt, *Marxism and Democracy*. In fact this problematic of the social movements is closely related to the critique of 'real socialism' and of 'real democracy', as well as with the current which sees the struggle for democracy in Latin America as a popular, not necessarily a bourgeois, struggle.

4. See Humberto Ortega Saavedra, *Sobre la insurrección*, La Habana, Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1981. On the origins of the mass organizations associated with the FSLN before the triumph, see CIERA, *La Democracia participativa en Nicaragua*, Managua, May 1984. Certain organizations were under the FSLN's direct control, such as, in the trade union area, the Trade Union Movement of the Working People (MSPT), the Revolutionary Workers' Committees (COR), and the Committee for Workers' Struggle (CLT), all these in urban areas; then the Committee of Rural Workers organized initially in 1977 and which comprised workers, semiproletarians and small agricultural producers, later to become the Association of Rural Workers (ATC); on the student front, the Revolutionary Student Front, the Revolutionary Christian Movement, The Sandinista Revolutionary Youth, the Nicaraguan Revolutionary Youth, the School Students' Movement, the Association of Secondary School Students and the Managua Federation of Youth Movements; at the neighbourhood level, the FSLN called for the setting up of the Civil Defence Committees (CDC) which were to play a crucial role during the insurrection. Also in 1977 the Association of Women concerned with the National Problem (AMPRONAC), clearly directed by the FSLN, was created.

5. Humberto Ortega Saavedra, op.cit.

6. Ibidem, Passim.

7. See Maxine Molyneux, 'Mobilisation without Emancipation? Women's Interests, State and Revolution in Nicaragua',- the following chapter.

8. See *Nicaragua: la estrategia de la victoria*, Mexico, Ed. Nuestro Tiempo, 1980. See also Amalia Chamorro Z., *Algunos rasgos hegemónicos del Somocismo y la Revolución Sandinista*, Cuadernos de Pensamiento Propio, Serie Ensayos, 5, INIES/CRIES, Managua, June 1983.

9. On this question see José Luis Coraggio, *Revolución y Democra-cia en Nicaragua*, Cuadernos de Pensamiento Propio, Serie Ensayos, 7, INIES/CRIES, Managua, May 1984.

10. The Sandinista Defense Committees have performed such tasks as organizing the supply of rationed products or night watch duties. Originating in the CDC, they now have approximately 600,000 members and are both multi-class and non-partisan.

11. See Rosa Maria Torres, *De alfabetizando a maestro popular: la post-alfabetización en Nicaragua*, Cuadernos de Pensamiento Propio, Serie Ensayos, 4, INIES:CRIES, 1983.

12. See Charles Downs and Fernando Kusnetzoff, 'The changing role of local government in the Nicaraguan Revolution', mimeo, April 1982; also published in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol.6, no. 4, 1982, pp. 533-548.

13. The 1983 Law on Compulsory Military Service, had the result of socializing the task of national defence, breaking down the mechanisms which used to ensure that the Sandinista Popular Army was made up principally of people coming from the less well-off classes.

14. See *Estrategia de desarrollo agropecuario y reforma agraria*, MIDINRA, Managua, December 1982.

15. The most explicit forms which this phenomenon has taken are the almost 200 Cooperatives for Defence and Production, with almost 7,000 members, in the border areas.

16. See the statements by Daniel Nuñez in *Barricada*, official organ of the FSLN, on July 7th, 1984, and the announcement made at the second assembly of UNAG and published in *Barricada*, July 9th, 1984.

17. See Maxine Molyneux, op.cit.

18. See Ana Maria Ezcurra, *Agresión ideológica contra la Revolución Sandinista*, Mexico, Ediciones Nuevomar, 1983.

19. See '*Declaraciones de Principios de la Revolución Popular San-dinista sobre las comunidades indígenas de la Costa Atlántica*' which appears in CIERA, op.cit., p. 156.

20. For an objective report on this problem, see Trabil Nani, *History and Current Situation in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast*, CIDCA, April 1984. A summarized version is available in ENVIO, Year 3, No.36, Instituto Histórico Centroamericano, Managua, June 1984.

21. On November 21, 1979, the FSLN issued a communique ordering 'The immediate and complete suspension of all confiscations and interventions of residences, vehicles and rural and urban properties...' (See *Barricada* of that day). Through the Sandinista Workers' Central (CST) and the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), the FSLN impressed upon the population that it was necessary to maintian production, but in the face of the external aggression which was already looming, the Revolutionary Government had to resort to the Law on Social and Economic State of Emergency (Degree 812) of September 9th, 1981, which

penalized land invasions, the occupation of places of work and strikes. See *Leyes de la República de Nicaragua*, Ministerio de Justicia, Volume V, July-December 1981.

22. See the Law of Agrarian Reform (Decree 782 of August 10th, 1981 which was characterized as 'productivist' by critics of the extreme left. In *Leyes de la Republica*...op.cit.

23. The Law on Decapitalization (Decree 805 of August 28th, 1981 was going to allow workers to maintain a strict vigilance over the management of private capital in this area.

24. In fact the trade unions multiplied after the revolutionary triumph. From 133 trade unions with 27,000 members, numbers rose (by December 1983) to 1,103 trade unions with 207,391 members, of which approximately 80 percent accept the leadership of the FSLN. See CIERA, op.cit., p.45.

25. The 1983-84 harvest witnessed the mobilization of approximately 40,000 voluntary workers who joined in the coffee and cotton harvests, which constitutes a new identity of the Nicaraguan people. See CIERA, op.cit., pp. 64-65.

26. On the question of worker participation in management, see CIERA, op.cit., pp. 100-123.

27. The Governing Junta for National Reconstruction fixed the maximum rent at a level several times lower than what was normal for the best land (300 cordobas per manzana for production of export crops and 100 cordobas for products designed for the internal market). See decrees 230 and 263 of January 1980. *Leyes*...op.cit.. Moreover urban rents were reduced by a figure of up to 50 percent by Decree no. 216 of December 29th, 1979. While these levels have not been maintained as a result of the operation of market factors, the initial political-ideological effect has not been lost.

28. On the 'bourgeois question' in Nicaragua, see J.L. Coraggio, op.cit. One of the increasingly significant features of the relationship between the Revolutionary government and the bourgeoisie is that the government maintains a continuous dialogue with and responds to demands from specific fractions, but it does not regard the associations which claim to speak on behalf of the class as a whole as valid spokesmen.

29. With this aspect as with many others, it is impossible to crystallize a revolution in accordance with a projected 'model'. One of the results of the economic and military aggression of the Reagan Administration, coupled with the crisis of world markets, has been to lead the government to introduce a program of macroeconomic adjustments which tends to drastically reduce conspicuous and non-basic consumption, while the consumption of mass goods and salaries has been affected relatively less.

30. On the question of this identity which was forged during Sandino's struggle, see Sergio Ramirez, *El Pensamiento Vivo de Sandino*, San José, EDUCA, 1974, and Carlos Fonseca, *Obras*,

Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1982.

31. See the Law on Political Parties and the Electoral Law which
    were promulgated recently.

32. This is not always clear. In other countries, social movements
    organized around issues such as peace, human rights or natural
    resources transcend the level of specific demands and take
    on the role of critics of the course which humanity has taken.

33. In fact, recent developments seem to indicate that the need
    to strengthen the internal front and the very dynamics of
    the electoral process will have to move closer and closer
    to the mass party model, even though the term vanguard may
    remain.

    In a certain way, this implies a partial 'internalization'
    of the confrontation of identities and particular interests
    within the revolutionary party. We should not confuse the
    cadre/mass opposition with the vanguard character of *the
    party*. A mass party can perfectly well play a vanguard role
    in relation to the social forces within a conscious process
    of building a new society.

MOBILISATION WITHOUT EMANCIPATION ?
WOMEN'S INTERESTS, STATE AND REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA [1]

Maxine Molyneux

I. Introduction

The fall of Anastasio Somoza in July 1979 could not have been
achieved without the mass urban insurrections which brought the
capital, Managua, and other key cities under the increasing con-
trol of the revolutionary forces. This was the culmination of a
process of growing popular opposition which was characterised by
the incorporation of new sectors of the population into political
activity. One important component of these new sectors was women.

Along with youth and the unwaged poor, large numbers of women
from all social classes entered the realm of politics in the
1970s, many for the first time. Women's participation in the
Nicaraguan revolution was probably greater than in any other re-
cent revolution with the exception of Vietnam to which it is fre-
quently likened. They made up some 30% of the FSLN's combat
forces, and at its peak in 1979, the women's organisation of the
FSLN (AMPRONAC) had over 8000 members. Many more women who were
not involved in organised politics provided vital logistical
and back-up support to the revolutionary forces, while still
others gave their support silently by refusing to denounce their
revolutionary neighbours, or hiding a fleeing combatant.

The extent of women's participation in the struggle against
Somoza has been regarded as an obvious enough response to the
widespread repression and brutality of the regime on the one hand,
and the appeal of the FSLN's vision and strategy on the other.
In this conception women's participation is assumed to be no dif-
ferent than that of other groups and classes which were similarly
mobilised in the revolutionary upheaval. Indeed the universalising
character of the opposition to Somoza is frequently seen as the
key to its success, and Coraggio has suggested elsewhere in this

volume that political subjects lost their own specificity in
the generalised struggle against the regime.

This important observation should not, however, obscure the fact
that the universalisation of the goals of revolutionary subjects
does not necessarily entail a loss of specific identities, and
it is certainly doubtful whether this can be said to have happen-
ed in the case of women. For as far as women were concerned no
loss of their gender identities occurred, except perhaps where
they entered the front line of the *guerrilla* forces. Rather, re-
presentations of women acquired new connotations, ones which pol-
ticised the social roles which women were conventionally asso-
ciated with, but which did not dissolve them.

The participation of women in political activity was certainly
part of the wider process of popular mobilisation, but it was
entered into from a distinctive social position to men, one cru-
cially shaped by the sexual division of labour. Moreover, for
different classes and groups of women, the meaning of political
participation also differed, whether in the case of students,
young middle class women, or women in the *barrios*. For many poor
women, entry into political life began with the earthquake of
1972, when in the aftermath, the neighbourhood committees were
organised to care for the victims, feed the dispossessed and tend
the wounded. The anger which followed Somoza's misappropriation of
the relief funds intensified with the escalation of opposition
and of the brutal methods used to contain it. Many of these women
experienced their transition from relief workers to participants
in the struggle as a natural extension, albeit in combative form,
of their protective role in the family as providers and as mothers.
This transition to 'combative motherhood' was assisted by the pro-
paganda efforts of the Sandinistas and by AMPRONAC which linked
these more traditional identities to more general strategic objec-
tives, and celebrated the role of women in the creation of a more
just and humanitarian social order. The revolutionary appropriation
of the symbol of motherhood has been institutionalised in the
FSLN's canonisation of the 'Mothers of Martyrs', who remain an
active part of the Sandinista political base.

However, if the revolution did not demand the dissolution of
women's identities, it did require the subordination of their
specific interests to the broader goals of overthrowing Somoza
and establishing a new social order. This is the crux of the
matter and it lies at the heart of the debate about the relation-
ship between socialist revolution and women's participation.
For if women surrender their specific interests in the universal
struggle for a different society, then at what points are these
interests re-habilitated, legitimised and responded to by the
revolutionary forces or the new state ? Some feminists argue that
they are never adequately re-established and that socialism has
failed to fulfil its promise to emancipate women.[2] Such critics
point out that not only does gender inequality still persist in
these states but that in some ways women could be considered to
be worse off than they were before, under capitalism. Far from
having been 'emancipated' as the rhetoric sometimes claims, wom-
en's workload has been increased and there has been no substan-
tial re-definition of the relations between the sexes. To the
traditional roles of housewife and mother, have been added those
of full time wage worker and political activist, while the pro-
vision of child care agencies remains inadequate.[3]

The negative image of socialist states in this regard is rein-
forced by their failure to establish anything near sexual parity
in the organs of political power and by the absence of real pop-
ular democracy. The conventional explanations of these shortcom-
ings, at least in the poorer states, in terms of resource scar-
city, international pressure, underdevelopment, or the 'weight
of tradition' are greeted with increasing scepticism; a feminist
writer recently expressed the current consensus when she wrote
'... if a country can eliminate the tsetse fly, it can get an
equal number of men and women on its politburo'.[4]

This view of the record of socialist states had generated what
might be called a feminist version of the 'revolution betrayed'
thesis. It argues that the 'revolutionary equality' experienced
by men and women freedom fighters is replaced in the post-revo-
lutionary period by the status quo ante with men in the positions

of power. As the all-male leadership grows increasingly uncon-
cerned about advancing women's interests, it appears that women's
sacrifices in the struggle for a better society have been unre-
warded by those whom they helped to bring to power. Women, like
the working class, have been 'sold out', only in this case, not
by a 'new bureaucratic bourgeoisie', but by a more pervasive and
at the same time analytically elusive entity, 'the patriarchy'.

This paper examines the proposition that women's interests are
not served by socialist revolutions. It does so by examining how
women are affected by government policies in the aftermath of a
successful revolutionary seizure of power in which they partici-
pated on a mass scale. It considers a situation in which, in an
extreme version of the argument, it could be said that women's
interests are ignored or are even 'betrayed' by a socialist govern-
ment - in this case that of the FSLN in Nicaragua.
The first part of the paper considers some of the theoretical
questions which are raised by this debate; in the second, the
policies which the Sandinista state has adopted in relation to
women are described and interpreted in order to see whether it
is the case that women's interests are not represented within the
Sandinista state.

Women in Nicaragua have certainly not achieved full equality let
alone emancipation. But the argument set forth here takes issue
with the view that women's interests have simply been sold out
or that they are denied in the interests of 'patriarchy'.[5] Male
power, whether institutionalised or inter-personal, and the es-
sentialist or naturalist argument which legitimise it, do play
a part in the explanation of women's continuing subordination
after revolutionary upheavals; but the importance of these factors
should not be exaggerated. Nor should the achievements of these
revolutions be underestimated, or the real material constraints
that they have faced be left out of account. To recognise the
importance of such influences is not to provide an apologia for
their failings but to establish more realistic parameters for
comprehending the underlying and persistent causes of gender in-
equality.

The central concern of this discussion, which much of this debate ultimately depends upon, is that of 'women's interests'. Most feminist critiques of socialist regimes rest on an implicit or explicit assumption that there is a given entity, 'women's interests' which can be betrayed. However, this assumption must be problematised rather than simply taken for granted, for the question of these interests is far more complex than is frequently assumed. The problems of deploying any theory of interest in post-revolutionary situations are well known, so the following discussion must be considered as exploratory rather than conclusive, as opening up debate rather than attempting closure. This is all the more so since the Nicaraguan case affords no simple conclusions both because of the severe pressure it is under and because of the resulting unevenness of its record, especially in relation to women.

Most women have benefitted in some way from the substantial advances made by the Sandinistas in the area of social policy and welfare. All women have seen some improvement in their legal rights through the enforcement of the equal pay and labour laws and through reforms designed to tackle discrimination in the family.[6] Nonetheless despite these undeniable advances, it remains true that relatively little has been done to dismantle other mechanisms through which women's subordination per se is reproduced in the economy and in society in general, and men's privileges over women remain virtually unchallenged. Does this mean then, that women's interests have not, after all, been adequately represented within the Sandinista state ?

II. 'Women's Interests'

The political pertinence of the issue of whether states, revolutionary or otherwise, are successful in securing the interests of social groups and classes is generally considered to be two-fold. First, it is supposed to enable prediction or at least political calculation about a given government's capacity to maintain the support of the groups it claims to represent. Second, it is assumed that the nature of the state can be deduced from

the interests it is seen to be advancing.[7] Thus the proposition
that a state is a 'worker's state', a capitalist state, or even
a'patriarchal state' is commonly tested by investigating how a
particular class or group has fared under the government in
question.

However, when we try to deploy similar criteria in the case of
women a number of problems arise. If, for example, we conclude
that because the Sandinistas seem to have done relatively little
to remove the means by which gender subordination is reproduced,
that women's interests have not been represented in the state and
hence women will eventually turn against it, we are making a num-
ber of assumptions; that gender interests are the equivalent of
women's interests', that gender should be privileged as the prin-
cipal determinant of women's interests, and that women's subjec-
tivity, real or potential, is also structured uniquely through
gender effects. It is, by extension also supposed that women have
certain common interests by virtue of their gender, and that these
interests are primary for women. It follows then that trans-class
unity among women is to some degree given by this communality of
interests.[8]

Yet while it is true that at a certain level of abstraction women
can be said to have some interests in common, there is no con-
sensus over what these are or how they are to be formulated.
This is in part because there is no theoretically adequate and
universally applicable causal explanation of women's subordina-
tion from which a general account of women's interests can be
derived. Women's oppression is recognised as being multi-causal
in origin and mediated through a variety of different structures,
mechanisms and levels, which may vary considerably across space
and time. There is therefore considerable debate over the approp-
riate site of feminist struggle and over whether it is more im-
portant to focus attempts at change on objective or subjective
elements, 'men' or 'structures', laws, institutions or inter-
personal power relations - or all of them simultaneously. Since
a general conception of interests (one which has political va-
lidity) must be derived from a theory of how the subordination

of a determinate social category is secured, and supposes some
notion of structural determinacy, it is difficult to see how it
would overcome the two most salient and intractable features of
women's oppression - its multi-causal nature, and the extreme
variability of its forms of existence across class and nation.
These factors vitiate attempts to speak <u>without qualification</u>
of a unitary category 'women' with a set of already constituted
interests which are common to it. A theory of interests which
has an application to the debate about women's capacity to strug-
gle for, and benefit from, social change, must begin by recog-
nising differences rather than assuming homogeneity.

It is clear from the extensive feminist literature on women's
oppression that a number of different conceptions prevail of what
women's interests are, and that these in turn rest upon different
theories of the causes of gender inequality. For the purpose of
clarifying the issues discussed here, we propose to separate out
three conceptions of women's interests which are frequently con-
flated. These are 'women's interests', strategic gender interests
and practical gender interests.

1. <u>Women's interests</u>. Although present in much political and theor-
etical discourse, the concept of 'women's interests' is, for the
reasons given above, a highly contentious one. Since women are
positioned within their societies through a variety of different
means - among them class, ethnicity and gender - the interests
which they have as a group are similarly shaped in complex and
sometimes conflicting ways. It is therefore difficult, if not im-
possible to generalise about the interests of women. Instead we
need to specify how the various categories of women might be af-
 fected differently, and act differently on account of the par-
ticularities of their social positioning and their chosen iden-
tities. However this is not to deny that women generally have
certain interests in common. These can be called gender interests
to differentiate them from the false homogeneity imposed by the
notion of 'women's interests'.

2. Gender interests are those that women (or men for that matter)
may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender
attributes. Gender interests can be either strategic or practical,
each being derived in a differentway and each involving differing
implications for women's subjectivity. Strategic interests are
derived from the analysis of women's subordination and from the
formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrange-
ments to those which exist. These ethical and theoretical cri-
teria provided the basis for the formulation of strategic objec-
tives to overcome women's subordination, such as the abolition
of the sexual division of labour, the alleviation of the burden
of domestic labour and childcare, the removal of institutionalised
forms of discrimination, the establishment of political equality,
freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate
measures against male violence and control over women. These con-
stitute what might be called strategic gender interests, and are
the ones most frequently considered by feminists as women's 'real
interests'. The demands which are formulated on this basis are
usually termed 'feminist' as is the level of consciousness re-
quired to struggle effectively for them.[9]

3. Practical gender interests arise from the concrete conditions
of women's positioning by virtue of their gender within the divi-
sion of labour. In contrast to strategic gender interests these
are formulated by the women themselves who are within these po-
sitions rather than through external interventions. Practical
interests are usually a response to an immediate perceived need
and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women's
emancipation or gender equality. Analyses of female collective
action frequently deploy this conception of interests to explain
the dynamic and goals of women's participation in social action.

For example it has been argued that by virtue of their place with-
in the sexual division of labour as those primarily responsible
for their household's daily welfare, women have a special inter-
est in domestic provision and public welfare.[10] When governments
fail to provide these basic needs women withdraw their support;
when the livelihood of their families is threatened (especially

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that to their children) it is women who form the phalanxes of
bread rioters, demonstrators and petitioners. It is clear, how-
ever, from this example that gender and class are here closely
intertwined; it is, for obvious reasons, usually poor women who
are so readily mobilised by economic necessity. Practical inter-
ests, therefore, cannot be assumed to be innocent of class ef-
fects. These practical interests do not in themselves challenge
the prevailing forms of gender subordination, but they arise di-
rectly out of them. They are vital in understanding the capacity
or failure of states or organisations to win the loyalty and sup-
port of women.

This raises the question of the pertinence of these three forms
of interest for an understanding of women's consciousness. This
is a complex matter which cannot be entered into in detail here,
but three initial points can be made. First, the relationship be-
tween strategic gender interests and women's recognition of them
and desire to realise them, cannot be assumed. Even the 'lowest
common denominator' of interests which might seem uncontentious
and of universal applicability (eg. complete equality with men,
control over reproduction and greater personal autonomy and in-
dependence from men) - are not readily accepted by all women.
This is not just because of 'false consciousness' as is frequent-
ly supposed, although this can be a factor, but because such
changes realised in a piecemeal fashion could threaten the short
term practical interests of some women, or entail a cost in the
form of a loss of means of protection which is not then compensat-
ed for. Thus the formulation of strategic interests can only be
effective as a form of intervention when full account is taken
of these practical interests. Indeed it is the politicisation
of these practical interests and their transformation into stra-
tegic interests which contributes a central aspect of feminist
political practice.

Secondly, and following on from this, the way in which interests
are formulated will vary considerably across space and time and
may be shaped in different ways by prevailing political and dis-
cursive influences. This is important to bear in mind when con-

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sidering the problem of internationalism and cross cultural soli-
darity. And finally, since 'women's interests' are significantly
broader than gender interests, and are shaped to a considerable
degree by class factors, women's unity and cohesion on gender
issues cannot be assumed. While they can form the basis of unity
around a common programme, such unity has to be constructed -
it is never given. Moreover, it is always conditional, and will
almost invariably collapse under the pressure of acute class con-
flict. It is also threatened by differences of race, ethnicity
and nationality. It is therefore difficult to argue, as some fem-
inists have done, that gender issues are primary for women, at
all times.

This general problem of the conditionality of women's unity and
the fact that gender issues are not necessarily primary is nowhere
more clearly illustrated than by the example of revolutionary up-
heaval. In such situations, gender issues are frequently dis-
placed by class conflict, and this is principally because al-
though women may suffer discrimination on the basis of gender
and may be aware that they do, they nonetheless suffer different-
tially according to their social class. These differences cru-
cially affect attitudes towards revolutionary change, especially
if this is in the direction of socialism.
This does not mean that because gender interests are an insuf-
ficient basis for unity among women in the context of class pola-
risation, that they disappear. Rather, they become more specifi-
cally attached to, and defined by, social class.

These, then, are the different ways in which the question of
'women's interests' can be addressed. An awareness of the different
issues involved serves to guard against any simple treatment of
the question of whether a state is, or is not, acting in the in-
terests of women, ie. whether all or any of these interests are
represented within the state. Before any conclusions can be drawn
it is first necessary to specify in what sense the term interest
is being deployed. As suggested earlier, a state may gain the
support of women by staisfying either their immediate practical
demands or certain class interests - or both. It may do this

without advancing their strategic objective interests at all.
However, the claims of such a state to be supporting women's
emancipation could not be substantiated merely on the evidence
that it maintained women's support on the basis of representing
some of their more practical or class interests. With these dis-
tinctions in mind, we will turn now to the Nicaraguan revolution,
and consider how the Sandinistas have formulated women's inter-
ests, and how women have fared under their rule.

III. The Nicaraguan Revolution

The Nicaraguan revolution represents an extreme case of the prob-
lems of constructing a socialist society in the face of poverty
and underdevelopment, counter-revolution and external interven-
tion. It could therefore be seen as an exceptional case, and its
usefulness as an example consequently limited. Yet while the San-
dinistas face a particularly severe constellation of negative cir-
cumstances, most socialist revolutions have encountered diffi-
culties of a similar kind and even of degree. One has only to
think of encirclement and internal disruption by enemy forces
which the Bolsheviks faced after 1917, or the conditions of dire
scarcity prevailing in post revolutionary Mozambique, China or
South Yemen; or the blockade of poor nations such as Cuba, or
the devastation through war wreaked on Vietnam, to realise that
such conditions are more common than not in the attempts to build
socialist societies.

Yet the problems which Nicaragua shares with the states referred
to above, in matters of circumstance, does not imply that it be-
longs to the category of revolutions that these countries repre-
sent. They were, or became, for the most part avowedly communist
in their political ideology, and anti-capitalist in their econom-
ic practice, moving rapidly to place their main resources under
state control. Most too aligned themselves directly with the
Soviet Union or at least maintained a distance from the NATO block
of countries in their foreign affairs. All of them are one-party
states in which dissent is allowed little, if any, free expression.

By contrast, the forces which overthrew Anastasio Somoza in July of 1979 distinguished themselves by their commitment to a socialism based on the principles of mixed economy, non-alignment and political pluralism. An opposition was allowed to operate within certain clearly defined limits, and over 60% of the economy remained in private hands, despite the nationalisation of Somocista assets. 'Sandinismo' promised to produce a different kind of socialism, one that consolidated the revolutionary overthrow of the old regime but was more democratic, independent, and 'moderate' than many other third world socialisms had been. Through its triumph and its commitment to socialist pluralism, Nicaragua became a symbol of hope to socialists, not only in Latin America, but across the world. It was this, rather than its 'communism' which accounts for the ferocity and determination of the United State's efforts to bring the process to an end.

The Nicaraguan revolution also gave hope to those who supported women's liberation, for here too the Sandinistas seemed full of promise. The revolution occurred in the period after the upsurge of the 'new feminism' of the late sixties, at a time when Latin American women were mobilising around feminist demands in countries like Mexico, Peru and Brazil. The Sandinistas' awareness of the limitations of vulgar Marxism encouraged some to believe that a space would be allowed for the development of new social movements such as feminism. Members of the leadership seemed aware of the importance of women's liberation and of the need for it in Nicaragua. Unlike many of its counterparts elsewhere, the revolutionary organisation, the FSLN did not denounce feminism as a 'counter-revolutionary diversion', and some women officials had even gone on record expressing enthusiasm for its ideals.

In practical terms too, there was promise; the FSLN had shown itself capable of mobilising many thousands of women in support of its struggle. It had done this partly through AMPRONAC, and partly through the participation of women in ranks of the combat forces, epitomised in Dora Maria Tellez' role as 'Commander Two' in the seizure of the Presidential Palace by the guerrillas in 1978.

Once they were in power, these hopes were not disappointed. Only weeks after the triumph, article 30 of decree Number 48 banned the media's exploitation of women as sex objects, and women FSLN cadres found themselves in senior positions in the newly established state as Ministers, Vice-Ministers and regional co-ordinators of the Party. The scene seemed to be set fair for an imaginative and distinctive strategy for women's emancipation in Nicaragua.

But after the first few years in power the FSLN's image had lost some of its distinctive appeal. The combined pressures of economic scarcity, counter-revolution and military threat were taking their toll on the Sandinista experiment in economic and political pluralism, placing at risk the ideals it sought to defend. In the face of mounting pressure from US-backed counter-revolutionaries in 1982 a further casualty of these difficulties appeared to be the Sandinista commitment to the emancipation of women. As the crisis deepened in the following year and the country went onto a war footing the priority had to be the revolution's survival, with all efforts directed to military defence. Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the efforts to promote women's emancipation seem to have been scaled down. Yet, critics point out that even before the crises deepened little enough had been achieved to tangibly improve the position of women, and FSLN cadres themselves admit that progress in this area was limited. Can we therefore conclude that the revolution that Nicaraguan women fought and died for has sold them out ? And if this is so, will women now enter the ranks of the opposition and seek the overthrow of the revolutionary regime as their sisters did in Chile, in France in 1795 or in Spain towards the end of the Civil War ?[11]

IV. Sandinista Policy with Regard to Women

As a socialist organisation, the FSLN, both in and out of power has recognised women's oppression as something which must be overcome in the creation of a new society. It has given support to the principle of gender equality as part of its endorsement of the

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socialist ideal of social equality for all. The 1969 programme
of the Front promised that 'the Sandinista people's revolution
will abolish the odious discrimination that women have been sub-
jected to compared with men' (and) 'will establish economic, po-
litical and cultural equality between women and men'. This com-
mitment was enshrined a decade later within the *Estatuto Funda-*
mental', the embryonic Constitution which proclaimed 'the un-
conditional equality of all Nicaraguans without distinction of
race, nationality, creed, or sex'. It went further in pledging
the state to 'remove by all means available ... the obstacles
to achieve it'.. thus providing the juridical context for future
legislative and policy measures aimed at securing some of the
conditions enabling this equality to be achieved.

Most states have enshrined within their constitutions or equiva-
lents, some phrase which opposes discrimination on the grounds
of race, sex or creed. What distinguishes socialist states such
as Nicaragua is their recognition of the specificity of women's
oppression and their support for measures which combine a concern
to promote equality with a desire to remove some of the obstacles
to achieve it. Some of the strategic interests of women are there-
fore recognised and, in theory, are to be advanced as part of
the process of socialist transformation. In its essentials, the
FSLN's theoretical and practical approach to women's emancipation
bears some resemblance to that found in those state socialist
countries which espouse Marxist theory.[12] According to Sandinista
officials, women's emancipation can only be achieved with the
creation of a new society and with the further development of the
productive capacity of the economy. In the meantime, however,
measures can be taken to alleviate the considerable inequalities
between the sexes and begin the task of 'humanising life and im-
proving the quality and content of human relations'.[13]

Official views and party documents appear to be in line with the
principles of the classic socialist guidelines for the emancipa-
tion of women as formulated by the Bolsheviks and broadly adhered
to ever since by socialist states.[14] These stressed six main
goals: to encourage the entry of women into wage labour, socialise

domestic labour and childcare, provide juridical equality, great-
er protection for mothers and the family, and the mobilisation
of women into political activity and public administration. In
addition, the 1969 programme of the FSLN makes special mention
of eliminating prostitution and other 'social vices', helping
the abandoned working mother, and protecting the illegitimate
child. There is also concern to allow greater freedom of choice
to women in the matter of childbearing.

Although these goals are insufficient on their own to realise the
complete emancipation of women, based as they are on a somewhat
narrow definition of gender interests, they do nonetheless, em-
body some strategic interests. However, progress in achieving
them in Nicaragua has been uneven. There is official support for
the implementation of the full programme, but only some of the
guidelines have been translated into policy and then only with
limited effect. Some advances have been registered but it remains
true that the socialist programme for women's emancipation re-
mains largely unfulfilled. Employment opportunities in the formal
sector have been slightly expanded but remain restricted both in
number and scope; most Nicaraguan women continue to eke out a
living as petty commodity producers, small traders or house ser-
vants, remaining at the bottom of the income structure. The so-
cialisation of childcare and domestic labour has affected only
a minority of women

The embryonic Family Law, the *Ley de Alimentos* passed at the end
of 1982, which aimed to establish a more democratic, egalitarian
and mutually responsible family, has not been widely implemented,
and public discussion of the issues it raises all but ceased in
1983. So far, the greatest benefits that women have received are
from the welfare programmes, and from certain areas of legal re-
form. They have also felt the impact of change in the realm of
political mobilisation in which they play an active part. Des-
pite these advances it is evident that the gap between intention
and realisation is considerable. The question is why ?

There are three kinds of explanation which must be given their
due weight in any assessment of this record. The first concerns

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the practical limitations, which have restricted the state's ca-
pacity for social transformation; the second is to do with fac-
tors of a general political kind, and the third concerns the na-
ture of the policies themselves and the way in which the Sandi-
nista's commitment to women's emancipation is formulated. All of
these have to be taken into account when assessing the position
of women in post revolutionary Nicaragua, for they help to ex-
plain why the social policy initiatives of the Sandinistas to
improve the position of women have been diluted, and why the
government has on occasion adopted different priorities, some-
times ones which are at variance with the goal of emancipating
women.

1. The problems of material scarcity in an underdeveloped economy,
or the tolls of military threat do not require extensive discus-
sion here. Details can be found elsewhere of the parlous state
of the Nicaraguan economy, the ravages of war and natural disas-
ters, the effects of the *contras* and US pressure, and the size
of the external debt.[15] What is most striking in all of this
was the government's success in sheilding the population from
the effects of these difficulties throughout 1982 and much of
1983. However, the combined effects of material scarcity and the
destabilisation efforts of internal and external forces have lim-
ited the available resources which have to satisfy the military
requirements of the state, as well as invest in long-term econom-
ic programmes, meet short-term consumer needs and the popular
expectation to expand social services. It is not difficult to
see how these factors reduce the scope of planning objectives,
channelling scarce resources of both a financial and technical
kind, as well as human potential,away from social programmes in-
to national defence and economic development.

If these two factors, scarcity and threat, explain the restric-
tions placed on the funding available for such projects as build-
ing and staffing nurseries, and expanding female employment, they
also go some way towards explaining why the emancipation of women,
except within a rather narrow interpretation of the term is not
considered a priority in Nicaragua today.

2. Even where the resource base exists, the government still faces
problems of implementation in the form of political opposition
to some of the proposed reforms. Contemporary Nicaragua is a clear
illustration of the truism that the acquisition of state power
does not confer on governments absolute power either in formula-
tion or implementation of policies even when they might have
widespread popular support. The overthrow of Salvador Allende in
1973 was a dramatic demonstration of the ever-present threat of
counter-revolution and of the diversity of sites within the state
and civil society through which it can be organised.

The Sandinistas were in a stronger position internally than the
government of Popular Unity in Chile even if they faced a more
determined threat from the USA and its allies in the region. They
dismantled Somoza's repressive apparatus replacing it with their
own military and police forces, and established control over a
number of state and government institutions. In the four years
since the fall of Somoza, the revolutionary government has also
succeeded in consolidating its power base through the establish-
ment of the 'mass organisations', the popular defence committees,
the militia and the revolutionary party, the FSLN. Moreover, the
opposition, both civilian and military has been unable to offer
a credible alternative, in part because of its links to the
United States and with the Somocistas.

Despite the strategic and political advantages which accrue to
the Sandinistas as a result of these transformations of the state
and of its institutions they have not entailed the elimination
of the opposition and nor have they sought to achieve this. The
Constitutional commitment to the principles of economic and po-
litical pluralism have allowed a space, albeit a restricted one,
from which oppositional forces can operate.
The FSLN has attempted to maintain, as far as the situation per-
mits, a broad multi-class base of support. It has tried to win
over a sector of the capitalist class, and on the whole it has
sought to maintain a conciliatory attitude towards its opponents,
sometimes in the face of considerable provocation. The opposition
therefore has the right to make its views heard and can organise

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to protect its interests, providing these do not jeopardise the government's overall survival or place the interests of the majority at risk.

The commitment to allow dissent, and opposition parties and press, represents an important principle of socialist democracy. Too many socialist countries have interpreted socialism as merely the socialisation of the economy and have failed to implement the other side of the equation - the democratisation of political power. But in this, the Sandinistas have at least tried harder than most. However, as with most attempts at compromise, there is a price; the commitment to 'pluralism' and to maintaining the support or at least neutrality of the capitalist class has as one of its necessary effects the imposition of certain limits on the transformative capacity of the state in some areas of policy. This is especially clear with regard to the government's programme to improve the position of women.

The maintenance of a sizeable private sector (78% of industry, 60% of commerce, 76% of agriculture) and the granting of a measure of autonomy to it, allows some employers, especially in the smaller non-unionised enterprises, to evade legislation designed to protect and improve the working conditions of women, as well as to pursue discriminatory employment policies. There are many other examples of this kind. But the most powerful ideological force and that which offers the most sustained resistence to Sandinista reforms is the conservative Catholic church. Its extensive institutional presence, forms of organisation, access to the media (it has its own radio station), and base within a substantial section of the population, make it a formidable opponent. Its impact on slowing reform in the areas directly concerned with women, has already been considerable. Conservative clergy have actively opposed educational reforms, enforced bans on weekend work (which made it difficult for voluntary labour schemes to achieve much) opposed the conscription of women and are strong advocates of traditional family life and the division of labour which characterises it. The conservative church has also urged adherence to the papal encyclical which states that it is sinful

to employ 'unnatural' methods of birth control, and has opposed
the legalisation of abortion, forcing thousands of women into
the hands of back street practitioners.[16]

What is therefore a positive feature of the Sandinista revolution,
its democratic commitment, does have the effect of diluting pol-
icy measures and weakening the government's capacity for imple-
mentation. It is therefore erroneous to imagine that just because
the state has a coherent set of policies and a unifying ideology,
that it has the capacity to be fully effective in social policy
terms. It should be clear that the most obvious solution is a
problematic one: the subjugation of the opposition, and the
strengthening of the state.

3. This is where it becomes relevant to discuss the third factor
which accounts for the limited achievements of the Sandinista
record on women- that of their conception of the place of women's
emancipation within the overall context of their priorities. It
is clear that the FSLN have been able to implement only those
parts of the programme for women's emancipation that coincide
with their general goals, enjoy popular support, and are realisa-
ble without arousing strong opposition. The policies from which
women have derived some benefit have been pursued principally be-
cause they have fulfilled some wider goal or goals, whether these
are social welfare, development, social equality, or political
mobilisation in defence of the revolution. This is, in effect,
what the Sandinistas mean by the need to locate women's emanci-
pation within the overall struggle for social reform, and latter-
ly of survival against intensifying external pressure.

This kind of qualified support for women's emancipation is found
in most of the states which pursue socialist development policies.
Indeed the guidelines which form the basis of their programme for
women's emancipation (discussed earlier) all have universalistic
as well as particularistic goals, in which the former is the jus-
tification for the latter. Thus, women's emancipation is not just
dependent on the realisation of the wider goals but is pursued
insofar as it contributes to the realisation of those goals. There
is therefore a unity of purpose between the goals of women's eman-

cipation and the developmental and social goals of revolutionary states.

Revolutionary governments tend to see the importance of reforming the position of women in the first period of social and economic transformation in terms of helping to accomplish at least three goals: to extend the base of the government's political support; to increase the size or quality of the active labour force; and to help harness the family more securely to the process of social reproduction. The first aim, to expand or maintain the power base of the state is pursued by attempting to draw women into the new political organisations such as the women's youth and labour unions, the party, and neighbourhood associations. There is a frequently expressed fear that unless women are politicised they may not co-operate with the process of social transformation. Women are seen as potentially and actually more conservative than men by virtue of their place within the social division of labour. More positively they are also regarded as crucial agents of rev-olutionary change whose radicalisation challenges ancient customs and privileges within the family, and has important effects on the next generation, through the impact on their children. The political mobilisation of women supposes some attempt to persuade them that their interests as well as more universal concerns (na-tional, humanitarian, etc.) are represented by the state.[17]

The second way in which the mobilisation of women is regarded as a necessary part of the overall strategy is more directly relevant to the economy. The education of women and their entry into em-ployment increases and improves the available labour supply, which is a necessary concomitant of any successful development programme. In most underdeveloped countries women form only a small percent-age of the economically active population (usually less than 20%) and while the figures tend to conceal the real extent of women's involvement by registering mainly formal rather than informal activities, the work they do is frequently unpaid and under-pro-ductive, confined to family concerns in workshops or in the fields, and subject to the authority of male kin. Government policies have therefore emphasised the need for both education and a re-struc-

turing of employment to make better use of the work capacities
of the female population.

The third aim is to bring the family more into line with planning
objectives and to place it at the centre of initiatives aimed at
social reconstruction. Post-revolutionary governments regard
women as key levers in harnessing the family more securely to
state goals - whether these be of an economic or an ideological
kind. The pre-revolutionary family has to be restructured to make
it more compatible with the developmental goals of revolutionary
governments. Once this has been accomplished, the reformed family
is expected to function as an important agent of socialisation
inculcating the new revolutionary values into the next generation.
Women are seen as crucial in both of these processes.

Although these considerations are shared by most socialist states,
the peculiar circumstances of Nicaragua's transition have deter-
mined the relative emphasis placed on these policy objectives,
and have shaped the state's capacity to implement them for the
reasons described earlier. For example, in Nicaragua there is no
absolute shortage of labour, so there is as yet no urgent require-
ment for women to enter employment. Initially women were called
upon to supply a considerable amount of voluntary labour as health
workers and teachers in the popular campaigns (health in 1981,
literacy in 1982). But there is no strong incentive to provide
widespread nursery care while the economy does not depend upon
a mass influx of female labour, and since most women work in the
informal sector, it is assumed that a substantial percentage of
these jobs are compatible with their domestic responsibilities.
This situation might be expected to change if there is a signi-
ficant escalation of military activities necessitating the in-
flux of women into jobs vacated by men serving in the armed
forces.

As noted earlier, the emphasis of the government has been on two
other strategies, that of political mobilisation and legal reform.
These are the areas in which the greatest advances have been re-
gistered in relation to achieving policy objectives which concern
women as such. Yet more women have benefitted, in overall terms,

from the implementation of measures designed to secure general objectives. Chief among these is welfare.

A detailed analysis of the impact of Sandinista social policies is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we will briefly summarise some of the main conclusions in relation to the issues raised earlier by considering the effects of the reforms in terms of the three categories of interest referred to earlier.

1. If we disaggregate 'women's interests' and consider how different categories of women have fared since 1979, it is clear that the majority of women in Nicaragua have been positively affected by the government's redistribution policies. This is even so though fundamental structures of gender inequality have not been dismantled. In keeping with the socialist character of the government, policies are targetted in favour of the poorest sections of the population and have focussed on basic needs provision in the areas of health, housing, education and food subsidies. These policies have been of vital importance in gaining the support of poor women. According to government statistics women form over 60% of the poorest Nicaraguans; in the poorest category in Managua, (incomes less than 600 cordobas per month) there are 354 women for each 100 men. Similarly rural women in the deprived groups have benefitted from the land reform programme.[18] It is these women, by virtue of their <u>class</u> position who have been the direct beneficiaries of Sandinista redistributive efforts, as have their male counterparts. But by the same token, it is obvious that not all women are to benefit from these programmes; women whose economic interests lay in areas adversely affected by Sandinista economic policies (imports, luxury goods etc.) will have suffered some financial loss, as have most women from the privileged classes in terms of higher taxation.

2. In terms of <u>practical</u> gender interests, (category three on the previous listing) these redistributive policies have also had gender as well as class effects. By virtue of their place within the sexual division of labour, women are disproportionately responsible for childcare and family health, and they are particularly concerned with housing and food provision. The policy measures

directed at alleviating the situation in these areas has, not surprisingly, elicited a positive response from the women affected by them as borne out by the available research into the popularity of the government. Many of the campaigns mounted by the women's union, AMNLAE, have been directed at resolving some of the practical problems women face, as is exemplified by their mother and child healthcare programme, or by their campaign aimed at encouraging women to conserve domestic resources to make the family income stretch further and thus avoid pressure building up over wage demands or shortages.[19] A feature of this kind of campaign is its recognition of women's practical interests, but in accepting the division of labour and women's subordination within it, it may entail a denial of their strategic interests.

3. With respect to strategic interests, the acid test, so to speak of whether women's emancipation is on the political agenda or not, significant if modest, progress has been made. The land reform has encouraged women's participation and leadership of co-operatives, and has given women wages for their work as well as their own titles to land. Legal reform, especially in the area of the family, has confronted the issue of relations between the sexes and of male priviliege, by attempting to end a situation in which most men are able to evade responsibility for the welfare of their families, and become liable for a contribution paid in cash, in kind or in the form of services. This has also enabled the issue of domestic labour to be politicised in the discussions of the need to share this work equally amongst all members of the family. There has also been an effort to establish childcare agencies such as nurseries, pre-school services and the like. Some attempts have been made to challenge female stereotypes not just through outlawing the exploitation of women in the media, but also by promoting some women to positions of responsibility and emphasising the importance of women in the militia and reserve battalions. And finally there has been a sustained effort to mobilise women around their own interests through the women's union, and there has been discussion of some of the questions of strategic interest, although this has been sporadic and controversial.

To sum up, we can see that it is difficult to discuss socialist
revolutions in terms of an undifferentiated conception of women's
interests and even more difficult to conclude that these interests
have been 'sold out' in order to maintain women in a subordinate
position to men. The Sandinista record on women is certainly un-
even, and it is as yet too early to make any final assessment
of it, especially while it confronts increasing political, eco-
nomic and military pressures. Nonetheless, it is clear that the
Sandinistas have gone further than most Latin American governments
in recognising both the strategic and practical interests of women
and have brought about substantial improvements in the lives of
many of the most deprived. When AMNLAE states that its priority
is defence of the revolution because the latter provides the
necessary condition for realising a programme for women's emanci-
pation - it is, with certain qualifications, correct.

Yet these qualifications are important nonetheless, and have a
wider significance than the Sandinista revolution as they go to
the heart of the relationship between socialism and feminism.
Three of these can be listed here in summary form:

The first is that strategic gender interests, although recognised
in the official theory and programme of women's emancipation, are
only narrowly defined, based as they are on the privileging of
economic criteria. Feminist theories of sexual oppression, or the
critique of the family or of male power have had little impact on
official thinking, and indeed are sometimes suppressed as being
too radical and too threatening to popular solidarity. There is
a need for greater discussion and debate around these questions
both among the people and within the organs of political power,
so that the issue remains alive and open, rather than entombed
within official doctrine.

The second issue concerns the relationship which is established
by planners between the goal of women's emancipation and other
goals such as economic development which have priority. It is
not the linkage itself which constitutes the problem - principles
like social equality and women's emancipation can only be realised
within determinate conditions of existence. So linking the pro-

gramme for women's emancipation to these wider goals need not necessarily be a cause for concern since these wider goals may constitute the pre-conditions for realising the principles. The question is rather, the nature of the link; are gender interests merely articulated into a wider strategy of economic development (for example) or are they irretrievably subordinated to it ? In the first case we would expect gender interests to be recognised as being specific and irreducible, and requiring something more for their realisation than is generally provided for in the pursuit of the wider goals. Thus when it is not possible to pursue a full programme for women's emancipation, this is explained and debated. The goal is left on the agenda, and every effort is made to pursue it within the existing constraints. In the latter case, the specificity of gender interests is likely to be denied or its overall importance minimised. The issues are trivialised or buried, the programme for women's emancipation remains one conceived in terms of how functional it is for achieving the wider goals of the state. It is difficult to say how these issues will be resolved in Nicaragua in the longer run. For the moment, and under intense pressure there is always a danger that the pattern which has emerged elsewhere in the socialist bloc of countries could be reproduced there, ie. subordination rather than linkage or articulation has occurred.

And this raises the third general problem, which is that of political guarantees. For if gender interests are to be realised only within the context of wider considerations, it is essential that the political institutions charged with representing these interests have the means to prevent their being submerged altogether, and action on them being indefinitely postponed. In other words the issue of gender interests and their means of representation cannot be resolved in the absence of a discussion of the form of state appropriate to the transition to socialism; it is a question therefore not just of what interests are represented in the state, but how they are represented.

NOTES

1. This paper is a condensed version of a more extensive study of Sandinista policies. It is based on research carried out in Nicaragua with the help of the Nuffield Foundation. It is part of an on-going project on state policy, women and the family in post-revolutionary societies and complements research already carried out in South Yemen, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Cuba and the USSR.

2. The term 'socialist' is used here for the sake of brevity. In relation to most of these states, some qualification is required along the lines suggested by Rudolf Bahro ('actually existing socialism'), for the reasons he advanced in his book *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*. Others have not reached the level of economic socialisation that qualifies them for inclusion in this category.

3. See for example the attitudes of women to this in C. Hansson and K. Liden's book of interviews, *Moscow Women*, Pantheon, 1983.

4. Quoted in C. MacKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An agenda for theory', *Signs*, Spring 1982.

5. There are differing definitions of patriarchy but most of them agree that it describes a power relation existing between the sexes, exercised by men over women and institutionalised within various social relations and practices among which can be instanced the law, the family, and education.

6. There are still inequalities in both the theory and practice of the law, for example, in divorce, where it is easier for women to be divorced for adultery than men.

7. There is a third usage of the term 'interest' found in Marxism which explains collective action in terms of some intrinsic property of the actors and/or the relations within which they are inscribed. Thus class struggle is ultimately explained as an effect of the relations of production. This conception has been shown to rest on essentialist assumptions and provides an inadequate account of social action. For a critique of this notion see E. Benton, 'Realism, Power, and Objective Interests' in K. Graham (ed.) *New Perspectives in Political Philosophy*, Cambridge 1982: and B. Hindess, 'Power, Interest and the Outcome of Struggles', *Sociology*, Vol 16 (4), 1982.

8. The current work of Zillah Eisenstein, editor of *Capitalist Patriarchy*, is a good example: she has recently produced a sophisticated version of the argument that women constitute a 'sexual class' and that for women, gender issues are primary.

9. It is precisely around these issues, which also have an ethical significance, that the theoretical and political debate must focus. The list of strategic gender interests noted here is not exhaustive but is merely exemplary. This question is discussed further and more fully in a forthcoming paper.

10. See for example Temma Kaplan, 'Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The case of Barcelona 1910-1918', *Signs*, Spring 1982; and Olwen Hufton, 'Women in Revolution 1789-1796', *Past and Present*, no. 53, 1971.

11. The issues around which women mobilise and their role in social change and revolutions is an underdeveloped area of research. Huften's work (op.cit.) is one of the few examples which documents women's initial support for and participation in the French revolution and explains why they turned against it.

12. For a fuller discussion of socialist policies with regard to women and the family see my 'Women's Emancipation Under Socialism: A model for the third world ?', in *World Development*, Vol 9, Nos 9/10, 1981. Also published in *Monthly Review*, July 1982, and in M. Leon, (ed.) *Sociedad, Subordinación y Feminismo*, ACEP, Colombia, 1982.

13. Speech by Thomas Borge on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of AMNLAE in September 1982.

14. These guidelines were passed as resolutions at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1921. For more details see B. Woolf Jancar, *Women Under Communism*, John Hopkins, Baltimore, 1978.

15. See, for example, J. Petras, 'Nicaragua: The Transition to a new Society', *Latin American Perspectives*, No. 29, Spring 1981, Vol. 8, No. 2.

16. In 1981 one Managua hospital was admitting an average of twelve women a day as a result of illegal abortions. The main maternity hospital there records four to five admissions weekly of women following abortions. In press reports in 1982 the number of abortions was said to be rising. Quoted in Deighton et al, *Sweet Ramparts*, 1983.

17. This has to be compared and contrasted with many nationalist movements which call for the sacrifice of women's interests (and those of other oppressed groups) in the interests of the nation.

18. Data from the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, December 1981.

19. AMNLAE argues that the implications of women conserving resources under a socialist government are radically different to those under capitalism because the beneficiaries are the people in the first case and private interests in the second.

POPULAR MOVEMENT TO 'MASS ORGANIZATION':
THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
OF GRENADA (NWO) 1979-1983[1]

Rhoda Reddock

I. Introduction

For those of us who were following with interest or actively in-
volved in the revolutionary process which was taking place in
Grenada before and after March 13th 1979, the events of October
1983 have been a shock from which some of us may never recover.
For those of us who do recover or do so even partially the task
before us is great. Our task is to, scientifically and compassion-
ately analyse the events of Grenada's recent history in order
that we and others after us may learn from these tragic events.

This paper was originally written as contemporary analysis of an
ongoing process. It was aimed not only at documenting and critic-
ally analysing facts but also at contributing to the debates and
discussions taking place within the NWO in particular and Grenada
and the wider Caribbean in general at the time. Now it has become
history. But as historical analysis it is not enough. To qualify
as historical analysis attempts will have to be made to use infor-
mation of a much more basic level, through the analysis of in-
ternal documents, correspondence and if possible oral history
interviews.

Recent discussions on the 'new social movements' in various Third
World countries have stressed the bases for organisation and strug-
gle within a wide range of oppressed and exploited groups in these
societies in addition to the working class. Included among these
groups are the bourgeoning women's movement, the urban (*barrios*)
and rural community groups, the unemployed and groups of petty
producers and traders, (the so-called informal sector).

The importance of these groups for political action has been receiving attention from political organisations and activists and now from scholars. A similar but different development could have been said to have characterised the New Left movements in Europe and North America in the late 1960s and early 1970s as numerous small groupings such as the civil rights movement, the peace movement and the women's movement in the USA challenged the overriding organisational legitimacy of the traditional left parties, in particular the Communist parties.

The rise and consolidation of right-wing forces internationally at the end of the 1970s once more however questioned this 'fragmentation' of the progressive political movement. One good discussion of this was *Beyond the Fragments* by Rowbotham, Wainwright and Segal (1980). This book was both a plea for the autonomy of organisation for the various groups struggling against their particular form of oppression (which might sometimes appear contradictory) as well as a call for greater unity of all such groups against the growing power and organisational cohesiveness of conservatism.

In this circuitous manner we now come to the question which is of relevance to this paper and within which may be found some clue, some starting point for the analysis of the events in Grenada – the relationship of social movements to the state. It is clear that the majority of social movements do challenge or at least seek to influence the existing state machinery. In some instances as in Grenada, such movements can come together under or within a broader revolutionary organisation or party in an attempt to surpass the existing oppressive state and work out an alternative. The question which necessarily follows this one however is whether such an attempt if successful of necessity negates the possibility for its continuation as a real social movement. In other words, how can such movements become part of a revolutionary process and yet retain their autonomy and dynamism. This is of particular importance at this time when the growing strength of right-wing forces internationally requires a much greater challenge than atomised individual movements can offer.

It is within this context that this study could be examined at
this time. To the very end, putting aside for the present personal
contradictions, the relationship between 'the people' and 'the
party' was a major point of discussion, debate and struggle. Maybe
the fact that on October 19th 1983 up to 30,000 of the Grenadian
people (one-third of the population) including large numbers of
women and school girls and boys took to the streets to make their
contribution to the debate and struggle taking place within the
party is a good starting point for another paper. But here we
simply recount the past. The following analysis was written in
early 1983.

II. Grenada: The general context

Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique form a small Caribbean
island - state comprising 133 square miles and situated in the
south of the Windward Islands, 80 miles north of Trinidad and
Tobago with a population of 109, 200 in 1980. It is an indepen-
dent country, formerly a British colony until 1974. On March 13th,
1979, Grenada experienced a revolutionary change when its former
leader 'Sir' Eric Gairy was overthrown. The economy has been pri-
marily based on agricultural production including forestry and
fishing which contributes thirty percent to the Gross Domestic
Product. Its main exports in 1980 were cocoa - 40%, nutmeg -
19%, bananas - 24% and mace (a by-product of nutmeg) - 4%.
The main export trading destinations are all in Western Europe
with 43% going to the United Kingdom, 9% to the Netherlands, 9%
to Germany and 15% to Belgium in 1980. The other major industry
is Tourism. At present there are 18 hotels and 6 guest houses;
in addition Grenada is regularly visited by cruise ships with
short stay visitors.

The population is relatively young with 47% under 15 years of
age; it is predominantly of African origin (84%) with a small
percentage of Indians (3%) and still smaller numbers of Europeans
and other ethnic groups. According to the 1970 Census, 33.4% of
the population was employed in agriculture; 8.0% in manufacturing;
2.6% in Commerce; 16.1% in Construction and Installation; 8% in

Electricity Gas, Water and Sanitary services; 5.1% in transport, storage and communications; and 22.5% in services. In 1970 there was an official unemployment rate of 20% composed primarily of young people and women. Mass migration of Grenadians to neighbouring islands, the United Kingdom and the United States was one way in which this problem was dealt with prior to the revolution, so much so that it is estimated that an equivalent number of Grenadians as those presently on the island are to be found abroad.

For years the people of Grenada had suffered under the tyrannical rule of Gairy supported by his armed 'thugs' the mongoose gang and the 'Green Beasts'. Gairy like many post-World War II Caribbean nationalist leaders, had developed his base as a trade-unionist in this case through the formation of the Grenadian, Mental and Manual Workers Unions in 1950. His initial support therefore had been among the depressed agricultural proletariat. But their situation in March 1979 showed that they had gained little in return. Unlike the case of Nicaragua no protracted armed struggle had been waged but for years the people had been organizing and struggling to change their situation. For example in December 1970 the famous nurses strike took place where thousands of nurses and their supporters marched through St. Georges and occupied the office of the Ministry of Health. This was followed by protest demonstrations of farmers directed against the official incorporation of the banana and nutmeg co-operative associations under essentially corrupt Government control. These events took place within the framework of the 'black power' upheavals during the late 1960s and early '70s in The Caribbean.

In 1972 an organisation known as Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education and Liberation (JEWEL) was formed in the south-east of the country comprising among its members Selwyn Strachan and Unison Whiteman, some teachers, peasants and youth.[2] They were engaged mainly in community activities; for example a farming cooperative and they published a newsheet called The Jewel. Six months later, that same year, another organisation was formed. This was known as The Movement for Assemblies of the People (MAP) and was based in the more urban, St. George's area; it comprised

mainly professionals, for example lawyers, Kenneth Radix and
Maurice Bishop. Within six months of the latter's formation, The
New Jewel Movement (NJM) was formed through a merger of the two
organisations.[3] From that period on the NJM provided leadership
for the Grenadian people in their struggle against Gairy, gaining
considerable support from among the youth (who were the main
groups being harassed and terrorised by the police and secret
police), in other areas of the population in all communities and
to a lesser extent in the workplaces. But the tyrannical activi-
ties of Gairy and the lack of improvement in the day-to-day living
conditions of the people also served to broaden the opposition
to his government.

As far as the stated political programme of the NJM was concerned,
the 1973 Political Manifesto outlined that a future NJM government
would be based on 'peoples assemblies' including village assem-
blies of all adult citizens and workers' assemblies of all those
who worked for a living. The village and workers' assemblies would
elect a national assembly, which would serve as the government .[4]
During the struggles which ensued, various people were killed,
and NJM members were beaten, arrested and jailed in 1973. A suc-
cessful general strike was called in January 1974. Later that same
month on the 21st of January, in an army and mongoose gang attack
on a 6,000 strong demonstration Rupert Bishop, father of Maurice
Bishop, was killed. This general strike preceded the granting of
independence to Grenada by Britain under the leadership of the
corrupt Eric Gairy, and to a large extent this was the focus of
a great deal of protest activity.

In 1976 General Elections were called and the NJM participated
in an alliance with the opposition Grenada National Party (GNP)
and the rigth-wing United Peoples Party (UPP) led by Winston
Whyte. After the very corrupt election the People's Alliance of
these three opposition parties won six of the fifteen seats in
the National Assembly. The NJM won three, the GNP two and UPP
one. An analysis of the elections however (Caribbean Contact,
August 1979) showed that had it not been for electoral corruption
the chances of a Gairyite victory would have been extremely slim.

After this the NJM continued its work outside of parliament, assisted by the fact that sessions were seldom called. It began to organise bank workers through the Bank and General Workers Union, and to reach other workers in the Grenada, Mental and Manual Workers Union (GMMWU) and the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU). During this entire period, police repression continued with attacks on ordinary citizens, including the rape of women and violence towards NJM activists and supporters.

The eventual seizure of power on March 13th, 1979, was the culmination of all of these developments. On Saturday March 10th word was received that Gairy had left instructions that six of the leading members were to be detained in six specially prepared dungeons. He was leaving for New York on March 12th. Later they were informed that further instructions had been left for them to be killed while he was out of the country. At that point the decision was taken to take political power. This was done when about forty-six NJM members of the incipient Peoples Revolutionary Army (PRA) attacked the Government army barracks at True Blue. The army, surprised, quickly surrendered, only one army commander being killed. The local radio station was then taken without a fight and a broadcast was made calling on the people to 'rise up against the Gairy regime'.[5] After this top government ministers and 'henchmen' were arrested. There was general public support because of the work carried out by the NJM over the years, and the broad alienation of the local middle-classes and bourgeoisie. However, some solid Gairyite support, in particular among rural agricultural workers and the peasantry continued to exist.

III. A Socio-Economic Note on Women in Grenada

In Grenada as in all other Caribbean countries, the majority of women have come out of a tradition of labour under slavery and indentureship and of resistance to these. In particular for working class and farmer women their lifestyle reflects the independence and strength characteristic of this region. Among middle-class women, however, the absorption within the Western European feminine model of the weak, dependent housewife has been greater.

For the majority of Grenadian women a major problem has been the
maintenance of their and their children's existence as independent
income-earners in a society where colonial/capitalist ideology
has deemed them housewives.

M.G. Smith writing on the family structure of Grenada in 1962,
found that legal marriage was only one of the three main forms
of domestic organisation, the others being what he and other func-
tionalist sociologists termed consensual unions and 'visiting
unions'. In addition, it was found that a household usually in-
cluded brothers and sisters and their children, and/or parents
and other relatives (Smith 1962:107). In other words, the nuclear
family with the male breadwinner, dependent housewife and their
children was not the norm. More recent sociological data are not
presently available but based on personal experience, it would
seem that this situation has changed little.

In 1975 the OAS-CEPCIES report noted that while female work rates
in Grenada were higher than the average for the rest of the Eng-
lish-speaking Caribbean, unemployment rates for women were con-

Table I. Unemployment by Age Groups and Sex-Grenada 1970

	Males	Females
14-19	27.8	46.7
20-24	11.2	16.9
25-59	1.8	3.1
60+	0.6	0.6
Total Percentage	7.3	12.4

Source: OAS-CEPCIES, Report Situation, Principal Problems and
        Prospects For The Economic and Social Development of
        Grenada, 1975, p.III-28.

siderably high in all age groups except for those over 60.

These figures however still do not show the real situation. Like
all existing labour force statistics they exclude a large propor-
tion of women from the labour-force by defining them as housewives

and hence 'not in the labour force'. In 1970 therefore although
the female population of working age was 27,296 the female labour
force was only 11,200 a difference of 16,096 women who are not
even counted as unemployed. Among men the difference is much less,
only 4,216 men fall into this category.

What is interesting to note however is the fact that women con-
tinue to work outside the home even after the age of 60 at an
equal rate with men in spite of the larger number of unemployed
men at earlier ages. It is possible that the longer life-span of
women may be a contributory factor.

Bearing this situation in mind it should not be surprising that
since 1946 the number of women migrating from Grenada increased
greatly. Between 1960 and 1970 close to 20,000 people emigrated,
about 20% of the total 1970 population. Of this 70% were in the
15-34 age group (OAS-CEPCIES, 1975, III-26) and of this women
comprised 52% (Ibid, III-12).

This question of female unemployment and female responsibility
becomes even more crucial when the simple factor of sex ratios
is examined. For the period 1946 to 1970, it has been found that
in spite of the fact that more males were born, in the higher age
groups the female population exceeded the male to a larger degree
than is usual. Again the longer female life expectancy could be
a factor but not for such a wide gap. At the same time the rela-
tively even ratio of migration prevents this from being a fact
(unless of course women comprised an even larger proportion of
illegal migrants). The OAS-CEPCIES report suggests that the ans-
wer may lie in the predominance of males in immigration prior to
1946. If this is the case then the gap should be narrowed in the
future. The fact at the present however is that even if they wish-
ed to be, there are not even enough men on whom individual women
may become dependent.

As far as education was concerned, Grenada has an official litera-
cy rate of 85%; 15% were therefore officially illiterate but the
Centre for Popular Education found in April 1980 that only 7-10%
of the population had no education at all (Epica, 1982:82). This
group however comprised mainly rural agricultural workers, rural

women in general and 'marginalised youth' (Epica, Ibid).

Table II. Male/Female Ratios Grenada 1946, 1960, 1970

	1946	1960	1970
0-14	1,025	992	1,007
15-44	685	783	868
45+	585	643	676

Source: O.A.S. Cepcies Report, p.III-13.

Functional literacy on the other hand was found to affect one-third of the population, while those who were functionally lite-rate had been schooled in the Colonial and neo-colonial education system. One of the characteristics of this system however was that girls had almost equal access to primary and secondary schools un-like in many other parts of the world. This is true for the entire English-speaking Caribbean. In 1977/78 therefore girls comprised 48.7% of the population of primary and all-age schools. But at secondary school level girls exceeded boys during the same period. See the tables below:

Table III. Proportion of Persons Aged 14-19 Attending Schools & Sex 1970

	Both Sexes	Male	Female	% Difference
Grenada	57.4	56.6	58.2	+1.6

Table IV. Enrolment in Junior & Senior Secondary Schools 1977/78

	Male	Female	% Female
Grenada	2,745	3,405	55

Table V. Enrolment in Fifth and Sixth Forms by Country & Year
         & Sex

	Fifth Form		% Female	Sixth Form		% Female
	M	F		M	F	
Grenada	443	484	52.5	87	119	57.7
1977/78						

Source: Joyce Cole, 'Female Education in The Contemporary Carib-
        bean: Major Trends and Issues'. Women in The Caribbean
        Conference, Barbados,1982 pp.6-9.

But overall as is evidenced above the figures are quite low and
exclude a large proportion of the population. Before the revolu-
tion all secondary schools were fee-paying, and in spite of the
large proportion of girls the emphasis was still on sex stereo-
typed occupations and the ideology of the housewife. What is clear
though is that by March 13th 1979, women did not form that 'large
backward group' which could be claimed in other countries, and
to a large extent the training, skills and experience of women
has been used by the PRG. In 1982 for example women held positions
such as ambassador to the Organisation of American States, Minis-
ter of Education, Youth and Social Affairs, Vice-Minister for
Community Development; Cabinet Secretary, Permanent Secretaries
in the Ministries of Health, Housing, Planning and Legal Affairs;
and programme heads such as the National Co-ordinator of the CPE,
Director of Tourism, Programme director of Television Free Grena-
da and other major government agencies.

IV. Women and The Grenadian Struggle

As was noted in the previous sections, at least two predominan-
tly female occupational groups contributed greatly to the politi-
cal struggle prior to March 13th 1979. In 1970, the famous Nurses
strike in one way heralded the beginning of the era of protest
and struggle against Gairyism and closer to the end the predomi-
nantly female bank workers were in the forefront of the struggle
for the recognition of the Bank and General Workers Union. In

addition to these, women were extremely active at the day to day
level in a number of ways. According to one source:

'As the anti-Gairy movement grew, Grenadian women began to
play an active, behind-the-scenes role. This activism cut
across all divisions of age and class, involving uneducated
rural women as well as professionals like teachers and nur-
ses. Women sold the New Jewel paper on street corners, con-
veyed messages secretly and offered their homes as meeting
places and shelters for the N.J.M. On revolution day, women
cooked for the soldiers of the Peoples Revolutionary Army,
helped make arrests and occupied police stations until
Gairy's forces surrendered.' (Epica, 1982; 97)

In addition to the general oppression which they had in common
with the men, women under Gairy suffered from additional problems.
One of these was the payment of lower wages for the same job es-
pecially among agricultural wage-labourers. In addition, women ex-
perienced the added burdens of their responsibility for child-care
and the family, brought on by the high cost of living and what is
known as 'sexual exploitation' in Grenada, 'the widespread prac-
tice of demanding sexual favours from women in exchange for schol-
arships or employment.' (Epica, Ibid). Moreover as noted before
70% of the women between the ages of 15 and 30 were unemployed
and those employed could be fired at will, for example on becoming
pregnant. The participation of women in the political struggle was
extremely powerful. But then so is the case in the majority of re-
volutionary struggles. The Grenadian Revolution however stands out
as one which from the inception recognised the contribution which
women have made and could continue to make to the process of revo-
lutionary transformation. One explanation of this development,
whether some would accept this or no could be the internationali-
sation of the women's struggle, which on the whole has made both
women and men more sensitive to the continued oppression and ex-
ploitation of women even if that is the extent of its effect.
Another but not contradictory factor, could be that the signi-
ficance of the contribution which women did make, gave them a
degree of power which demanded commensurate respect and attention.

V.The Characterisation of the Grenadian Process

In the period since March 13th, 1979, the Peoples Revolutionary
Goverment of Grenada (P.R.G.) began a process of revolutionary
transformation. However in an interview in 1979, Bernard Coard
described the process <u>at that initial point in time</u> as one whose
primary aim was not that of building socialism, but one of 'sim-
ply trying to get the economy, which has been totally shattered
by Gairy, back on its feet'.[6] He identified the primary tasks
therefore as being:
1.   to get agricultural production going again;
2.   to develop a fishing industry;
3.   to develop a lumber industry with the limited forestry;
4.   to develop tourism;
5.   to develop agro-industries based on the food processing of
     cocoa, nutmegs, bananas, other fruits, vegetables, coconuts,
     sugar-cane etc.

The development of a socialist society was seen as a longterm aim.
He went on to conclude on this subject by saying:

   'So, fundamentally, at this time, we see our task not as one of
   building socialism. It is one of re-structuring and re-building
   the economy, of getting production going and trying to develop
   genuine grassroots democracy, trying to involve the people in
   every village and every workplace in the process of the recon-
   struction of the country. In that sense we are in a national
   democratic revolution involving the broad masses and many stra-
   ta of the population' (Searle, 1979; 12)

In 1982 no definite claim was being made by the P.R.G. to be in
a process of socialist transformation. At the 1st International
Conference in Solidarity with Grenada in November 1981, the Mi-
nister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister described the country
as still being in the process of National Reconstruction.[7] In
other speeches given on this occasion, the Economy was described
as a 'Mixed Economy' inviting the participation of local and fo-
reign private and co-operative involvement (Radix 1981 pp. 65-66).
Further to this, in the Report on the National Economy for 1981

and the Prospects for 1982 by the P.R.G., which was presented by
Bernard Coard on the 29th January 1982, the economy was described
in the following manner:

> 'As Comrades are aware, we are developing our economy on the
> mixed economy model. Our economy as a mixed economy will com-
> prise the state sector, the private sector, and the co-operati-
> ve sector. The dominant sector will be the state sector, which
> will lead the development process. In our view, this is a rea-
> listic and feasible approach, if we want to make any progress.'
> (p.64)

This approach is similar to that adopted by the Nicaraguan govern-
ment (Harris, 1981, 7). In both situations this has been justified
by the fact that in these early stages the government is not in
the position, as far as finance, technical expertise and experien-
ce is concerned, to exclude the private sector altogether. In the
words of Bernard Coard:

> 'We adopted this approach because it is the only approach in
> our view that is realistic, possible and feasible within the
> context of our country - a small developing country starting
> from an extremely primitive economic base.' (Coard, 1981, 44)

The view is held that the well-entreched private sector in Grena-
da is capable of serving the national interest (Jacobs, 19; 10).
A similar explanation was also put forward in Nicaragua, where
in January 1981, the Minister of Agricultural Development, Jaime
Wheelock stated that:

> 'Where there is revolutionary leadership, we can also make use
> of the middle classes, including sectors of the bourgeoisie.
> Their experience in agriculture, their administrative skills
> in industry can strengthen the country's unity... The internal
> class contradictions are less important than the material gains
> we receive in the reconstruction of the national economy.'
> (quoted in Harris, 1981; 8)

According to Harris however this strategy has turned out to be a
very expensive one as the 'straight-forward self-interest' of
so-called 'patriotic private enterprise' has outweighed their

national interest. Thus overall the level of production has not been as high as expected, investment has been small and there has been a greater concentration on current projects rather than on capital maintenance and improvement (Harris, Ibid).

In both instances the primacy of the State sector over the private sector is stressed. In Grenada an Investment Code was developed which aimed at underlining the role envisaged for the private and co-operative sectors. Some criticism of this approach did take place. Some saw it as an outright betrayal of the revolution, a criticism dismissed as ultra-leftist by the government. Others however, while accepting its expediency preferred to see it situated within the framework of the ultimate objectives of the revolutionary process. Political pronouncements and declarations as well as action however, have to be placed within a national and international context. In this regard, both the practice of the former prime minister Eric Gairy of confiscating private property without compensation, as well as the hostile international climate and the local anticommunist bogey, possibly influenced the adoption of such a position.

It is important also to stress that based on earlier examples the P.R.G. possibly rejected the approach of nationalisation from above. The strategy as it unfolded appeared to be one where workers were organised at the shop-floor level and prepared for eventual control when the time was ripe.

The influence of the theory of the non-capitalist path to development however cannot be discounted in the determination of these strategies and increased links with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe also, to some extent, influenced political developments. The P.R.G. maintained most of the approaches and principles of the incipient New Jewel Movement in 1973-74. However in the day to day unfolding of the economic process, a great deal was adopted from these earlier models, for example the systems of material incentives and of special significance to this chapter the organisation of the national women's organisation.

As far as economic policy is concerned, the P.R.G. has identified

agriculture as the main pillar or 'motor' of the economy (Louison,
1981: 96, Coard, 1981: 45) based on the reality that at least
35,000 of the population depends directly or indirectly on agri-
culture for a living. As such, agriculture was supposed to con-
tribute to the economy by being the supplier of food to the
people, the major foreign exchange earner, the main basis for in-
dustrialisation and agro-industrial development, the main employ-
ment creator and a means of increasing internal self-reliance ba-
sed on the use of land as the main natural resource. (Louison,
1981: 95-6) In addition to this Coard (1981: 45) stressed the im-
portance of agriculture to the expansion of the tourist industry.
Within this area all three sectors of the economy would partici-
pate; the private sector in one sense, as 66% of the 8,202 farmers
own the land which they farm; the State sector through the Grenada
Farms Corporation, Forestry Corporation and Sugar Factory Ltd.,
and the co-operatives for expample the Grenada Nutmeg Co-operati-
ve and new ones that were developed among small farmers and the
unemployed youth and women by the National Co-operative Develop-
ment Agency (N.A.C.D.A.) founded in April 1980. In this last con-
text, some idea of the ultimate objective of co-operative develop-
ment was given by the Minister of Agriculture George Louison who
described it as a means towards the eventual collectivisation of
agriculture. (Louison, 1981: 100)

As noted earlier industrialisation was to be focussed on agricul-
ture. According to Kenneth Radix, the strategy was to be one of
import-substitution but through the utilisation of 'indigenous
natural and human resources' (Radix, 1981: 64). This was one of
the areas where both local and foreign private capital were to
have their greatest involvement. The leading role was ascribed to
the Public Sector but joint ventures as well as totally private,
local and foreign investment were also to be encouraged. This was
put forward as a strategy aimed at finding urgent solutions to
the problems of high unemployment and under-employment, high le-
vels of inflation and towards the diversification of the country's
economic base (Radix, 1981: 65). By outlining the principles of
the draft investment code, the P.R.G. presumed its capability of

controlling in particular foreign investment and accommodating it
within the framework of its overall economic goals, in spite of
the difficulties experienced in this area, for example in Poland.
It is important to note however that as far as industrial develop-
ment was concerned, most of the activities that were developed,for
example the Agro-Industrial plant and the Fisheries Corporation,
were state initiatives.

This attempt at an analysis of the Grenadian economy is at best
incomplete. It was however included to provide a basis for the
analysis of the National Womens Organisation (N.W.O.) within the
socio-economic reality of post-revolutionary Grenada. The follow-
ing section will begin this analysis.

The Process of National Democratisation

In partly a spontaneous and partly a planned process a system of
national democracy was instituted. This was done through a system
of Workers Parish* Councils which due to their large membership
were eventually divided into zonal councils. Eventually also the
N.W.O. began to organise Women's Parish Councils where the women's
groups in a particular zone or parish would meet. At these Coun-
cils at least one member of the P.R.G. was usually present and
discussions took place on draft legislation, the draft budget or
other programmes, strategies for mobilisation or accountability,
and question and answer sessions with heads of state corporations
and government ministers.

The question of accountability was central to this process as the
government ministers and or heads of government programmes had to
answer the questions of the people. From time to time people in a
particular parish could request in advance any official they wished
to question. In the past this included the head of the Water Depart-
ment, the manager of the electricity company and the Commissioner
of Police (Epica, 1982: 111). In addition to the workers and wo-
men's parish councils parallel structures were established for far-
mers and youth. The meetings were always interspersed with cultural
items - songs, poems, or skits written and performed by the people

* Parish - A regional division similar to a county.

of the area. Through these means, the people were constantly
aware of and involved in the programmes of the government.

VI. The Development of The National Women's Organisation

Prior to March 13th, 1979, the precursor of the N.W.O. was the
New Jewel Movement Women's Arm. This was formed in 1977 and com-
prised a number of small groups and their work was described
thus:

   'We printed pamphlets, attacking the high cost of living, and
   calling for equal pay for equal work. We used to do house-to-
   house underground, and speak to the people who were against
   Gairy about why change was important and how women would be-
   nefit from it' (Epica, 1982: 97)

As would be expected at this time membership was largely limited
to members and supporters of the N.J.M. In the post-revolutionary
period this structure was found to be inadequate as it restricted
access to large numbers of women who were not directly involved
in the politics of the N.J.M. However in spite of this initial
situation women were extremely active in the support of the Revo-
lution. This was noted by Bernard Coard in an interview when he
stated:

   'The upsurge of activity by women in Grenada is one of the most
   remarkable features of the revolution. Their participation and
   involvement at so many levels, particularly at the grassroots
   level of the villages is truly extraordinary. Right now, quite
   frankly, the men must be embarrassed because the initiative has
   been entirely seized by the women...' (Searle, 1975: 15).

The continuous activity of Grenadian women in both the pre- and
post-revolutionary process has been a constant subject of writing
and discussion on Grenada. In fact, the Free West Indian, national
newspaper of Grenada, is one of the few newspapers internationally,
including the socialist world, in which one can find so many arti-
cles included on the situation of women. In order to manifest its
concern for the position of women in the society, two measures
were taken in this direction in 1979. The first was to abolish

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'sexploitation', the practice which had developed under the pre-
vious government with women having to exchange sexual favours in
return for jobs and scholarships both in governmental circles and
in private enterprise. Another early move was the establishment
of the Grenada Women's Desk within the Ministry of Education,
Youth and Social Affairs.

Almost immediately after March, in June 1979, the first National
Women's Conference of Grenada was held. It's theme was 'In Search
of Solutions to the Problems facing Grenadian Women'. It was atten-
ded by 76 delegates representing every parish and including Ca-
rriacou and Petit Martinique (Searle, 1979: 22). At this conferen-
ce, the problems selected for study were; the high cost of living,
bad working conditions for women workers, poor health facilities
(especially for pregnant women), lack of water, roads and electri-
city, poor housing and the need for the provision of education and
skill training to enable them to qualify for better jobs.

In June 1980 the N.W.O. launched a campaign to increase the parti-
cipation of Grenadian women in national life. The objectives of
this campaign were to: 'Organise all women; Educate all women;
Build services for women; Create work for women and raise up na-
tional production' (Hodge, 1980: 15). This was to be done through
house to house meetings, the establishment of community day care
projects, community improvement projects which would directly be-
nefit women, and help create work for women and the formation of
co-operatives for poultry farming, handicraft work and agro-indus-
trial production of preserves. In addition other activities re-
lated to children were identified, for example a campaign to get
all children to attend school and of providing free milk to the
poorest children in the communities, identified by the N.W.O. mem-
bers. The area of education was also identified as one for special
attention. This was begun with film shows, panel discussions, talks
and cultural shows carried out in collaboration with the Centre for
Popular-Education (C.P.E.).

On the 19th of June that year, at a rally in honour of two heroes -
Tubal Uriah Butler and Alistair Strachan, a bomb, intended for the
leaders, exploded killing three young women - 13 year old Laureen

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Phillip, 23 year old Laurice Humphrey and 15 year old Bernadette Bailey. The fact that three women and young women were killed is representative of the fact that women comprised a major percentage of the participants at this political rally. Among the thirty-seven who were injured and hospitalised the majority were women (Hodge, 1980: 14). But far from intimidating them, this strengthened their militancy and defiance and in the solidarity marches which followed on June 20th hundreds more women who had never marched before including white-collar workers, middle-class housewives and schoolgirls joined the demonstration. This event served as a catalyst to the campaign of the N.W.O. outlined on June 1st. Women formed the majority of the recruits volunteering to join the People's Militia and they became even more active in the N.W.O. and other activities.

Later that same year in October 1980, the Maternity Leave Law was passed. This law was passed after the original draft produced in April had been circulated and discussed by women's groups, community groups, employer's associations, trade unions and professional groups. Based on these discussions, changes were made to the original draft. For example the draft did not include benefits for unmarried teachers and student nurses and based on public response, all sectors of women workers were included. Also in the original, women working in small businesses with less than five workers were not eligible. Based on public response, a survey was carried out which showed that the only employers who may not be able to pay these benefits were some professionals who employed domestic servants. In response to this the draft was altered so that the government would cover half of the pay for these workers (F.W.I. 11.10.80). In the case where trade union contracts existed, workers could choose those provisions which were in their favour. Under the law all women workers were eligible to two months whole pay and one month half pay. Daily paid workers were to get one/fifth of their annual salary. Employers who failed to honour these provisions faced a $1,000 fine or 6 months in prison while employers who fired a worker faced up to $2,000 fine or one year in prison.

This law was signalled as a major 'step forward' in 'protecting women'. Also in 1980, a law decreeing 'equal pay for equal work' was passed. This affected mainly agricultural labourers. Based on a report on these developments Grenada was elected to the executive of the Inter-American Commission of Women, of the O.A.S.

In December of that year the 2nd Annual Conference was held; at this time the organisation comprised 1,500 members and it set itself the target of 5,000 members by December 1981. It identified, based on a recent survey, the most pressing problems of women at that time to be: the need for work, day care centres (pre-primary and nursery) community improvements, and the development of agricultural co-operatives was again stressed as a means of providing employment and the strengthening of women's traditional skills.

In its recruitment campaign during the ensuing months it was stressed that the N.W.O. was for all women and not only N.J.M. women. An information brochure stated the following:

'The N.W.O. is not for some women only, it's all women. It joins young and older sisters together. Our members are road workers, nutmeg, pool workers, housewives, students, agricultural workers, unemployed sisters, teachers, nurses and domestic servants. You don't have to support any political party or any particular church. You don't have to join the militia although many N.W.O. members do. The N.W.O. is for all women who support the revolution, defend equal rights and opportunities for women and want to see Grenada progress and move forward...'

During 1981, many groups were formed so that by December 1981 they had achieved their target of 5,000 members long before this deadline.

The activities of the N.W.O. took place within the framework of continuous mass mobilisation which was allocated a special portfolio in the P.R.G. The success of mobilisation efforts among women and their strong visibility in many aspects gave women confidence. Unfortunately however this strength was not used by the N.W.O. to deal with the fundamental problems of the man-woman relationship which beset the community. In spite of the contribu-

tion of women to the revolution with their very lives, there was a
deep fear that any acknowledgements of the contradictions existing
within the 'family' and the 'private' sphere would serve to des-
troy national unity. As a result one had a situation , as mentio-
ned in the introduction, where there existed a great fear in link-
ing any of these activities with women's liberation and feminism.
Feminism has been defined as 'foreign' and as 'separatist' thus
one source was at pains to point out that:

> 'If it is true that the revolution has changed the status of
> women in Grenada, it is even more accurate to say that <u>through</u>
> <u>their involvement in the revolution, Grenadian women are chan-</u>
> <u>ging themselves</u>.
> Advancement has come not so much through pressures for women's
> rights as an isolated issue (the model of the U.S. feminist mo-
> vement) as through active participation and leadership in the
> revolution as a whole.' (Epica, 1982: 98)

The aims of the movement are discussed in terms of equality and
women's rights and not in terms of emancipation or liberation,
words which denote not only discrimination but also subordination
and exploitation.

A. Activities of the N.W.O.

According to Bernard Coard in the <u>Report on The National Economy</u>
<u>for 1981 and the Prospects for 1982</u> - the role of mass organisa-
tions in 1981 (Year of Agriculture and Agro-Industries), in the
country (including the women's organisation) had been to 'strike
forward' in social services (Coard, 1982: 67). During 1981, when
the Ministry of Mobilisation began to function effectively, there
was a marked mobilisation of people into the National Youth Orga-
nisation (N.Y.O.), the Trade Unions, the Militia, the Productive
Farmers Union (P.F.U.) and the 'Community' Youth Brigades.

Prior to 1981 and during 1981, the work of the N.W.O. had been
concentrated on the social services. To a large extent this
emphasis grew directly out of the real day to day problems of
women and their children in a society where the Western nuclear
family is not the norm. In doing this they worked particularly

with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Social Affairs. For
purposes of discussion these activities can be divided in the
following main areas - social welfare, education and community
work.

A.1. Social Welfare:

For the most part this has centred around the welfare of children
in Caribbean society, as much as in others (or more) the respon-
sibility of women. The women's organisation took as its special
responsibility the monitoring of government projects such as -
primary health care, free school meals, free books and uniforms,
free milk and so on. This in many ways was a logical development
as in the Caribbean women are responsible not only for the nur-
turing of children but also for their economic well-being. With
the aim of facilitating women's entry into social production, a
great deal of emphasis was also put on the establishment of day-
care facilities, and the continued support of existing ones.
One of the most interesting aspects of the establishment of these
centres has been that within the respective communities attempts
were made to involve the other mass organisations in this work,
thus the local youth organisation, peoples militia and N.J.M.
support groups all worked together to establish, furnish and run
the centres. In this way men and women were involved in the pro-
vision of these facilities. At the level of teaching though in
general no men were involved.

A.2. Education:

This was advanced as the main way through which women could gain
'equality'. Thus in conjunction with the Ministry of Education,
a mass education programme for women was developed. Within the
organisation itself, special study seminars were organised as
well as political education at the regular meetings. The subjects
covered according to Minister of Education, Jacqueline Creft, in-
cluded: Grenada's history from The Caribs* to 1979; Grenada's
economy; how to overcome underdevelopment; topics in World history
and international affairs; the importance of education in esta-

 * indigenous people of the southern Caribbean.

blishing People's Power; women's needs and participation in the establishment of a People's Power; women's needs and participation in the establishment of a People's Democracy; methods of organising women's groups; maternity law rights; and first aid training. (Creft, 1981: 54).

In relation to more formal education , and through the programme 'Every child in school' the practice of keeping girls at home to take care of younger children was radically challenged. Within the formal education system some attempts to break down the sexual division of labour took place, especially through the awarding of scholarships to girls and women for technical courses as well as through encouraging them to attend local vocational institutes such as the agricultural school and the Fisheries School. Evidence of similar attempts with relation to men and boys were not apparent. The high value attached to 'male-dominated' fields of employment and education served to encourage women to enter these fields. At the same time however some attempt should have been made to re-evaluate the 'female-dominated' fields as those continued to exist and to be primarily staffed by women. Similar encouragement should also have been given to boys and men to enter these fields. The N.W.O. should also have been able to boast of the number of boys studying home economics, advanced secretarial studies or early childhood education, and similarly also of male typists, nursery school teachers and cooks (not only chefs).

At the same time as this is taking place, it is important that the women are maintaining the skills which they already have and that they are recognised as such. The constant reference to women who have skills and experience in agriculture, sewing, basketry, handicrafts and food preparation and preservation as 'unskilled' should therefore cease.

Also in the area of education some important work was initiated in the area of curriculum transformation. Merle Hodge Coordinator of The Curriculum Development Programme, wrote in 1980:

'The new woman of Grenada will be the product of a changing education system which is geared towards equal educational

exposure for girls and boys and <u>a more conscious attack, through education on the roots of sexual stereotyping</u> than is evident anywhere in the English-Speaking Caribbean' (F.W.I. 2.9.80).

Along similar lines at the 2nd National Congress of the N.W.O. in 1980 one of the instructions (No. 10) given to the new executive was 'To ask the Curriculum Development Unit to ensure that a true image of women's abilities and her role in a revolutionary society is portrayed in all learning materials for our children'. This is of course a very important area and one which has often been neglected. However it will have little result if the material circumstances which determine women's oppression are not removed In Cuba, via the *Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* (F.M.C.) attempts were made to deal with the questions of sexual stereotyping at this ideological level through the press, school curricula and television. This however had little effect as 1) the low-status of the household 'role' of women continued, therefore women within the society were viewed first as housewives and second as workers and 2) there was a general acceptance of a certain degree of biological determinism in the allocation of women's jobs as women were often seen as physically weaker and on this basis excluded from many jobs, (Reddock, 1979: 145). In the Cuban case also the continued existence of *machismo* as a phenomenon and of male pride was a major obstacle which was passed from parents to sons within the family and could not be removed through accepted channels.

Similarly in Grenada the view that a change in ideas and attitudes is what is necessary was accepted. It was recognised that changes in the law were not enough. This was noted by President of the N. W.O. and then Secretary for Women's Affairs Phyllis Coard in an interview with *Prensa Latina* in July 1980 in Copenhagen, when 'she pointed out that the fundamental problem which a revolution must eradicate is not inequality in the eyes of the law – because that is changed easily – but the traditional attitude to women in many sectors' (F.W.I. 2.8.80). This struggle to change ideas and attitudes of course must be continued but other structural changes in the day to day power relations at a more basic level must also take place.

A.3. Community Work:

As mentioned earlier, the entire community was mobilised via the mass organisations for the establishment of nursery and pre-primary schools. But in addition to this a great deal of other work occurred - for example in the area of road-repair, fund-raising for local institutions, hospitals, health centres, repairs to school buildings and community centres, repairs to the homes of single women and old people. In all of this the women provided voluntarily the manual labour required with minimal assistance from men.

In spite of a very creative approach in developing the new Grenadian society in general, the programme for women bore a striking similarity to that of most of the older socialist countries which themselves have inherent difficulties. In the case of Cuba for example, Lewis, Lewis and Ridgon (1977) summarised the activities of the F.M.C. when it was institutionalised as:

1. Mobilising women for education, production and defence, by encouraging women to attend adult school, enter the labour force and join the militia.
2. Carrying out periodic surveys of women's educational and employment backgrounds, skill levels and willingness to work outside the home.
3. Establishing and operating sewing and dress-making schools, retraining centres for domestic servants and day-care centres for children of all working mothers.
4. Establishing and operating study-groups for ideological training of all people but specifically of women.
5. Presenting government policy to the women, more than representing women's position to government. (Lewis, Lewis & Rigdon, 1976).

B. Recent Developments

On the 12th August 1983, the Women's Desk of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Social Affairs was transformed into a new Ministry of Women's Affairs with education minister Jacqueline Creft as Minister and Phyllis Coard, President of the N.W.O. as Deputy-

Minister. The Ministry was divided into two sections: 1. The
Women's Bureau and 2. The Early Childhood department (*Scotilda*,
4.12.82; 3). The Women's Bureau had the responsibility for poli-
tical and social education, legal reform, leadership training,
the development of cooperatives among women, the organisation
of women at a national level, and further ran a social advice
centre. The Early Childhood Department was responsible for the
support of both already existing and new day-care centres and
nurseries as well as the coordination of the free school books
and uniforms programmes. At a general level, the Ministry was
also responsible for maintaining government to government contact
and relationships with regional and international agencies.

As can be already observed there was a great deal of interaction
between the N.W. O. and the Women's Ministry so much so that
many resources are shared and certain personnel are held in
common.

In December 1983, the 1st Congress of the N.W.O. was held, but
prior to this a number of preparatory activities took place to
which women within and outside the N.W.O. could contribute. Of
these the main ones were the special Parish Councils and Delega-
tes meetings held to discuss : 1. the Draft Work Programme and
2. Amendments to the Constitution. The main proposals included
in the Draft Work Plan were: 1. that women should be made aware
of all possible areas of work, in particular in agriculture and
construction and should be trained in those areas; 2. that more
political education and leadership training was needed; 3. that
the work of the C.P.E. must continue and develop; 4. that more
child care facilities must be established to facilitate working
women, and community health brigades should be supported and 5.
that the Marketing Board should take over the importation of
school books and uniforms in order to lower prices. (*Scotilda*,
Ibid; 2).

By the time of the 1st Congress, the N.W.O. had 6,500 members
and more than approximately 2,000 had attended the Special Parish
Councils and Delegates Meetings. At the actual Congress, the
Constitution was amended to enlarge the N.W.O. Secretariat to

include secretaries for production, defence, academic education
and social problems, Parish committees were created, and N.W.O.
members outside the country for more than six months could not
be elected to the executive. (F.W.I., 11.12.82; 1).

The resolutions passed at the Congress were concentrated in three
main areas. The first was in the area of legal reform, calling
for the removal of the stigma of illegitimacy on children born
out of wedlock, and the removal of inheritance laws based on le-
gitimacy and illegitimacy. In addition a call was made for the
establishment of a private court to establish paternity where it
was contested, and the strengthening of maintenance laws in cases
where either the mother or father deserts the child. (Ibid; 4)
Other resolutions were passed in the areas of academic and poli-
tical education, and on international solidarity and World peace.

C. An Analysis of The Work of The N.W.O.

Through these activities discussed above, women in general and
the N.W.O. in particular earned themselves high esteem in the
society. But these changes in women's self-realisation as well
as the attacks on the sexual division of labour will have a fun-
damental effect on the relationships between women and men,
women and women and men and men in the society. In China
in 1949   for example the Marriage Law recognised divorce by
mutual consent and the Land Reform allocated land to individuals
and not to families (thus women gained access to land, a means of
production). Women took this opportunity to refuse the domination
of their mothers-in-law and husbands. The effect of this was so
widespread that the situation was soon altered making divorce
more difficult and controlling the allocation of land (Davin,
1976; 46). During this period of relative freedom there was an
increase in the number of murders of women and suicides as men
fought to retain control over their women. In the end, the men
won, and even though women continued their work in social produc-
tion male domination was restored.

Already in Grenada in the new situation women gained the confi-
dence to fundamentally question and to refuse to accept their

subordinate position. While in Grenada in 1981, one woman was
overheard complaining to another - 'He take a woman off de bus
an put on a man'. She apparently had in no uncertain terms told
the minibus driver the error of his ways. Similarly N.W.O. members,
burdened by their daily work as well as voluntary duties were to
be heard complaining about their double burden of housework which
still had to be done, often late at night. Yet when asked whether
this was ever discussed publicly the response would be No, that
would cause too much disturbance.

The reality is that change is a dialectical process and change
in one area also results in change in others. Historically at
crucial periods it is always the women who eventually have to
sacrifice their freedom for the 'public good'. It is important
to realise that all these changes bring the formerly suppressed
or repressed contradictions to the fore and machinery will have
to be established to deal with the new situation. In addition
the political education of men will have to prepare them for the
changes in the present situation which will have to come later.

Another area of importance is 'the family'. As is well-known
Marx and Engels recognised the oppressive and·exploitative nature
of the bourgeois family, when in the Communist Manifesto they
stated:

>   'Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at
>   this infamous proposal of the Communists. On what foundation
>   is the present family, the bourgeois family based? On capital,
>   on private gain. In its completely developed form this family
>   exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things
>   finds its complement in the practical absense of the family
>   among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

>   The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when
>   its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanish-
>   ing of capital'. (Marx & Engels, 1977; 50) (My emphasis)

In the case of Grenada and indeed the entire Caribbean region
this statement underlined above holds true, yet 'the family' as
the unit of society is still held. In the Cuban Family Code of

1975 this is stated, while in the Principles and Programme of
The Working Peoples Alliance (W.P.A.) of Guyana published in
1980 (?) the family is recognised as the basic unit of society
and its 'strengthening' is seen as a means of ending domestic
exploitation and woman and child abuse. (W.P.A. 1980 (?); 26).
In Grenada (to its credit) no such formal statement was made
but actions, based on these assumptions did take place. One
example was the situation described as 'irresponsible father-
hood', where fathers do not contribute financially to the up-
keep of their children. The position put forward was that this
problem could not be adequately dealt with until all men were
employed. This prospective solution assumed that a man's 'respon-
sibility' to his children was primarily a financial one. One
step in the right direction was the call at the N.W.O. Congress
for women to be made equally responsible before the law for the
maintenance of their children, a situation which in reality had
always existed. This could be seen as the first dismantling of
the male breadwinner concept of the bourgeois family. But for
working-class and peasant women their responsibility is both eco-
nomic and social and the society castigates very strongly any
woman who contributes only financially to her children's life
and well-being. In a new society a man's responsibility to his
children as well as other relatives is to be also socially res-
ponsible and this is possible even when men are unemployed. The
stereotype of the male breadwinner is part and parcel of the
Western capitalist family model and this has to be eradicated
with the rest of the system. At a broader level the whole quest-
ion of the role of the bourgeois family in socialist society has
to be studied and analysed so that strategies aimed at eradicat-
ing it and replacing it with relationships more in tune with socia-
list society can emerge. The relationship of 'the family' to the
capital accumulation process in industrial/commercial production
as well as in peasant/petty-bourgeosie production has to be pro-
perly analysed. It is no accident that the family arose in histo-
ry at the same point in time as did private property and class
society. Any attempt to get rid of the latter and retain the for-
mer is fraught with the contradictions being experienced in socia-

list countries in their strategies 'on the woman question'.

The Caribbean working-class and peasantry recognized very early the limitations and uselessness of the bourgeois family for its needs. Attempts by the Colonial Church and State to force it upon them have virtually failed. In the present situation women (in spite of poverty) enjoy a degree of social and economic independence not enjoyed by their sisters in parts of the world where a 'stable' family exists, for example in India. The commonly-held view that all working-class and peasant women want to be married is totally incorrect.[8] From earlier times these women recognised the limitations placed on them by legal marriage. The fact that this is often put off until a man can afford to be a breadwinner shows the economic as opposed to the social or affective basis of the bourgeois family.

The Caribbean in general therefore has the historic possibility and responsibility to show that non-oppressive forms of domestic organisation can develop from among the working-class which are able to further rather than retard the progress towards true socialist society.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion then one can say that possibly more than in any other revolutionary process to date, the visibility of women in Grenada has been outstanding. In addition, and from the outset measures aimed at ameliorating the conditions of women and involving them in national life were introduced and continued. In spite of the creativity and innovativeness of the People's Revolutionary Government, however, there was a growing tendency to closely ally their strategy for women to the traditional strategies used in older socialist countries which have failed to 1) successfully challenge the sexual division of labour 2) equalise the responsibility for housework within the home and 3) transform the oppressive bourgeois family. The reason given for these failures is usually the time factor as old ideas are hard to eradicate. The question arises therefore of the connection between the old ideas and the old family. Is the former responsible for the latter or vice versa?

In Grenada, as in other parts of the region, women have already been in an advantageous position since large numbers of them have not been constrained by the old family system and so were freer to participate in the activities of the revolution and in social production. To try to re-establish patriachal control over these women by 'strengthening' the bourgeois family (which hardly exists) would undoubtedly have been historically a backward step.

In order therefore to develop new strategies and forms of social organisation an anlysis based on the peculiar characteristics of the regional and working-class situation, as well as a materialist understanding of the origins and continued bases for women's oppression and exploitation and its interrelationship to class and national oppression has to be developed. In doing so the traditional prejudices against feminism will have to be eradicated and the wealth of research and analysis carried on by the socialist-feminists taken into consideration.

NOTES

1. The paper is an adaptation of an earlier paper entited 'Women's Movements and Organisations in The Process of Revolutionary Transformation : The Case of Grenada'. It was originally presented at a conference on *Crisis y Respuesta en América Latina y el Caribe*, organized by FLACSO, Quito, Ecuador.

2. a) Grenada: *Let Those Who Labour Hold The Reins* : Interview with Bernard Coard by Chris Searle, Race and Class Pamphlet No. 7; Liberation, London, 1979, p. 7; b) Ernest Harsch 'How the Gairy Regime was Overthrown', *Intercontinental Press combined with Imprecor*, Vol. 17, No. 44, December 3, 1979, p. 1185.

3. Ibid.

4. Harsch, Op. Cit.2 (b), p. 1185, by 'village' they probably refer to farmers and agricultural workers.

5. Ibid p. 1187.

6. Op. Cit. 2 (a), p. 11.

7. In : *Grenada is Not Alone*, Fedon Publishers, St. Georges, 1982; p. 27.

8. This will be developed in the forthcoming work of the author on 'Women, Labour and Struggle in 20 th Century Trinidad and Tobago'.

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