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MUST WORKERS' REVOLUTION ALWAYS FAIL?
BOLSHEVISM, THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY
CRISES IN RUSSIA, CHILE, PORTUGAL AND POLAND

by

BRIAN McDOUGALL, B.A., M.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

March 1991

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

During the twentieth century there have been many revolutionary upheavals featuring a highly mobilized working class. Yet, with the exception of Russia in 1917, none of those revolutionary crises resulted in a working class seizure of state power, and the formation of a radical democratic workers' state of the sort envisaged by Marx and Lenin. If Marxism is to retain any credibility as a theory of proletarian revolution, it must be able to account for the failure of the world working class to duplicate the feat of 1917.

Since capitalism continually generates revolutionary crises, a Marxist explanation for the failure of working class revolution must focus on the processes and short-term outcomes of those crises, rather than their long-term causes.

Part I of this thesis identifies the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky as the only version of twentieth century 'Marxism' compatible with Marx's project of proletarian self-emancipation. The basic concepts and arguments of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process are outlined, focusing on the immediate causes, features, dynamics, and short-term outcomes of revolutionary crises. Bolshevik theory is discussed in light of the revolutionary process of the Russian revolution (1917), and the failed revolutions in western Europe (1918-1923). The Bolsheviks' explanation for the failure of proletarian revolutions in their epoch is shown to hinge on the 'missing party thesis' -- the claim that the crises in western Europe failed to produce successful workers' revolutions because of the absence of a mass revolutionary party which embodied the revolutionary consciousness of a majority of the working class.

Part II of the thesis, employs a slightly modified version of Bolshevism to examine more recent cases of revolutionary crises -- those in Chile (1972-73), Portugal (1974-75) and Poland (1980-81). In each case, all of the objective features of a revolutionary crisis were present. There was a profound crisis in the ranks of the ruling class, a dramatic growth in the level of organization within the working class (manifest in institutions of dual power), and a growth in the level of suffering of the working class. And yet, there was no working class revolution. In each of the three cases, the subjective element (which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a proletarian revolution to succeed) was missing. Thus, our examination of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish cases demonstrates that the core of any Marxist explanation for the failure of those crises to end in a successful workers' revolution must focus on the absence of a mass, Bolshevik-style revolutionary party.

The basic arguments made by the Bolsheviks about the features and dynamics of the revolutionary process still apply today. Furthermore, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process gives us a methodological and theoretical basis to explain the absence of a revolutionary outcome to the revolutionary crises that have occurred since 1917.

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CHAPTER (1.0) INTRODUCTION: MARXISM, BOLSHEVISM AND THE THEORY OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

(1.1) Marxism, Social Science and the Study of Revolution

We live in a world where exploitation and oppression are still the major social problems faced by the human race. But, since the French Revolution, it has been possible for the exploited and the oppressed to conceive of a revolutionary transformation of the social world in accordance with their needs and desires. Not surprisingly, therefore, people have been arguing about the causes, processes and outcomes of revolution for the last two hundred years -- as they sought either to induce the arrival of revolution, or to prevent it. Today, the arguments continue.

Analyzing the study of revolution almost twenty years ago, Wolin identified two distinct traditions of analysis: revolutionary theory and the social scientific study of revolutions. "For more than a century," he explained to his academic audience, a "distinct tradition" of revolutionary theory has flourished, "for the most part, outside academic and scholarly communities." As Wolin showed, the revolutionary tradition -- Marxism in particular -- has been portrayed in quite unflattering terms by generations of social scientists who claim revolutionary theory is

hortatory, whereas social science writings tend to be explanatory; the former are action oriented, the latter detached; and while the former seek their justification by the criterion of practical success, the latter would feel vindicated by the achievement of a scientifically tenable theory of revolution.(Wolin,1973:345)

Wolin rejected that kind of self-serving evaluation by social scientists because of the transparently partisan character of most social scientific studies of revolution. Prominent

sociologists who have studied revolution have often openly identified with counter-revolutionary movements, giving the ruling class practical advice on how to prevent revolutions from succeeding.(Johnson,1966:166-72; Huntington,1966:344; Gurr,1971: 352-3; Eckstein, 1965:153-163)¹ Wolin concluded "that the social scientific study of revolutions also has an orientation which is hortatory, activist, and practical, the difference being that the orientation is counter-revolutionary."(Wolin,1973:346)

Since the French Revolution, the tradition of revolutionary theory has developed in a symbiotic relationship with working class and revolutionary movements.(Wolin,1973:347; Lichtheim, 1961,1968,1970; Callinicos,1983a) From the conspiratorial communism of Babeuf and Blanqui, the utopian socialism of Owen, the paternalistic socialism of Fourier and the "scientific" socialism of Saint-Simon, there emerged a quite diverse tradition of revolutionary thought that Marx could critically draw upon in the formation of his theory of proletarian revolution.(Lichtheim, 1968; Gilbert,1981; Draper,1977; Callinicos,1983a; Lindemann, 1983) Marx's synthesis established him as the pre-eminent theorist and practitioner of revolution.² By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the revolutionary movement in Europe was predominantly "Marxist".(Lichtheim, 1961,1970; Lindemann, 1983) In the twentieth century, "Marxism" -- in the loosest sense of the term -- has been, by far, the favorite theory of revolutionaries, from Europe to the Third World.(Kaplan,1973: xvii) Thus, there is a good prima facie case for viewing the Marxist tradition as the premier theory of revolution and an essential starting point for any serious study of the phenomenon -- particularly for those analysts who consider revolution a legitimate means to rid the world of exploitation and oppression, as we do.

In a sense, Marxism (as the main theory of the revolutionary tradition), and the social scientific study of social order (usually carried out by sociology) are siamese twins: two contrasting bodies of argument, analysis and political strategy -- each of which is the product of the effort by different classes to control and channel the social energies created by the rise of European capitalism. Each tradition poses -- implicitly, and often explicitly -- as a critique of the theory and politics of the other; and each represents an alternative interpretation of the basis of social order and the possibility of revolution within capitalism. Economics, sociology and the other social sciences defend capitalism, while historical materialism advocates its abolition through proletarian revolution. (Clarke, 1982; Therborn, 1976; Shaw, 1975)

Left as such, the choice between theories seems rather straightforward; analysts who are sympathetic to the existing social order ought to work within the counter-revolutionary tradition of social science, while those who see a need for a fundamental change of the social order should work within the Marxist tradition.

However, those of us who work within the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, and who believe proletarian revolution is the only effective means for ending exploitation and oppression, face an obvious problem. Although there have been many revolutionary upheavals in the twentieth century -- some of them featuring highly mobilized working class movements -- none since 1917 has produced a successful workers' revolution of the sort envisaged by Marx. (My contention that the Russian revolution of 1917 was a genuine workers' revolution of the sort advocated by Marx, is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.) Thus, in the eight decades since the Russian working class seized state power, there has not been a single instance of a revolutionary transformation of society in which the

working class has succeeded -- through its own mass action --in replacing the existing capitalist state machine with a workers' state of the kind outlined by Marx in his analysis of the Paris Commune. That simple fact stands as one of the most common objections to the validity of Marx's theory of proletarian revolution. Can Marxism provide a convincing explanation for the failure of workers' revolution since 1917?

In this dissertation, we will argue that Marxism can indeed provide such an explanation, one sufficient to reassure opponents of exploitation and oppression that their analyses of revolutionary phenomena should begin from within the Marxist tradition.

* * * * *

Wolin's talk of two distinct traditions focuses our attention on the dual legacy of nineteenth century social thought: revolution and counter-revolution (i.e., 'social order') as alternative objects of study and as conflicting political objectives. But, it does not solve three crucial problems that face today's student or advocate of revolution. First, what are we to make of the existence of a radical sociology of revolution that appears to be a blend of Marxism and sociology? Second, once we accept that Marxism is the premier version of revolutionary theory, how do we determine what counts as part of the Marxist tradition. (After all, there are many seemingly incompatible and competing versions of 'Marxism.')

Third, what exactly is the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution?

In this Chapter, we will answer those questions and outline the strategy we will follow in subsequent chapters, to prove that Marxism can provide a reasonable explanation for the failure of the proletarian revolution of 1917 to be duplicated. In section (1.2) we consider the work done by radical sociologists interested in revolution, to determine what attitude a revolutionary should take towards that body of work. Section (1.3) describes

some criteria we can use to distinguish what constitutes the real Marxist tradition. The following two sections argue that Bolshevism should be considered an extension of the real Marxist tradition (1.4), while Stalinism, Maoism and third world nationalism should not be (1.5). In section (1.6) we discuss the constituent parts of the Bolshevik theory of proletarian revolution, and identify our object of study as a portion of that overall theory, the theory of the revolutionary process. Finally, in section (1.7) we discuss the strategy we employ throughout the remainder of this dissertation for outlining, updating and then using the Bolshevik theory of revolution to account for the failure of proletarian revolution since 1917.

(1.2) The Radical Sociology of Revolution

Wolin's contrast of the revolutionary and social scientific traditions is somewhat dated. Today, neither Marxism nor sociology appears nearly as homogeneous and unitary as his comments suggest. Both are plagued by internal disagreements, competing theories and conflicting political orientations. In the 1990s, there are 'Marxists' who scoff at the notion of revolution, and radical sociologists whose studies of revolution display enormous sympathy for the participants in those movements. Thus, the line between the two traditions of analysis no longer seems as clear as it once did. In the next section we will examine the Marxist tradition. In this section we need to say something about the work of the radical sociologists of revolution -- commentators who are critical of the exploitation and oppression they see around them, and generally sympathetic to the idea of revolution, even though they work within the sociological tradition.

The radical sociology of revolution originates in the 1960s revolt by the New Left against mainstream social science. Rejecting both the counter-revolutionary ideas of mainstream sociology, and the dominant Stalinist interpretation of 'Marxism', radical sociology sought to synthesize or combine elements of the two traditions into a new theory that would enable them to attack the exploitation and oppression they saw around them. (In our view, the effort to combine or synthesize Marxism and Sociology should be rejected because the theories have different objects of study, incompatible explanatory strategies, and very different political implications.)³

None of the work done by those radical sociologists who concerned themselves specifically with the question of revolution -- people like Theda Skocpol (States and Social Revolutions (1979) and Barrington Moore (Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (1966) and Injustice (1978) -- can be dismissed in the same way we might dismiss the counter-revolutionary propaganda produced by many mainstream sociologists. The work of the best radical sociologists interested in revolution (e.g., Moore and Skocpol) uses radical sociological theory, historical research and a comparative method.⁴ At the same time it expresses some hostility to capitalism, a degree of openness to the 'Marxist' tradition (broadly defined), and some sympathies with revolutionary movements. Therefore, it is worth considering what value that body of work may have. To do that we will briefly comment on the work of Moore and Skocpol.

* * * * *

Instead of casually dismissing Marxism, as mainstream sociologists interested in revolution do, both Moore and Skocpol see their work as part of a debate with and

rejection of, the theory of proletarian revolution initiated by Marx and later developed by Lenin and Trotsky.(Moore,1965,1970,1978; Skocpol, 1977,1979,1982c)⁵ Both these radical sociologists seek to explain and justify the necessity of revolution in the advanced countries of past centuries and the backward countries of this century, while specifically denying that the revolutions they analyze (particularly the Russian revolution) can be taken as evidence that proletarian revolution is possible (Moore) or justifiable (Skocpol) today. Since proletarian revolution is either a logical impossibility (Moore) or something guaranteed to degenerate into a horrific, and bureaucratic "state socialism" (Skocpol), both sociologists advocate a "radical reformism" as the only hope in ridding the world of exploitation and oppression.(Moore,1970: 113-114,192-193; Skocpol,1979:292-293; 1983:42-43)

Theoretically, both Moore and Skocpol employ explanatory frameworks that point towards the logical impossibility of conscious revolutionary action by the working class; Moore uses the notion of a social contract that supposedly exists between rulers and ruled, while Skocpol relies on an extreme structuralism that denigrates the role of human agency in social change. Both settle the argument about proletarian revolution in advance, without extensive investigation of the Russian revolution itself.⁶ And both these authors rely heavily upon conventional Cold War myths about the Russian revolution, the working class, Lenin, and the Bolshevik Party, to justify their theoretical and political conclusions.(Moore,1978:357-375; Skocpol,1979)

Despite all of this, what makes their work radical is their recognition of the existence of exploitation and oppression, their admission that capitalism produces major social crises, and their willingness to countenance -- at least in principle -- the possibility of revolution as a solution to social problems. But the radicalism of Moore and Skocpol,

evident in their analyses of the causes of revolution, is not matched by a comparable radicalism in the assessment of the possible outcomes of a proletarian revolution. We can only conclude that by dismissing the very possibility of a Marxist style workers' revolution, by falling prey to cold war myths, and by refusing to seriously analyze the work of theorists like Lenin and Trotsky, the work of radical sociologists like Moore and Skopcol does not recommend itself as a useful starting point for the project undertaken here. However, that does not mean that Marxists have nothing to learn from the work of radical sociologists. It is both entirely possible, and indeed quite necessary for revolutionary Marxism to learn from, and appropriate those elements of bourgeois social science that capture some truth about the nature of capitalist society.

(1.3) The Real Marxist Tradition

Once we make the decision to locate ourselves within the Marxist tradition of revolutionary theory, rather than in the tradition of radical sociology, we are left with a problem: How can we identify the real Marxist tradition, the theorists, and political movements that adhere to the essence of what Marx argued? In the effort to both explain and promote Marx's vision of proletarian revolution, how do we distinguish it from other political traditions that may use Marxist terms -- but actually depart from the substance of Marx's argument? That problem must be tackled, if we are going to identify which elements of the 'Marxist' tradition should be used in the study of revolution.

Isaac Deutscher distinguished between the 'classical Marxism' of Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky, and the 'vulgar Marxism' initiated by the Second International and later revived by Stalin. Perry Anderson added a third type of Marxism to Deutscher's list, the 'Western Marxism' (it could just as easily have been called 'academic Marxism') associated with politically inactive intellectuals interested in Marxist theory -- particularly during the 1930s and the 1960s-1970s. (Anderson, 1976; Callinicos, 1982:3-4) This dissertation starts from the judgment that the work of Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg, represents the real twentieth century development of the Marxist tradition, while the vulgar "Marxism" of Kautsky, Stalin and Mao, and the third world nationalism of Castro and others, do not. In the remainder of this section and the next two, we will explain our rationale for that view.

* * * * *

In this age of multiple interpretations of 'Marxism', most academics view any effort to distinguish the 'real Marxist tradition' from competing versions as evidence of dogmatism. It has become commonplace to deny any meaning to the search for a 'true' version of Marxism. Yet in a century when self-proclaimed 'Marxists' have carried their theoretical disputes over into physical violence against each other, the real meaning of Marxism remains the central question for all those who seek not only to explain revolutions, but also to make them.

The real problem is that...in all the great social conflicts of our age self-proclaimed "Marxists" are to be found on opposite sides of the barricades. Think of Plekhanov and Lenin in 1917, of Kautsky and Luxemburg in 1919, of the Communists and the POUM in Barcelona in 1936, of Hungary in 1956, of Poland in 1981. It is this which compels us to pose the question of

what defines Marxism. (Molyneux,1983:3-4)

Thus, political activists who seek to change the world through proletarian revolution "have no choice but to face the problem (of what constitutes the real Marxist tradition-BM) and to draw a line between the genuine and the false."(Molyneux,1983:4)

To avoid scholasticism, dogmatism, and idealism, Marxism cannot simply be identified with mere adherence to Marx's original texts. (Besides, Marx's writings, like those of any serious intellectual, have their own unanswered questions, inconsistencies, and -- in some cases -- contradictions.) Nor can Marxism be identified solely by the uniqueness of its method, as suggested by Lukacs (1968:1-26), since Marx's method is internally related to the substance of his argument. (Molyneux, 1983:4-5; Sayer,1983,1987; Ollman,1978:104-107; Kain,1980) Rather, Marxism must be defined as "a method combined with certain essential analyses and propositions."(Molyneux,1983:5) To identify which analyses and propositions are fundamental to Marxism, we must begin from the materialist premise that Marxism is a form of social consciousness which rests on a particular social being as its foundation. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx used his materialist outlook to explain that

the theoretical conclusions of the Communists...merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. (Marx, 1967:95-96)

In other words, Marxist theory was not simply the product of Marx's brain; he simply raised to the level of theory, what was already inherent in the living activity of the European working class of the nineteenth century. Thus, Marxism is the recognition of the class struggle between capital and labour from the point of view of the working class. But Marx goes further, identifying his theory as one which stems from the interests of the

entire working class, not just one section of it:

The communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1...they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of nationality. 2. In the various stages of...the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie...they always and everywhere represent the interests of the whole. (Marx,1967:95)

So, the Communist Manifesto provides us with both a social definition of Marxism as the theory of the international proletarian revolution, and an historical explanation of the origins of that theory in the activity and experience of the nineteenth century European working class. Following Molyneux, we can identify Marxism as a theory of the common interests of the entire working class, and the possibility of the proletariat's victory in the class struggle, which was generated by the birth of the modern proletariat and the development of its struggle against capitalism.(Molyneux,1983:8)

The roots of Marxism in the experience and struggles of the working class is, for Marxists, precisely what gives it the status of a science -- the working class having a privileged position when it comes to penetrating the appearances generated by capitalism.(Molyneux,1983:8-11; Harman,1983:80-82; Sayer, 1983) Thus, Molyneux is able to outline "the connections leading from the conditions of existence of the proletariat and the tasks confronting it in the class struggle, to the main propositions of Marxist theory."(1983:11-12) For example, he identifies the theoretical foundations of Marxism -- Marx's non-mechanical and non-idealist materialist conception of history -- as the "natural theory of a producing class struggling for its emancipation... history viewed from the standpoint of the proletariat." (Molyneux,1983:14,16)

Marx's revolutionary experience and his study of capitalism proved sufficient to generate all the elements necessary for a systematic analysis of society and the possibilities

of revolution: a sophisticated body of theory that included a set of fundamental theories (e.g., his philosophical views, his theory of historical materialism, and his application of that theory in an analysis of the history and functioning of capitalism); a series of cardinal political principles (like his commitments to proletarian self-emancipation through class struggle, and the creation of a workers' state as the first stage in the creation of a classless communist society), and a political strategy (based on an historical and empirical investigation of the circumstances that he found himself in at various points in time, and a commitment to incorporate the lessons of political practice into improved theory. (Molyneux, 1981:2-7; Wolin, 1973: 348; Dunayevskaya, 1973; 1975)

Given the rich complexity of Marx's theory, we could use a number of standards to determine the degree of continuity between his work and those of later 'Marxists'. To simplify matters, we will use Marx's most basic political principles. During his lifetime, Marx believed the working class would emancipate itself through a process of class struggle that could culminate in the dictatorship of the proletariat, and eventually, world-wide socialism. (Draper, 1977, 1978, 1986; Gilbert, 1981; Callinicos, 1983a; Blackburn, 1977; Lichtheim, 1961) His vision of proletarian revolution -- nurtured by his participation in the revolution of 1848 and his close association with the Paris Commune of 1871 -- centered on certain political principles:

First, that the working class had to emancipate itself through its own collective action. Freedom could not be given over to the working class, it had to be conquered by the oppressed themselves. Secondly, in order to bring about a socialist transformation of society, the working class would have to overthrow the old state and create a new, fully democratic state for itself. These two principles -- of self-emancipation and of the democratic workers' state -- became the very essence of "Marxism", of socialism from below. (McNally, 1980:18)

Marx's two principles are in fact three: the working class as the key agent of change,

revolution as the process by which the working class achieves its self-emancipation, and the creation of a Commune-style workers' state as the short term goal, the immediate outcome of the process. We can use these basic political principles (which define the agency, process and short term-outcome of proletarian revolution) as a basic standard to judge some of the many versions of Marxism which exist: the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky, the Social Democracy of Kautsky, Stalinism, Maoism, and so on.

(1.4) Bolshevism as the Revival of the Real Marxist Tradition in the Twentieth Century

In our view, the key political principles of Bolshevism identify it as a theoretical and political interpretation of Marxism which is distinct from Stalinism, Social Democracy, and the original version of Marxism -- while being a continuation of the latter.⁷ Since the process of defining Bolshevism could itself be the subject of a lengthy thesis, what follows merely outlines our basic assumptions about the character of Bolshevism.⁸

Marx's critical analysis of capitalism, his vision of communism, together with his account of the agent, process and immediate goal of proletarian revolution, was buried by Kautsky, Bernstein and the other leaders of European Social Democracy. Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg resurrected it in the era of World War I. (Molyneux,1978,1981,1983; Harris,1968; Geras 1976; Cliff,1975,1976,1978,1979; Lowy,1976; Dunayevskaya,1973,1975; Leibman,1975; Lichtheim,1961; Harding,1983; Lindemann, 1983; Nettl,1969; Colletti,1972; Braunthal,1966,1967; Joll,1966) The 'Marxism' that was transmitted through the Second International (dominated by theorists like Kautsky and Plekhanov) to new generations of 'Marxists' consisted of far more than just a mechanical version of Marx's materialism. It

also included a political practice that reflected the philosophical underpinnings of the theory and violated the cardinal rules of Marx's revolutionary politics.

Social Democratic 'Marxism' preached the capture of the bourgeois state rather than its destruction. That capture was supposed to be the conscious act of the party leadership, while the working class membership of the elitist and bureaucratic party was to serve as the instrument by which the party leaders could form the executive of the 'new' state. (Harman,n.d.) Social Democracy abandoned the notion of proletarian internationalism in the struggle against capitalism, for a national alliance with its own ruling class against other nations. As a result, Social Democrats preached the idea of class harmony between capital and labour. This was a massive departure from Marx's theory of proletarian revolution. The social democrats substituted the party leadership for the working class as the agent of socialism, emphasized electoral based reform rather than revolution as the key to the process, and viewed a social democratic parliamentary majority as the immediate goal rather than a Commune-style workers' state.

In such circumstances, Lenin's State and Revolution, the Bolsheviks' slogan "All Power to the Soviets," and their unwavering commitment to international revolution, represented a major critique of the Second International's political strategy. Indeed, the political strategy of the Bolsheviks marked a return to themes found in the work of Marx. Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, the strategic basis for the 1917 revolution, echoed arguments developed by Marx in his analysis of the prospects for socialism in a backward country (Germany in Marx's case). Similarly, Lenin's theory of the party is reminiscent of certain arguments in Marx's 1850 Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League. Furthermore, Lenin's State and Revolution relies heavily upon Marx's

analysis of the Paris Commune. It was the Bolsheviks' political commitment to class struggle rather than class collaboration, their preoccupation with the destruction of the existing state rather than its capture, and their internationalism, which made it possible for them to actually recapture the essence of Marxism and develop the theory of proletarian revolution beyond Marx's initial formulations.

However, as an interpretation of Marx's more fundamental theories (e.g., historical materialism) Bolshevism was only a partial, though incomplete, break from the mechanical materialism of the Second International.⁹ Lenin and Trotsky's rejuvenation of a non-deterministic version of Marxism was never extended to a thorough reconsideration of the mechanical Marxism of the Second International. The revolutionary movement that generated and sustained the new ideas about the working class succumbed to the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the failure of the revolution in Western Europe. In those circumstances, the incomplete, but highly significant return of Lenin and Trotsky to the original vision and spirit of Marxism, was undercut by their own political and theoretical retreat. While not abandoning their break with the political orthodoxy of Kautsky, their political insights did not become the basis for a full fledged re-evaluation of the 'orthodox' version of historical materialism. (By the late 1920s, Stalin's counter-revolution in Russia had not only eliminated the last vestiges of workers' power, it had also consolidated a version of the Second International's mechanical materialism as the absolute orthodoxy for the vast majority of Marxists.)

Even though Lenin and Trotsky never completed their theoretical break from the Marxism of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Bernstein, the central political thrust of Bolshevism was fundamentally incompatible with that of Social Democracy (and with the Stalinist,

Maoist, Eurocommunist, and Third worldist versions of "Marxism" that developed later). Thus, in our view, the theory and practice of the Bolsheviks in the revolutionary upsurge of 1917-1923 represents the highest political accomplishment of revolutionary Marxism in the history of the working class, and the point of greatest contact between the theory and politics of revolutionary Marxism and the struggles of the working class.

As a result, any student of revolution who accepts the fundamental assumptions of Marx's theory of proletarian revolution -- that the working class is capable of its own self-emancipation through international socialist revolution -- must start with Bolshevism as the cornerstone of a Marxist theory capable of explaining proletarian revolution.

* * * * *

If Bolshevism was a resurrection of certain key elements of Marx's original argument, it was not simply the application of Marx's ideas to the circumstances of Russia in the early twentieth century.

Although the Bolsheviks remained unaware of some of Marx's most important writings and political conclusions, Bolshevism -- which is not identical to Marxism -- nevertheless represents the closest thing there is to a development of Marxism in the circumstances of the early 20th century.¹⁰ If Marxism was the theory of the international proletarian revolution as developed in the conditions of the mid-nineteenth century, Bolshevism can be defined as the reinterpretation of portions of Marx's legacy in the concrete social conditions of the class struggle in early twentieth century Europe, and in opposition to the revisionism of other 'Marxists'.

Using the work of Lakatos on the history and philosophy of science, we can say that Bolshevik theory was an attempt to defend the "scientific research program" launched

by Marx and Engels.(Lakatos,1976,1978; Burawoy 1989a,1989b; Callinicos, 1982,1990)

Lakatos argued that science develops not by the falsification of theory, but through the effort to defend theories from attempted refutations by others. For him, science was characterized by the mobilization of scientists to protect the premises of previous scientific achievements against the refutations by critics.(Burawoy,1989:761) In the process, they create what Lakatos called a scientific research program, composed of a set of hard core postulates accepted by all those who work within that tradition. Adherents to a given research program are committed to defending those hard core propositions from falsification by outsiders. They do so by developing auxiliary hypotheses designed to protect the hard core postulates from refutation. As this "protective belt" of auxiliary theories and hypotheses is modified and elaborated, the research program evolves. Successive versions of the theory are developed, composed of the core propositions and auxiliary theories designed to explain anomalies. Thus, a scientific research program is "a developing series of theories."(Lakatos, cited in Callinicos, 1982:181)

If we consider Marx as the originator of a scientific research program, and some of his fundamental ideas as the hard core of that research program (e.g., the materialist conception of history, the analysis the inherently contradictory nature of capitalism, the inevitability of class struggle, the potential of the working class for self-emancipation, the possibility of proletarian revolution, the nature of communism as a classless and stateless form of society, etc.), then Bolshevism can be understood as a later version of Marxism -- one that accepted all the hard core postulates of the original version, and developed some new auxiliary theories designed to explain certain anomalies. For example, the theory of imperialism developed by Lenin and Bukharin was designed to account for the development

of capitalism after Marx's death. Lenin's theory of the labour aristocracy was intended to account for the absence of mass revolutionary consciousness among the European working class.

Thus, as a theoretical current, Bolshevism was defined by the effort to defend Marx's original research program from the criticisms of Bernstein, Kautsky and others, by developing a series of auxiliary theories that would protect the hard core postulates of Marxism.

* * * * *

In practical terms, Bolshevism emerged as "a current of political thought and as a political party" through a gradual and semi-conscious process after the 1903 split with the Mensheviks. (SW,3:352; Molyneux,1978:37) From then until Lenin's death in 1924, a group of Russian revolutionaries went through "years of practical history unequalled anywhere in the world in terms of its wealth of experience." (SW,3:353) Besides the 1917 revolution, the character of Bolshevism

was shaped by the experience of the 1905 revolution, the period of reaction that followed it, and the later revolutionary upsurge; by operating illegally and in the Duma, in the heat of numerous industrial and political strikes, offensive and defensive battles, insurrection and civil war. It matured through extended ideological and political struggle, and by an analysis of its own experience, including its mistakes. Its (proponents-BM) had to fight against both the centrist Mensheviks and the ultra-lefts in its own ranks, at the same time as...struggling with the real problems of life in Russia. (Cliff, 1979:47)

The struggle against revisionism, and the experience of 1905 had given birth to a host of new ideas (e.g., Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, Lenin's theory of the party, and Luxemburg's theory of the mass strike) as the revolutionaries within the Second International sought to raise theory to the level of the revolutionary practice of the working class. When those ideas were verified by the revolutionary experience of 1917, they

became the foundation for the theory and practice of international proletarian revolution embodied in the Communist International.

But, politically and theoretically, Bolshevism was crystallized as a unique interpretation of Marxism by the events of 1917. As a worldview, it was embodied in a series of political organizations and their activities, the framework through which members of the Bolshevik party (and later the Communist International) shared a common set of experiences and political practices, and a common pool of ideas, theories and debates. In the writings of the leading Bolshevik theorists (especially Lenin and Trotsky), we find a host of theoretical, political and strategic innovations that point towards a partial recapturing of the essence of Marxism in the new circumstances of the epoch after World War I.

* * * * *

In this dissertation we focus on the writings of the two major contributors to the Bolshevik theory of revolution: Lenin and Trotsky, rather than work of Bukharin, Luxemburg, Gramsci or others. That is not because Lenin and Trotsky were the sole contributors to the defence and renewal of the Marxist research programme, but because their opportunity to gain direct experience of two Russian revolutions (1905 and 1917) meant their contribution to the analysis of revolution would be greater than the contribution of revolutionaries in other countries.

A second reason for focusing on the Bolshevik version of the theory of proletarian revolution, is the way the contributions of Lenin and Trotsky to the analysis of revolution have been obscured by Stalinism. Bolshevism reached the height of its influence during the revolutionary upsurge of 1917-1921. But with the defeat of the 1917-1923 revolutionary

movement in Europe, and the degeneration and defeat of the Russian Revolution during the 1920s, Bolshevism was pushed to the margins of the working class movement by Stalinism. Only the writings of Trotsky kept alive the tradition of revolutionary Marxism during the rise of fascism and Stalinism. (Hallas,1979; Mandel,1979; Molyneux,1981; Callinicos,1990)

Defending the importance and value of the Bolshevik tradition, does not necessitate a slavish and psychophantic interpretation of Bolshevism. On the contrary, it demands a critical attitude to both the theoretical and political accomplishments of the Bolsheviks. The understanding of Bolshevism that serves as the basis for this thesis, is a "critical" version of the theory. It starts from the assumption that the Bolsheviks made theoretical and political mistakes, in addition to making an enormous contribution to our understanding of the process by which proletarian revolution occurs.

(1.5) The Non-Bolshevik Portions of the "Marxist" Tradition

Although the Russian revolution of 1917 confirmed Marx's argument about the revolutionary potential of the working class, the events of that period split the "Marxist" tradition into several incompatible and irreconcilable camps: Bolshevism, Social Democracy, and a host of smaller currents (e.g., the ultra-leftism of the Council Communists). (Gombin,1979; Mattick,1978; Bottomore,1978; Loew,1979; Lindemann,1983; Braunthal, 1967; Claudin,1975; Hallas, 1985) By the end of the 1920s, the revolutionary tradition was further split, as the degeneration of the Russian Revolution split the Bolsheviks into Stalinists and Trotskyists.(Deutscher,1959; Molyneux,1981; Serge,1963,1973) Later, the

Stalinist camp was further split by the post World War II rise of Maoism and Eurocommunism, and the rise of Third World nationalism.

Despite the success of the Bolsheviks in 1917, not all 'Marxists' have been prepared to accept that Bolshevism is the legitimate extension of Marxism. Since 1917, the advocates of proletarian revolution have not only had to account for the failure of the world working class to duplicate the feat of 1917, they have also had to answer for the degeneration of the Russian revolution, and the rise of Stalinism.(RB*; Cliff,1974; Bellis, 1979; Mandel,1979; Callinicos,1983b; Claudin,1975) In our view, the civil war of 1918-1921 together with the failure of the Soviet revolution to spread into western Europe is sufficient to explain the bureaucratization -- and ultimately -- the demise of the Russian Revolution.(RB; Cliff,1974,1979; Hallas,1985; Mandel,1979) In turn, those developments undercut and discredited the Bolshevik revival of Marxism, making it possible for Stalinism to displace Bolshevism, and become almost hegemonic on the left.(Claudin,1975; Molyneux,1981; Hallas,1985)

With the degeneration of the Russian revolution, and without a successful duplication of 1917, Marx's political goal -- of proletarian self-emancipation through the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist state and its replacement by a workers' state --disappeared from the mainstream of the working class movement after the 1920s. (Since then, revolutionary crises have come and gone in countries with large working classes, without the presence of a substantial revolutionary organization that championed the revolutionary ideas of Marx and the Bolsheviks.) In its place remained the non-revolutionary, and often counter-revolutionary politics of European

* Sources given in the text without proper names and year of publication refer to the writings of Lenin and Trotsky. Thus, for example, RB refers to Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed.

social democracy and Stalin's Comintern, as the revolutionary core of Marxism was buried under the triple legacy of the defeat of the European revolution of 1917-1923: reformism, Stalinism and fascism. (Hallas, 1985; Tilak, 1947; James, 1973; Claudin, 1975; Mandel, 1979)

Since the defeat of the Russian Revolution, a host of other non-Marxist strategies to change capitalism have arisen, often mistakenly identifying themselves as part of the Marxist tradition. They include both the guerilla and parliamentary strategies popularized before 1917 by the Narodniks, the Mensheviks, and the German Social Democrats, and revived by Stalin, Mao, Guevera and others. (Harris, 1974; Birchall, 1974, 1986; Molyneux, 1983; Mandel, 1978; Salvadori, 1979; Claudin, 1975; Ali, 1984; Boggs, 1982; Westoby, 1981)

By the late 1960s, there were innumerable versions of revolutionary theory that claimed some basis in the Marxist tradition. Each of the new versions of 'Marxism' provided an analysis of the obstacles to revolutionary or parliamentary change, defined the nature of the changes to be accomplished, and pointed to a strategy for achieving those changes through the agency of a particular group or class(es). Despite their many undeniable differences, Stalinism, Maoism, Gueverism, Eurocommunism, and the other versions of 'Marxism' that replaced Bolshevism, all share something in common. Unlike Bolshevism, and unlike Marx's original theory, these political currents all substitute some other social entity for the conscious revolutionary activity of the working class -- when they identify the essential agent of the transition from capitalism to socialism.¹¹

Not surprisingly, if parliamentary deputies and party bureaucrats who represent a bloc of 'progressive forces', or peasant guerrillas and their middle class military leaders, are viewed as the essential agents of socialism, the substance of the goal itself is altered.

The change of agency is necessarily accompanied by a parallel shift in both the process by which change is achieved and the "socialism" which is the immediate outcome. With the agency, process and goal of revolution changed, the substance of Marx's thesis of proletarian revolution as the basis for the creation of a Commune style workers' state simply disappears. (Draper,1966,1970; McNally,1980; Geras,1973) The vision of socialism from below that originated with Marx and was revived by the Bolsheviks, was replaced by one that could only appeal to the party bureaucrats and trade union officials who seek to elevate themselves to power through the social democratic and communist parties: the vision of a bureaucratic state capitalism run from above.(Molyneux,1983; McNally,1980)

Thus, by our criteria, Social Democracy, Stalinism, Maoism, Eurocommunism, Castroism and other forms of third world nationalism, cannot be considered part of the Marxist tradition. None of these theories analyzes capitalism from the standpoint of the proletariat. They mix proletarian and bourgeois viewpoints, because they have their material base in the various strata of the petit bourgeoisie that stand between labour and capital (ranging from the old petit bourgeoisie, small employers and peasants, to the new petit bourgeoisie, trade union bureaucrats and salaried employees in positions of authority over the working class). The commitment of these theories to defence of the national state and hostility to the self-emancipation of the working class, indicates that in addition to abandoning the class position of the proletariat, they have ended up supporting the further development of capitalism. (Molyneux, 1983:46)

To conclude, we can say that even on the basis of this narrow comparison, Bolshevism seems to represent a greater continuity with the theory and practice of Marx than any of the other twentieth century versions of 'Marxism'. Unlike social democracy,

Stalinism, Maoism and Third World nationalism, Bolshevism retained a focus on proletarian revolutionary movements and the establishment of workers' states as the key to studying efforts to bring about the transition from capitalism to socialism. Thus, any examination of Marxist theorists purporting to explain the phenomenon of revolutionary change, must start with Bolshevism and its rich legacy of concepts, theories, political strategies, and historical analyses of proletarian revolution.

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If Stalinism, Social Democracy, and Maoism can all be rejected as part of the real Marxist tradition, then the continuation of the Bolshevik tradition can be found in the Trotskyist tradition -- broadly defined. After the rise of Stalinism, the Marxist vision of proletarian revolution -- as developed by the Bolsheviks -- was defended against Stalinist and social democratic critics.(Molyneux,1981; Mandel,1978,1979a, 1979b; Frank,1979; Hallas,1979; Callinicos,1990) Since the 1930s, it is members of the Trotskyist tradition who have defended the revolutionary "traditions of October 1917...(the-BM) transformation of society by the proletariat, democratically organized through workers' councils."(Callinicos,1990:2-3) Not only have the Trotskyists tried to extend and generalize the work of the Bolsheviks on strategy and tactics, they have also pioneered a Marxist analysis of Stalinism and the regime it spawned.(Callinocs,1990:88) Today, the Trotskyist tradition remains small and fragmented. Of course, "the marginality and fragmentation of the Trotskyist movement do not of themselves constitute grounds for dismissing the ideas which it embodies and has sought...to develop." (Callinicos,1990:2)

Only with the post-1956 crisis of Stalinism (with the invasion of Hungary, Khrushchev's secret speech, and the split between Russia and China) and the development of the radical student movement in the 1960s, did Marx's revolutionary vision regain a substantial audience. The creation of new revolutionary organizations in the 1960s and the early 1970s, and the spread of "Marxist" ideas among a new generation of left wing academics, created a milieu in which the ideas of Lenin, Trotsky and Marx the revolutionary -- could be excavated and rediscovered. (Ali, 1978; Birchall, 1974; Harman, 1979; Callinicos, 1982)

(1.6) - The Bolshevik Theory of Revolution, and the Study of the Revolutionary Process

Now that we have established that a Marxist explanation of the failure for the 1917 revolution to be duplicated should be rooted in the Bolshevik tradition of analysis, we have to consider what the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution consists of.

Not only are there many competing versions of Marxism: within the revolutionary tradition, there are also many different phenomena of interest to those who study 'revolutions.' In the first half of this century, most analysts of 'revolution' were concerned with the sort of phenomenon that occurred in Russia in 1917, and that almost occurred in other European countries in the period after the war: proletarian uprisings aimed at smashing the existing state, eliminating capitalist exploitation and challenging the world dominance of capitalism.

Since 1945, revolutionary upheavals featuring large working class movements have occurred in a variety of countries (e.g., Hungary, Portugal, Chile, Iran, Poland, Bolivia,

etc.), only to be ignored by many 'Marxist' commentators. For most commentators, interest in the phenomenon of revolution has shifted from a concern with working class movements to peasant revolutions. Thus, in the last few decades, the analysis of revolution -- both by 'Marxists' and social scientists -- has been dominated by consideration of a phenomenon very different from proletarian revolution: the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles that have led to changes in the Third World. In countries like China, Cuba, and Vietnam, those movements have been led by the educated middle classes, spouting a nationalist and usually populist rhetoric to mobilize the peasantry and the urban underclasses in the establishment of a new regime. Statism and national economic development on behalf of the entire nation have been the expressed goal, rather than the elimination of exploitation and oppression through workers' control of the economy and the creation of a commune style workers' state.

Adhering to the classical ideas of Marxism, this dissertation focuses on revolutionary upheavals that have featured a highly mobilized working class.

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In section 1.1 above, we argued that the priority for developing a Marxist explanation for the absence of a successful workers' revolution lies not in an analysis of the long-term structural causes of large-scale class confrontations, but in an examination of the processes and outcomes of such crises. The distinction between the long term causes of revolutionary crises, the processes by which they are played out, and their outcomes, is crucial to any understanding of the theory of proletarian revolution.

In recent years there has been a spate of new studies on the leading figures of the Bolshevik Party, analyzing the Bolshevik "theory of revolution" contained in the writings of

Lenin and Trotsky. (Molyneux,1981; Stokes,1982; Lane,1981). In each case, these commentators have analyzed the entirety of Lenin and Trotsky's social and political thought, just like Harding (1983) and Knei-Paz (1978) who have published studies of the "thought" of Lenin and Trotsky respectively. By equating Lenin or Trotsky's "theory of revolution" with the totality of their "thought," all of these authors have presented wide ranging discussions of Lenin and Trotsky's Marxism. For them, the Bolshevik theory of proletarian revolution subsumes the analysis of the process by which revolution occurs within a global account of the contradictions of capitalism (i.e., the long-term causes of revolution) and the goal of revolution, its long term socialist outcome. (See Table 1.1 below, for a breakdown of these three components of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution.) However, in studying the Bolshevik theory of revolution in this broad sense, these studies have largely neglected the more specific Bolshevik analysis of the revolutionary process -- the immediate process by which revolutionary social crises actually develop and are resolved, whether in a revolutionary or non-revolutionary way.

This narrower Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, focuses on neither the long term causes of proletarian revolution (i.e., the totality of economic, political and cultural contradictions of capitalism and the objective social forces that are the long term preconditions and causes of a revolutionary crisis), nor the long term outcome of the transition to socialism (i.e., the post-insurrectionary transition from the newly established workers' state to communism).(Larsson,1970:13-14) Instead, it is concerned with a much narrower range of problems: the immediate causes, processes and short-term outcomes of revolutionary crises. It is only one component of the more general theory of proletarian revolution found in the work of the Bolsheviks, but it is this narrower component of the

broader, all encompassing "theory of revolution," which this dissertation focuses upon. In other words, we will be concerned with phenomena like "revolutionary situations," "dual power," "soviets," "mass strikes," and "insurrections." In doing so, we will presuppose many of the elements that are normally considered to be the constituent parts of the Marxist or Bolshevik theory of proletarian revolution (e.g., the theory of capitalist development, the theory of classes, the theory of the withering away of the state in the transition from socialism to communism, etc.).

FIGURE 1.1: THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE MARXIST THEORY OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

1) THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM (THE LONG TERM CAUSES OF REVOLUTIONARY CRISES)

- (a) class nature of society: the contradictory relations of exploitation and oppression between the ruling classes (e.g., the capitalist class, the landlord class, etc.) and the underclasses (e.g., the proletariat, the peasantry, etc.) in all their economic, political, and ideological manifestations
- (b) forms of capitalist competition (economic, political and military) and crisis
- (c) objective revolutionary possibilities of each epoch of capitalism, depending on the particular social weight of various classes at a specific conjuncture

2) THEORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

- (a) immediate, short term causes, or 'triggers' of revolutionary crises (e.g., wars, economic crises, general strikes, etc.)
- (b) mechanisms and features of the actual process of proletarian revolution: the process of class polarization
- (c) immediate, short term outcomes of the revolutionary process: counter-revolution, proletarian revolution, evaporation of the revolutionary situation, etc.

3) THEORY OF THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM (THE LONG TERM OUTCOME OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION)

- (a) from political revolution and the alteration of state structures to social revolution and the change of class structure: the functioning of the new workers' state
- (b) from national revolution to international revolution: the battle against international and domestic counter-revolution
- (c) the withering away of the state and communism

This naturally raises the question of why anybody might want to study the phenomena covered by the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process rather than those covered by the broader theory of revolution. There is at least one obvious reason. The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process enables us to study in detail the standard features and dynamics of revolutionary crises, the mechanisms by which profound crises that afflict an existing social order get resolved -- whether in a revolutionary manner or not. In other words, when we treat the revolutionary crises that arise in capitalist society as a unit of analysis, we focus on processes rather than long-term causes or long-term outcomes.

(1.7) Revitalizing Bolshevism: Our Strategy for Examining the Explanatory Value of a Neglected Theory

This dissertation argues that the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process provides us with the basis for explaining the inability of the working class to achieve power in any country, since 1917. To substantiate that claim, we use the following strategy: first, we present a clear summary of the Bolshevik theory of revolution (Chapter 2.0); second, we evaluate Bolshevik theory against the historical evidence about the revolutionary crisis of 1917 in Russia (Chapter 3.0); third, we consider whether it is legitimate to use a theory developed to analyze phenomena in one conjuncture (revolutionary Europe in 1917-1923) to examine revolutionary phenomena in a different period (i.e., the 1970s and 1980s) (Chapter 4.0); fourth, we supplement the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process with certain

auxiliary theories designed to deal with anomalies Lenin and Trotsky had some difficulty with (e.g., the non-revolutionary consciousness of workers in western Europe); finally, we check how well the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process explains the experience of revolutionary crises in another conjuncture, by using it to evaluate the events in Chile (1970-73), Portugal (1974-75) and Poland (1980-81) (Chapters 5.0, 6.0 and 7.0).

The Chapters on the revolutionary crises in Chile (1972-73), Portugal (1974-75) and Poland (1980-81), the more substantive portion of this dissertation, each follow the same format. We look at the contradictions of capitalism in each country on the eve of the crisis, examine the dynamics of the revolutionary process in each case, and consider the short-term outcome that resulted. We also examine the main features of the revolutionary process in each case, including the forms of organization and class struggle generated by the working class, as well as the forms of consciousness and political organization that characterized the revolutionary period. Each of the three chapters concludes with an evaluation of the revolutionary crisis in light of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process.

This dissertation undertakes these tasks in an effort to enrich and revitalize the theory of revolution found in the writings of the Bolsheviks. By comparing Bolshevik theory with historical experience (both past and recent), this dissertation contributes to the Marxist tradition as one which explains revolutions in order to facilitate making them -- though the latter task is not addressed here.

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Neither the comparison of cases of revolution, nor even the evaluation of theory in the light of historical evidence, is novel in the literature on revolution. Nevertheless, our

rationale for attempting a Marxist explanation for the failure of workers' revolution to succeed since 1917, through an investigation of the particular historical cases we have chosen (i.e., Russia in 1917, Chile in 1970-73, Portugal in 1974-75 and Poland in 1980-81) has to be justified. In Chapter (4.0) we explain why we chose to discuss the recent revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland rather than those that occurred in Hungary, Iran, Nicaragua, France, or Bolivia. And, in Chapter (3.0) we explain why we decided to examine the historical experience of the Russian Revolution, rather than the German revolution of 1918-1923, the Paris Commune or the Italian occupation of the factories in 1920.

In addition, Chapter (4.0) outlines the Bolsheviks' missing party thesis: the claim that the working class could not seize control of state power and establish a commune style workers' state, without the existence of a mass revolutionary party composed of the vanguard of the working class. That claim, emerging out of the experience of 1917-1923, is vital to our argument.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

1. For an analysis of this explicitly counter-revolutionary current in the sociology of revolution, see Aya (1979), Kaplan, (1973:xxi), Leys (1982), Taylor (1984), O'Brien (1979), Bernstein (1979), Blackburn (1969), Buxton (1985).
2. Though Marx's practical experience as a revolutionary was limited to direct involvement in the 1848 revolutions in Europe, and close association with the Paris Commune of 1871, both he and Engels followed the international class struggle closely and studied the history of previous revolutions in detail. (Callinicos, 1983a; Lichtheim, 1961; Draper, 1977, 1978, 1986; Gilbert, 1981)
3. The rise of radical sociology in the last two decades has created a debate about the relationship between Marxism and sociology. Among those who advocate a synthesis of Marxism and sociology are Gouldner (1970), Giddens (1973), Mills (1959) and Bottomore (1975). Marxist opponents of that view include Shaw (1972, 1975), Therborn (1976), Clarke (1982) and Swingewood (1970, 1975).
4. For critical commentaries on Moore, see Smith (1983, 1984a, 1984b), Zelnik (1982), Wiener (1975, 1976, 1979), and Stedman Jones (1980). Skocpol's work has been critically assessed by Levine (1985, 1987), Vieux (1988), Boswell (1986), Burawoy (1989), Himmelstein (1981) and Nichols (1986). Despite the shortcomings of their work, the writings of Moore and Skocpol undeniably represent the high point of the radical sociology of revolution. (Dunn, 1982:313) It has become the major reference point for other radical sociologists doing work in this field (e.g., Trimberger 1978; Walton, 1984; Budiman, 1981; Parsa, 1985; Goldstone, 1980, 1982; Aya, 1979, 1984; Gugler, 1982; Adelman, 1985).
5. Although neither Moore nor Skocpol undertakes a detailed examination of the Bolshevik theory of revolution, much of their work is framed as a critique of Marxism and Bolshevism. See the arguments and comments scattered throughout both Moore's book Injustice (especially Chapter 10), and Skocpol's States and Social Revolutions.
6. Although a great deal of Moore's writings pertain to Russia, a single Chapter in Injustice provides his most extensive investigation of the Russian Revolution. In Skocpol's case, the Russian Revolution is one of the three revolutions her book States and Social Revolutions focuses on. But, her extreme structuralism prevents her from really analyzing the events of 1917, or the strategy of the Bolsheviks in a serious way.
7. In this dissertation we use the term "Bolshevism" rather than more common "Leninism," because "during Lenin's lifetime, the expressions 'Leninist' and 'Leninism' were generally used by enemies of the Bolsheviks, more often than not in a pejorative sense. Lenin

described himself as a Marxist and even his closest comrades took the view that he was not the creator of any new doctrine or independent line of thought: he had merely put into practice the doctrines propounded by Marx and Engels." (Medvedev, 1981:12) Furthermore, Bolshevism incorporates much more than simply Lenin's theoretical and practical contributions to the revolutionary movement. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, and the many other revolutionaries who participated in the first four Congresses of the Communist International, also must be counted as part of that tradition.

8. Obviously, we can not undertake a comparative review of Marxist theory in this dissertation. The literature on that subject is abundant. But there are some crucial landmarks. On the discontinuities between Bolshevism and the Marxism of the Second International, see: Colletti (1972), Lowy (1981), Molyneux (1981), Harris (1968), Dunayevskaya (1971,1973). On the discontinuities between Bolshevism and Stalinism, see: Harris (1968), Medvedev (1971,1981), Cohen (1977), Serge (1963,1973). Finally, on the continuities between Bolshevism and Marxism, see Harris (1968), Molyneux (1978) and Lowy (1976,1981).

9. Harris argues that "Lenin's theoretical work is incomplete, but it does constitute, in the conditions he faced, something of a brief renaissance of the spirit of Marx's work." (1968:152,138-152,166) A similar view is developed in Molyneux (1978:69-78; 1981:1-14).

10. Because books like The German Ideology, the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, and the Grundrisse remained unavailable, making it difficult for Lenin and Trotsky to fully appreciate Marx's emphasis on the alienation of human labour -- for example.(Molyneux,1981:2)

11. For a specifically Marxist critique of the theories and strategies for achieving socialism in the Maoist, Stalinist and Eurocommunist political currents, see the following sources: on Maoism, see Harris (1974,1978), Gluckstein (1957), Westoby (1981), Molyneux (1983), Lew (1975), Isaacs (1938), Lowy (1981); on Third World nationalism, see: Harris (1974,1978), Westoby (1981), Molyneux (1983), Lowy (1981), Mandel (1979b), Binns (1981), and Cliff (1983); for critiques of Stalinism and Eurocommunism, see Ali (1984), Cliff, (1974), Harman (1983), Barker (1981), Birchall (1974,1986), Westoby (1981), Mandel (1978,1979), Barker (1979), and Spencer (1979).

CHAPTER (2.0) THE BOLSHEVIK THEORY OF REVOLUTION AND THE STUDY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

In Chapter 1, we identified the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process as our object of study. In this Chapter, we will outline that theory, examining the basic concepts employed by Lenin and Trotsky as they analyzed the causes, features, dynamics and outcomes of revolutionary crises. Throughout this Chapter, we will demonstrate that the Bolsheviks very carefully avoided the kind of voluntarism and determinism characteristic of the work of other advocates of 'proletarian revolution' (e.g., August Blanqui and Karl Kautsky). Like Marx, the Bolsheviks sought to balance the importance of objective and subjective factors in the analysis of the phenomena that are typical of a revolutionary crisis. They succeeded in developing the concepts arguments necessary to any serious study of the revolutionary process.

(2.1) Blanqui, Marx and Kautsky: The Precursors to Bolshevism in the Analysis of the Process of Workers' Revolution

The work of Auguste Blanqui, Karl Marx and Karl Kautsky epitomize the three main tendencies among pre-Bolshevik advocates of proletarian revolution. Blanqui was a romantic and a voluntarist (a precursor of the 'council communist' current Lenin later called "ultra-leftist"), who viewed proletarian revolution as an act of will, and consequently took little or no account of the objective preconditions for success. (Larsson, 1970; Spitzer, 1957) On the other hand, Kautsky was a determinist and a fatalist who subscribed to a 'naturalist' theory of proletarian revolution -- the view that revolutions happen

automatically, without planned intervention by revolutionaries, as the inevitable product of the contradictions of capitalism and the laws of history.(Kautsky,1909:5-6; Molyneux,1983:27; Colletti,1972:52-56; Salvadori,1979; Lichtheim,1961:259-277) By contrast, Marx tried to steer a course between those two sorts of positions.¹ He developed a 'realist' theory of proletarian revolution, that attributed a role to both objective social conditions and human and class agency.(Kamenka,1979:78-79; Kumar,1971:35-36) Hence, Marx's often quoted comment that "Men make their own history, but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."(Marx,1963:15)

These three approaches to the study of proletarian revolution (summarized in Figure 2.1 below) provided the basic spectrum of revolutionary theory the Bolsheviks could draw upon in developing their theory of the revolutionary process.² But, the voluntarism of Blanqui's theory and the determinism of Kautsky's view meant neither of them treated the revolutionary process seriously. If there are no objective preconditions for revolution (as with Blanqui), then the revolutionary process gets reduced to a technical question (e.g the availability of weapons and conspirators for the insurrection). On the other hand, if the development of socialism is assured by the objective contradictions of capitalism and the laws of history (as with Kautsky), then analysis of the revolutionary process is not vital.

Unlike both Blanqui and Kautsky, Marx actually did see a purpose in analyzing the revolutionary process. He neither reduced that process to insurrection (like Blanqui), nor collapsed it into an account of how the existing contradictions of capitalism would inevitably create socialism (like Kautsky). But, Marx never actually discussed the features and dynamics of the revolutionary process in the same detailed way the Bolsheviks later

did. His observations on the revolutionary process cannot easily be compared with the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on 1917. Because many of the characteristic forms of proletarian revolutionary struggle had not emerged in 1848 or even 1871 (e.g., factory committees, soviets and mass political parties), Marx and Engels could not develop a detailed understanding of the process of proletarian revolution.(Blackburn,1977:62) Marx made his contribution to the theory of the proletarian revolution in a period of historical transition between the bourgeois revolution of 1789 and the proletarian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. (Lowy,1981:53; Postgate,1962:viii) That imposed certain objective limitations on his ability to theorize about proletarian revolutions, since the process by which they occur differs so markedly from the process of bourgeois revolutions.³

FIGURE 2.1: BLANQUI, KAUTSKY AND MARX ON THE PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

	<u>existence of an objective economic & political crisis</u>	<u>conscious revolution- ary organization and action by the masses</u>
<u>determinists</u> like Kautsky	+	-
<u>voluntarists</u> **		
-type 1: Blanqui	-	-
-type 2: ultra-leftists like Pannekoek	-	+
<u>revolutionary socialists</u> like Marx, Lenin, and Bolsheviks	+	+

**** NOTE:** There is a critical difference between Blanquists and the ultra-leftists of Lenin's era (e.g., Pannekoek). The former believe conscious revolutionary organization and action by the masses is not necessary for an insurrection, whereas the latter do.

Because of limitations on space we cannot discuss the work of Blanqui, Marx and Kautsky any further here. However, a close examination of what these three authors say about the immediate causes, processes and outcomes of proletarian revolution shows the basic continuity between Marx's efforts and those of the Bolsheviks. Like Marx, Lenin and Trotsky were opponents of both the subjectivism of Blanqui and the objectivism of Kautsky when it came to the analysis of revolution.

Prior to 1917, Kautsky's version of the theory of proletarian revolution was far more influential within the Second International than Marx's original argument. The fragmented revolutionary current within the Second International, consisting of people like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg, followed Marx in treating the revolutionary process as a critical object of study. Like Kautsky, the revolutionaries analyzed the objective contradictions of capitalism, and considered the nature of socialism. But unlike Kautsky and ultra-leftists like Pannekoek, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg studied all the forms and dynamics of working class struggle to better understand how proletarian mass action might create socialism. Analyzing mass strikes, armed insurrections, street demonstrations, mutinies and other phenomena, the revolutionary current within the Second International treated the revolutionary process as a distinct and vital object of study.

Kautsky acknowledged the inevitability of economic and political crises, but wanted to restrict proletarian activity to a tightly controlled, gradual and defensive struggle for parliamentary power. The ultra-leftists ignored the objective development of capitalist crises, viewing the masses as always ready for conscious revolutionary action.⁴ Of the three

ostensibly 'Marxist' political currents within the Second International, only the Bolsheviks (and Luxemburg) examined both the objective and subjective preconditions for the transition to socialism in a serious manner. For the Bolsheviks, the transition to socialism could only result from the combination of a major crisis of the existing system (both economic and political) and the conscious revolutionary activity of the mass of the working class. In their view, the natural development of capitalist competition (both economic and military) would inevitably create revolutionary crises featuring mass action by the working class which could result in the creation of socialism, provided the working class became consciously revolutionary and generated the organization necessary to carry out a proletarian insurrection.

By identifying the revolutionary process as a distinct object of study, the Bolsheviks avoided the main problems of those commentators who either collapsed the analysis of the revolutionary process into a discussion of the objective contradictions of capitalism, or tried to subordinate it to a preoccupation with the outcome of such revolutions. They understood there was nothing automatic about the transition to socialism, despite the recurrent breakdowns of capitalism. They also realized that proletarian revolution was more than just an act of will, even if organization and consciousness were vital to its success.

The revolutionaries (Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg) made their theoretical breakthrough, during and after the Russian revolution of 1905-1907. That event forced them to undertake a serious analysis of the revolutionary process, while giving them their first direct experience in revolutionary struggle -- experience during the most 'proletarian' uprising to that date. (IWC,3:135-144; Shanin,1986:4-6) Out of that experience, they developed a variety of practical and theoretical differences from the dominant currents of

centrism (Kautsky) and revisionism (Bernstein), focused on Lenin's theory of the party (and its embodiment in the Bolshevik Party), Rosa Luxemburg's theory of the mass strike, and Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Each of these new revolutionary ideas broke from the determinism of Kautsky and contributed enormously to the eventual development of a Marxist theory of the revolutionary process.

It would take a series of events, including the onset of World War I, the collapse of the Second International, the success of the Russian revolution in October 1917 and the initial defeat of the German revolution in November 1918-January 1919 to weld these new insights into a real theoretical and political alternative, applicable to the revolutionary struggle beyond Russia and Germany. The emergence of a new theory about the revolutionary process -- as expressed in the arguments and deliberations of the first four congresses of the Communist International -- meant the crystallization of a political alternative to the Second International's reformism.

The core of the revolutionary current within the Second International, were the Bolsheviks. It was their theoretical work and their practical revolutionary accomplishments in 1917 that made the greatest contributions to a theory of the revolutionary process.

(2.2) - The Bolsheviks and the Debate over the Strategy for Revolution in Russia and Europe: 1905 and 1917

Before we can discuss the theory of the revolutionary process in the writings of Lenin and Trotsky, we have to outline their overall analysis of the prospects for revolution in Russia and Europe. Only then will their evaluation of the revolutionary process and their

tactical decisions during 1917 make any sense. For Marxists, the distinction between strategy and tactics, parallels that between the broad theory of proletarian revolution and the much narrower theory of the revolutionary process. Strategy is the assessment of the general disposition of class forces within a particular society and the world system, plus the determination of which class will be the driving force of a revolution; it is an evaluation of the whole process by which the contradictions of capitalism will create openings for particular classes to seize power and alter the social order. On the other hand, tactics refer to the specific actions taken by classes and revolutionaries during the revolutionary process, in order to facilitate a revolutionary outcome.(Geras,1976:74; LO:6; TAL:75; Cliff,1975:253-254) In Lenin's view tactical decisions should flow from a strategic appraisal of the objective character of society (i.e., the nature of the relations between all classes in society, the stage of development reached, and the character of relations with other countries) and the goal the revolutionary movement can achieve (i.e., whether a socialist revolution is possible).(Harding, 1981:32) Since strategy always takes precedence over tactics, we can hardly make sense of the Bolsheviks' discussion of the revolutionary process, without first considering their strategic assessment of the contradictions of Czarist and European society, and the prospects for socialism.

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Three slogans summarize the main strategic views of the "Marxists" who participated in the 1905 revolution: the Mensheviks (e.g., Axelrod, Plekhanov, Martov, etc.) called for a "bourgeois-democratic revolution"; Lenin and the Bolsheviks advocated a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" (i.e., a radical version of a bourgeois revolution), while Trotsky favored a "permanent revolution" (i.e., a proletarian

revolution). While Lenin and Trotsky had quite different perspectives on the nature and tasks of the Russian revolution in 1905, what they shared in common (an emphasis on the feebleness of the Russian bourgeoisie, and the need for independent proletarian action in its own class interests) proved more important in the long run.

The Mensheviks adhered to the orthodox evolutionism of the Second International, believing the Russian revolution would be limited to the establishment of bourgeois democracy, since neither the economic nor the political prerequisites for socialism existed in Russia. Their strategic perspective was based on a rigid two-stage theory that made a prolonged period of capitalist development and bourgeois democracy necessary, to create the objective preconditions for a subsequent socialist revolution. Since the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution required bourgeois domination of both the state and the economy, the Mensheviks devoted their energy to mobilizing the working class in support of a bourgeois revolution.(Cliff, 1975:196-199; Ascher,1976:12-21) Not surprisingly, the Menshevik efforts to curtail various revolutionary initiatives by the working class, undercut their appreciation of the novelty of the revolutionary process during the 1905-1907 and 1917 revolutions.

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In 1905, Lenin also assumed Russia's backwardness would limit the revolution to the creation of a bourgeois-democratic regime. He explicitly rejected the idea the revolution against the Czar could be a 'socialist' revolution.(Harding,1977:66-69, 123-134,213-218) However, the Bolsheviks did not believe the timid Russian bourgeoisie would lead the revolution, and unlike the Mensheviks, they refused to subordinate working class interests to the liberals.(Molyneux,1981:20) Instead, Lenin argued the bourgeois-democratic

revolution had to be carried out by an alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, against both the autocracy and the bourgeoisie. These strategic differences with the Mensheviks stemmed from Lenin's belief that the weak Russian bourgeoisie would betray the revolution against autocracy by selling out to the landlord class long before the last remnants of Czarism and feudalism were thoroughly smashed -- just as the German bourgeoisie had during the 1848 revolution. (Leibman, 1975:64-69; Cliff,1975:139-149)

Accordingly, Lenin sought to prevent the revolution from being short-circuited in two ways: first, by "raising the independence, the political consciousness and the fighting spirit of the proletariat to the maximum," and by building an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. (CW,12:106; Molyneux, 1981:20) In this way the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution could become a radical "democratic" one, in which the proletariat and peasantry fought a bourgeois-landlord alliance to establish a new state dominated by the radical petit bourgeoisie.⁵

Because Lenin viewed the coming Russian revolution as a bourgeois-democratic one prior to 1917 (albeit a novel, radicalized version of such a revolution), he did not analyze the events of 1905 as those of a proletarian revolution. In his view, it was proletarian in form (i.e., in methods and leadership), but not in its social content.(CW,23:238-239) That evaluation undercut his ability to study the process of workers' revolution. However, after 1914, Lenin shifted his focus from Russia to the coming revolution in Europe -- one which he believed would be proletarian in both form and content, since all the objective preconditions for socialist revolution existed in Europe,

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Like Lenin, Trotsky was skeptical about the revolutionary capacities of the bourgeoisie. Even though the task of eliminating the absolutist state and the last vestiges of feudalism in the countryside made the Russian revolution a 'bourgeois' one, the struggle could not be led by the bourgeoisie. After 1848, the European bourgeoisie had abandoned the struggle to eradicate the old order, out of fear of the radicalization the working class underwent during periods of social instability. Therefore, the "bourgeois revolution" in Russia would have to adopt 'proletarian' methods. Furthermore, it would be led by the working class, since neither the peasantry nor the petit bourgeoisie could lead it successfully.(1905:49-56)

But Trotsky went beyond Lenin, to argue the Russian revolution would be proletarian not only in form, but also in content. In his view, during "this bourgeois revolution without a bourgeoisie, the proletariat (would be-BM)...driven, by the internal progress of events, towards hegemony over the peasantry and to the struggle for state power."(1905:55) The logic of the class struggle dictated that a bourgeois democratic revolution in a backward country like Russia, would necessarily grow over into a struggle for workers' power, because the proletariat would be forced by circumstances to encroach upon the economic power of the bourgeoisie. The contradiction between a working class that was leading a successful revolution and a counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie that still dominated the economy, would push the former towards a struggle for hegemony over the peasantry and the achievement of socialism -- without an intervening period of bourgeois democracy or capitalist development. Furthermore, the backwardness of Russia meant a proletarian revolution could only survive if it quickly spread into Europe, socialism in one country being an impossible achievement in a world capitalist system. (1905:vi-vii,317-318)

Thus, Trotsky rejected the two-stage theory of revolution adhered to by the Mensheviks, who claimed Russia must follow the historical path of Western Europe and undergo a prolonged period of bourgeois democracy prior to a workers' revolution.(1905:331; Lowy,1981:30-69; Molyneux,1981:1-14,52,64,195-197) Trotsky's explicit rejection of the rigid evolutionism of the Second International, formulated in his theory of permanent revolution, was a brilliant strategic forecast of the 1917 revolution. (Molyneux,1981; Cliff,1983; Lowy,1981)

Whereas Lenin's mistaken view that the Russian revolution would be proletarian in form but bourgeois in content did not prevent him from studying the revolutionary process, Trotsky's conclusion the revolution would be proletarian in both form and content steered him towards a study of that process. Because both theorists accepted the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, their conception of the revolutionary process was bound to share much in common. What set them apart from the Mensheviks) was the fact they both bothered to study the specific forms, processes and mechanics of the struggles of the working class during a revolutionary crisis. Both learned important, though different lessons from their analysis of 1905, enabling them to play a critical role in 1917.

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The events of 1917 confirmed Trotsky's strategic perspective for the Russian revolution. (Molyneux,1981:29-42) As anticipated, the revolutionary process of 1917 posed the question of workers' power, despite Russia's backwardness. The anti-Czarist revolution of February 1917, carried out by the working class and the soldiers of Petrograd, grew over into a proletarian revolution without any intervening period of capitalist development. Furthermore, the events of 1917 also confirmed Trotsky's claims about the political

incapacities of both the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Prior to February 1917, the bourgeoisie was unable to mount a coup against the decaying Czarist regime, and after the proletarian uprising it was unwilling to break with the landowners and push through bourgeois democratic reforms (e.g., agrarian reform, representative government, etc.). Likewise, the peasants proved incapable of pursuing an independent political course during 1917, as they alternately followed the lead provided by the bourgeoisie and -- by late summer -- the working class. Thus, as Trotsky had predicted, the only class capable of carrying out the bourgeois democratic tasks of the revolution was the working class. During the struggle to democratize Russia, the working class had to remain permanently mobilized, guaranteeing the fight for democracy would grow over into a fight for socialism. Finally, the 1917 revolution confirmed Trotsky's argument about the international character of the revolution. Not only did the Russian revolution have an enormous impact on the class struggle elsewhere, but the subsequent degeneration of the isolated soviet regime -- stemming from the failure of the socialist revolution in the West -- confirmed Trotsky's argument that socialism could not be built in one country. (Molyneux, 1981: 29-32)⁶

If the Russian revolution of 1917 confirmed the strategic perspective developed by Trotsky, it revealed the inadequacies of Lenin's previous strategy of the "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry." Since 1905, Lenin had argued the Russian revolution would be proletarian in form, but bourgeois in content. However, in 1917, he abandoned the established Bolshevik strategy for the Russian revolution in favor of a new one that was indistinguishable from Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. (CW, 35:239, 241; Leibman, 1975:79-83; Cliff, 1975:196-207; 1976:111-130; Lowy, 1976; 1981:58-69)⁷ The strategic perspective on which the October insurrection was premised,

was that the revolution would be proletarian (though not yet not socialist) in content as well as in its methods. Lenin's new view, summarized in his April Theses, urged the working class not to support the bourgeois Provisional Government or the war it continued to wage, but to create a commune-style Soviet government which could complete the bourgeois revolution, begin the transition to socialism, and help ignite the socialist revolution in Europe.

Lenin abandoned his old strategy for at least three reasons.⁸ In the first place, Lenin's old strategy assumed the peasantry had the capacity to act as an independent political force in alliance with the proletariat in a radical bourgeois regime. (CW,10:260,263,340-341) However, after the February revolution in 1917, the peasantry (represented in the Petrograd soviet by the soldiers) followed its moderate socialist leadership (in the Socialist Revolutionary Party) into an alliance with the new bourgeois Provisional Government. Thus, although the worker and peasant delegates in the soviet embodied the 'democratic dictatorship' Lenin had advocated, the inability of the peasantry to act independently of the bourgeoisie made the democratic dictatorship tantamount to a bourgeois dictatorship. (SR:119-123)

Lenin's new strategy was premised on a complete re-evaluation of the peasantry's capacity for independent revolutionary activity.(CW,25:119-120,203,281) After February 1917, Lenin agreed with Trotsky's view that the peasantry was incapable of acting as an independent political force.(CW,32:277-278) Lenin did not accept peasant support for the Provisional Government as a given. He wanted the working class to fight for the leadership of the peasantry, recognizing the importance of peasant support for a proletarian revolution.(CW,24:45)

A second reason why Lenin abandoned his old strategy of the "democratic dictatorship" stems from his changed evaluation of the prospects for capitalist development in Russia. The "democratic dictatorship" formula assumed a radical bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia could lead to further capitalist development, laying the foundation for a subsequent socialist revolution. However, Lenin's wartime study of imperialism and the world economy convinced him international capitalism had entered a period of wars and revolutions coincident with its decline. Under those circumstances, an expansion of Russian capitalism was simply unthinkable. There could be no prolonged period of growth during the interval between a bourgeois revolution and a future socialist one. Thus, the agrarian backwardness of Russia could not be changed by a mere bourgeois democratic revolution, even if it was led by a coalition of the proletariat and peasantry. (Mandel, 1975:99) In other words, a two stage revolution, with the bourgeois democratic (or even radical democratic) stage in 1917 and the socialist stage at some later point, had to be rejected.

When Lenin analyzed the prospects for the bourgeois/moderate socialist alliance (i.e., the Provisional Government) that ruled Russia throughout most of 1917, he could see only two alternative outcomes: a further proletarian revolution establishing soviet power and devoted to world revolution and the construction of socialism, or a counter-revolution that would insure Russia's continued status as an economically backward country, and be an obstacle to the coming socialist revolution in Europe. (Mandel, 1977:100) There was no third way, no alternative of capitalist economic growth and bourgeois democratic political reform that could solve the problems of Russian workers and peasants. (CW, 28:299) Thus, Lenin's adoption of a strategy of permanent revolution was made possible by a shift in his analytical starting point, from a focus on Russia considered in isolation from the world

economy, to the world economy and the position of countries like Russia within it. The political collapse of the Second International in 1914 forced him to shift his attention from Russia to Europe and the world, encouraging him to analyze the prospects for socialist revolution on a world scale.(Harding, 1981:19-20; Cliff,1976:5-18)⁹

The judgement that Europe was entering a period of revolutionary upheavals (a period during which socialist revolution would be a realistic possibility) was one of the central assumptions of the Lenin/Trotsky strategy for a workers' revolution in Russia. In Lenin's view, the devastation wrought by the war guaranteed the development of revolutionary crises, featuring severely weakened regimes and mass revolutionary movements throughout Europe.(Harding,1981:73) In Lenin's view, the world war was incontrovertible evidence that capitalism had entered its final downswing. War was no longer simply an "ill-fated occurrence. It was, on the contrary, endemic, unavoidable and would repeatedly recur" if the socialist revolution did not succeed. Thus, World War I seemed to indicate the final maturation of the contradictions of capitalism, and the beginning of an epoch of revolution leading to the birth of socialism. (Harding,1981:21-22)

A third reason why Lenin abandoned the "democratic dictatorship" strategy, stemmed from a changed estimate of how far the Russia proletariat could go in beginning the transition to socialism -- even if a workers' revolution could not create socialism in backward Russia. Prior to 1917, Lenin believed the level of economic development in Russia ruled out a revolution that transcended bourgeois-democratic tasks. Thus, a victorious revolution would result, not in the dictatorship of the proletariat, but in the creation of a radical-democratic bourgeois state presiding over a period of further capitalist development to create the objective possibility for the construction of socialism. But, after

February 1917, Lenin believed a Soviet government, established through proletarian revolution, could begin a transition to socialism, even though that transition could only be completed with the success of the socialist revolution in Europe. (Mandel,1985:16-17; CW,23:340-341, Lowy,1976:12)

In his April Theses, Lenin identified the Paris Commune as a model for the future soviet regime, indicating his approval of a revolutionary transition towards socialism. Under no circumstances did Lenin entertain the delusion that a workers' revolution in backward Russia would mean the immediate creation of socialism.(CW,25:69) "The objectives of the revolution according to Lenin...were far more modest; they were generally represented as radical democratic rather than expressly socialist." Instead of introducing socialism, a workers' revolution would establish workers' control in the factories, state control over the economy by the soviets, and introduce the democratic reforms needed to abolish the remnants of Czarism. (Harding,1981:75-77) Thus, the workers' revolution Lenin favored would destroy the bourgeois state, the political basis of bourgeois domination, but it would capture the institutions of the capitalist economy (e.g., the banks). (Harding,1981:79)

The proletarian revolution Lenin envisaged would be a hybrid revolution, creating a new type of regime (a workers' state that was not yet fully socialist), and serving as a prologue to the socialist revolution in Western Europe.(CW,23:371) The revolution would enable the working class to govern itself through a commune-style workers' state centered on the soviets.(CW,23:331) It would end the war, redistribute the land, raise workers' living standards, give them greater freedom, and support the need for socialist revolution beyond Russia.

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Lenin and Trotsky arrived at similar strategic conclusions, albeit by very different paths. Lenin's wartime preoccupation with the coming European revolution meant he had the same analytical starting point Trotsky had started with in 1906, the world economy and the world revolution. Furthermore, Lenin's research on the state prepared him to see the possibility of a commune state in the Soviets that developed after February 1917. Finally, the creation of dual power made him aware of the real possibility the peasantry would side with the bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat during the revolution. For his part, Trotsky accepted Lenin's tactical arguments about the role of the party in the revolutionary process, and joined the Bolshevik organization, under the pressure of events during 1917. Thus, despite their differences in 1905, in 1917 Lenin and Trotsky shared the same strategic assessment of what the Russian revolution could accomplish, and a similar understanding of the forms and dynamics of the revolutionary process. During the Russian Revolution the strategic and tactical agreement of Lenin and Trotsky provided the cornerstone for Bolshevik policy and practice.

The Bolshevik account of the objective contradictions of Russian and European capitalism proved correct, at least with regard to their main political conclusions. All the major elements of the Lenin/Trotsky strategy for the 1917 revolution were confirmed by events. The Russian bourgeoisie proved too weak to reform the old Czarist society, the peasantry proved incapable of independent political action, and the working class demonstrated its ability to lead a proletarian (even if not fully socialist) revolution in a backward country. Furthermore, the Russian revolution did spark a European revolution, while the subsequent degeneration of the revolution through isolation from a success in a more advanced country confirmed the Bolshevik position that socialism could not be built

in one country.

Because the Bolshevik strategy accurately analyzed the contradictions of Russian society, it laid the basis upon which Lenin and Trotsky could actually analyze the revolutionary process of the 1917 revolution. Knowing the bourgeois Provisional Government could not revive Russian capitalism, and that the soviets could be the basis of a workers' state were the indispensable preconditions for analyzing the features and dynamics of the revolutionary crisis that lasted from February to October.

(2.3) The Bolshevik Theory of the Revolutionary Process: Some Basic Concepts

The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process consists of a set of concepts and arguments used to explain the features and dynamics of the severe social crises that periodically disrupt the 'normal' operation of capitalist society. It was developed by Lenin and Trotsky as an argument about how the transition to socialism could be accomplished, in light of their strategic assessment of Russia and Europe, their experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, and their understanding of the history of past class struggles and revolutions.

In examining both the objective and subjective conditions necessary for a successful revolution, the Bolsheviks developed a theory of the revolutionary process, which analyzed three things: first, the immediate, short-term causes or triggering mechanisms of revolutionary crises; second, the standard features of those crises and the dynamics by which they are either deepened or short-circuited, and third, the nature of the various short-term outcomes that might result from such situations (e.g., successful proletarian revolution,

counter-revolution, the evaporation of the revolutionary situation, etc.). In this section, we will consider some of the key concepts associated with the theory of the revolutionary process, as a prelude to examining what the Bolsheviks said about the causes, features, dynamics and outcomes of revolutionary crises.

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Of all the concepts associated with the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, none is more important than that of a "revolutionary situation." It describes those occasional periods of short-term, but severe crisis for a regime, that are characterized by open divisions within the ruling class, intensified and escalating class struggle and the immediate possibility of a workers' revolution. Lenin and Trotsky both contrasted revolutionary situations with 'normal' periods of capitalist development, periods when neither the level of class struggle nor the rigors of capitalist competition threatened -- in any immediate or direct way -- the continued domination of the ruling class.(1905:303-304) For the Bolsheviks, revolutionary situations differed from normal periods in two key ways. First, they were characterized by a crisis of the existing social order that made it impossible for the ruling class to continue to rule in the old way. Second, revolutionary situations featured a qualitative change in the levels of activity, organization and consciousness of the underclasses that indicated their unwillingness to be ruled in the old way.(SW,3:401-402) In Lenin's words,

The fundamental law of revolution...is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the "lower classes" do not want to live in the old way and the "upper classes" cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph.(SW,3:401-402)

Thus, in Trotsky's words, "the revolution is a combination of objective factors which are independent of us and which are the most important, and of subjective factors which are more less dependent upon us."(CI,1:301) These two interrelated components of a revolutionary situation may arise independently or in relation to each other. But the conjuncture of the two is what creates the real possibility for revolution.(Hobsbawm,1986:19-20)

Although the Bolsheviks were very concerned about the long term structural contradictions that led to the development of revolutionary crises, their theory of the revolutionary process focused not on the long-term causes of those crises, but on their short term causes and processes. In that regard, the focus of attention in any treatment of the revolutionary process, falls on the role of the masses. Trotsky argued that in normal periods, history is made by "specialists in that line of business" (i.e., the ruling classes). But, during a revolution, the exploited and oppressed masses force their way onto the stage of history, and directly interfere in "historic events."(HRR,I:xvii) Likewise, Lenin argued that revolutionary crises are distinguished from normal periods "by wider, richer, more deliberate, more methodical, more systematic, more courageous and more vivid making of history than periods of philistine... reformist progress" (i.e., periods of normal development-BM). (CW,10:253-254,259) The organizing abilities and level of energy displayed by the working class during a revolution was "a hundred times greater than in ordinary peaceful times," leading Lenin to suggest that "revolutions are festivals of the oppressed and the exploited."(CW,9:113; 23:240)

The distinction between revolutionary and non-revolutionary periods points to the fact that the class struggle is not always at the same pitch. During 'normal' periods, the

class struggle is fragmented and sectional, posing no direct challenge to the control of the ruling class and no possibility for an insurrection to succeed. What distinguishes a revolutionary situation from 'normal' periods, and from other periods of heightened social tension (e.g., a mass strike) is a qualitative, tangible and public shift in the balance of power between the two main classes -- a shift which sees the existing ruling class greatly weakened and the underclasses enormously strengthened. When the balance of power has shifted to such an extent that the established state is compelled to co-exist with the embryonic form of a potential proletarian state (e.g., soviets), when a situation of "dual power" exists, then -- unlike "normal times" -- a proletarian insurrection can succeed. Dual power is that special set of circumstances, the peculiar balance of class power that is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the success of a proletarian revolution.

This notion of a special period of crisis in the normal pattern of class relations, a period during which proletarian revolution became possible, enabled Lenin and Trotsky to distinguish certain features and dynamics peculiar to the class struggle during a revolutionary situation from those characteristic of normal periods. Lenin provided the classic description of the symptoms of a revolutionary situation:

(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes," a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes has grown more acute than usual; (3) when as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who...in turbulent times are drawn by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the "upper classes" themselves into independent historical action. Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. (AR:221-

222)

When the class struggle has intensified to the point where these three necessary conditions are met, a proletarian revolution becomes possible. However, the mere existence of these objective conditions is no guarantee a revolution will actually take place. As Lenin suggests,

it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, "falls," if it is not toppled over. (AR:221-222)

Thus, a revolutionary situation exists when the three objective symptoms of a revolutionary situation coexist. However, that is not yet a revolution. It is simply the degeneration of the power of the regime to the point where proletarian revolution becomes objectively possible, provided the organization and consciousness of the working class proves sufficient to depose the remnants of the old state.¹⁰

In addition to the distinction between 'normal' and revolutionary periods, the Bolsheviks also analyzed what they called "pre-revolutionary situations" -- periods in which some (but not all) of the objective preconditions for a successful proletarian revolution exist. Revolutions "are always preceded by a process of unrest, crises, movements, revolts, the beginnings of revolution, the latter not always developing to the very end (if, for instance, the revolutionary class is not strong enough).(CW,21:451) As Trotsky explained, history shows there are not only "stable situations which are altogether non-revolutionary" (i.e., normal periods) and "situations which are obviously revolutionary," but also "intermediate and transitional ...situations," ones that are pre-revolutionary in character. (OF:77,68,96) A pre-revolutionary situation is triggered by some dramatic event that either

reveals the potential power of the underclasses or exposes the weakness and bankruptcy of the ruling classes. It exists because either the mass movement of the underclasses has not yet given birth to the new forms of proletarian organization (e.g. soviets) that are necessary for the existence of dual power, or the crisis of the existing regime is not sufficiently deep to split the ruling classes, undermine their authority and initiative, and allow the embryo of a new workers' state to develop.(Mandel, 1979:8) When the balance of power has shifted to such an extent that the established bourgeois state is compelled to co-exist with the embryonic form of a newly risen proletarian state (e.g., soviets), when the masses have been able to identify the existing state as the source of their continued suffering and their embryonic state as the means by which they can end that suffering, and when the ruling classes have been seriously crippled by the escalation in the class struggle, then a revolutionary situation exists, mass revolutionary consciousness can develop and a proletarian insurrection can succeed -- provided there is a party to organize it.

(The Bolsheviks were actually somewhat inconsistent in how they used the terms 'pre-revolutionary situation' and 'revolutionary situation.'¹¹ To avoid confusion we will use the term 'revolutionary situation' to describe any situation where the objective preconditions for proletarian revolution exist, whether or not the subjective ones do. Therefore, a 'pre-revolutionary situation' refers to a transitory period, in which some (but not all of) the objective preconditions for revolution have developed. We use the term 'revolutionary crisis' as a general description of a situation which is either pre-revolutionary or revolutionary in character.)

The line between a pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situation is crossed when the balance of power shifts sufficiently to undermine the unity and initiative of the ruling

classes and to permit the creation of new institutions that express the potential state power of the underclasses (e.g., soviets, factory committees, workers' militias, etc.). The creation of such institutions on a national basis -- providing therefore, the embryonic form of a new workers' state -- establishes a situation of dual power, so long as the old state has not been thoroughly eliminated. Trotsky says that the "essence of dual power" is that it expresses a "split in the state apparatus," arising out of the "irreconcilable class conflicts" that exist in a revolutionary crisis. When the working class has "concentrated in its hands a significant share of the state power," but the "official apparatus of the government" is still in the hands of the old ruling class, then the whole of society faces the question of whether there will be a "transfer of power from one class to another." Because "society needs a concentration of power," dual power is inherently unstable. Restoring the unitary character of state power becomes the preoccupation of both the revolution and the counter-revolution. (HRR,I:207-208)

These Bolshevik concepts -- "revolutionary situation," "normal period," "pre-revolutionary situation" -- all pertain to the overall balance of power between the key classes in any society able to undergo a proletarian revolution: capital and labour. Lenin and Trotsky were very interested in the shifting balance of class power and initiative in the class struggle.

(CW,9:394-395,414,428,447; 10:388).

For the Bolsheviks, it is only when the 'normal' balance of class forces has been altered to the point where the old state has been seriously weakened, and the working class has created the embryo of a new workers' state (i.e., when a situation of "dual power" exists), that a proletarian uprising can be more than "anti-capitalist" in character. In a

situation of dual power, the working class can mount an insurrection which has as its conscious objective the elimination of the old regime and the creation of a workers' state, because the existence of soviet like institutions gives workers a practical alternative to the continuation of capitalism. Otherwise, a working class insurrection that topples an old regime will simply make way for a new ruling class. The existence of a revolutionary situation allows the discontent that always plagues capitalism to assume the proportions of a conscious proletarian insurrection.

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Once a revolutionary situation has developed, it may or may not lead to an actual revolution and a world revolution.¹² The Bolshevik analysis of the revolutionary process assumed the outcome of the situation was not determined in advance; the outcome depended upon a sufficient development of both the objective crisis of the regime and the subjective preparedness of the working class for revolution. At any point -- whether during a pre-revolutionary situation, a revolutionary situation, or even after a successful insurrection -- the revolutionary movement could run up against insurmountable obstacles and begin to deteriorate, eventually succumbing to reaction or counter-revolution as the balance of power shifts, and 'normal' class relations are restored.(SAFG:21) For the Bolsheviks, the outcome of a revolutionary crisis is contingent upon the class struggle during each phase of the process (from a 'normal' period, through a pre-revolutionary situation, revolutionary situation, insurrection, and civil war to international revolution), rather than the structural contradictions which gave rise to the revolutionary crisis in the first place. The structural contradictions of capitalism create situations of crisis, but human agency (primarily class agency) determines which of several potential outcomes that

situation will lead to.

Thus, the Bolshevik theory of proletarian revolution, with its attention to both the objective causes of revolutionary crises and the role class agency plays in resolving them, avoids both the voluntarism of Blanqui and the determinism characteristic of Kautsky. Lenin understood that while revolutionaries do not make revolutionary crises, revolutionary situations crises do not automatically result in successful proletarian revolutions either. Against the voluntarists, he insisted that revolutionary situations cannot be intentionally produced by either classes or individuals. During World War I, Lenin argued that the task for revolutionaries was not to somehow make the revolution, but to prepare the political organization that could lead the masses to victory when the pre-revolutionary situation that was developing in Europe matured. Defending the revolutionary current in the Second International against the charges of Blanquism from the reformist leaders, Lenin argued the revolutionaries knew that "a revolution cannot be "made", that revolutions develop from objectively (i.e., independently of the will of parties and classes) mature crises and turns in history ...and that the struggle against a centralised state's powerful." (AR:248; CW,27:547)

If Lenin was not a Blanquist, neither was he a determinist in the mold of Kautsky. He argued there was nothing inevitable or automatic about the success of a revolutionary movement, just because a revolutionary crisis existed.(CW,9:368-369) Similarly, Trotsky argued against all those who sought to replace "the theory of revolutionary action" with fatalism as the basis of Marxism.(OF:71,72-73) For the Bolsheviks, it was the class struggle which determined the outcome of a revolutionary crisis. Lenin had no doubts that an objective social crisis would activate the masses, generating an enormous increase in their fighting spirit, learning ability, organization and creative power.(CW,8:564;

10:256,259; 23:240; 25:229) The real question was whether that spontaneous energy would be harnessed and organized so the struggle against oppression and exploitation could be transformed into a struggle for the establishment of workers' power.

Implicit in the Bolshevik argument is the understanding that during a period of revolutionary crisis, the social weight of the existing social relations -- which during 'normal' periods severely limits the scope of human activity making serious change seem impossible -- is lessened, as the agency of the underclasses gets more opportunity to influence the course of history. In 'normal' periods, capitalism appears as an unchanging, eternal reality, in the face of which individuals classes and parties seem impotent. During a revolutionary crisis, the masses discover their capacity to make history, as everything suddenly seems possible. The critical point about the Bolshevik distinction between 'normal' and revolutionary periods is that it points to the very different possibilities for human and class action during a period when the regular, taken for granted, objective 'reality' that structures everyday life has broken down. (Molyneux,1981:64-65)

Because the Bolsheviks refused to liquidate the study of the revolutionary process into a preoccupation with either the objective causes of revolution (like Kautsky) or the outcomes desired by revolutionaries (like Blanqui and the ultra-leftists), they were able to make a serious contribution to the theory of the revolutionary process. (Certainly, their contribution to an understanding of the revolutionary process is certainly more enduring than much of their conjunctural account of the objective contradictions of capitalism in the era of World War I.)

Now that we discussed some of the basic concepts used by the Bolsheviks in analyzing the revolutionary process, we can examine their treatment of the immediate

causes, dynamics, features and outcomes of revolutionary crises.

(2.4) The Immediate Causes of a Revolutionary Crisis

The long-term causes of revolutionary crises are the structural contradictions of capitalism, while its short-term or immediate cause (i.e., its precipitant or 'trigger') is some decisive event in the class struggle (either between capital and labour, or between different sections of the international bourgeoisie) that dramatically changes the existing balance of class power, and shifts the situation into crisis. It is the occasion which makes the severity of the contradictions within a given regime public. Thus, the Bolshevik theory of revolution identifies both a material cause (i.e., a set of structural contradictions that plague a particular capitalist society and generate the possibility of major crises) and an efficient cause (i.e., a triggering event that dramatically changes the balance of class forces) during a period of 'normal' class relations. Lenin suggested that there were many kinds of events that might spark a revolutionary crisis, including: a general strike, hunger riots, military rebellions, colonial revolts, a parliamentary crisis, an economic crisis, and so on. (Gankin, 1960:520; SW, 3:411-413) Thus, for example, the immediate cause of the revolutionary crisis in 1905 was the slaughter of more than 1,000 unarmed workers on Bloody Sunday, when the Czar's troops fired on an unarmed demonstration in St. Petersburg. (Cliff, 1974:153)

(2.5) The Main Dynamics of the Revolutionary Process

Between the development of a revolutionary crisis and its potential resolution through proletarian revolution, there are certain intervening processes which are peculiar to the class struggle during such a period. For Lenin and Trotsky, the switch from 'normal' times to a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation meant a dramatic change in the dynamics of the class struggle.

The Bolshevik analysis of the revolutionary process centered on two key theses about the dynamics of a proletarian revolution: first, the argument that a revolutionary crisis creates a dynamic of escalating class polarization which increasingly concentrates the forces of society into revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps headed towards civil war; second, the claim that such a crisis qualitatively transforms the many isolated, local struggles for reforms by politicizing them, and that all isolated struggles have a centralized impact contributing to the social pressure for a general societal solution to the revolutionary crisis. We need to explain these two theses.

The Bolsheviks' thesis of class polarization involves the claim that the logic of the class struggle during a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation creates an escalating spiral of attack and counter-attack by capital and labour, as each tries to eliminate the situation of dual power and impose its own unitary power on the other. Lenin saw the revolutionary process as one in which "two forces were in contestation -- revolutionary action whose object was to heighten and develop the process, and counter-revolutionary reaction whose objective was to arrest or reverse the process." (Harding, 1977: 238; CW, 23:249) As the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution escalates, class consciousness grows in both camps, and "sharper and more ruthless forms of struggle" are inevitably adopted. (CW, 11:172, 185) Moreover, the polarization of society between two

alternatives, forces the defenders of the old regime "to declare themselves (and-BM) the waverers to choose sides."(Harding,1977: 230)

The escalation of the struggle towards civil war naturally leads to sharp blows from the side of the counter-revolution, which either destroys the mass movement or eliminates the naivete of many workers about the real nature of the situation.(OF:200) Along with the growing polarization of society between the explicitly revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps, there is a diminishing role for the moderates in each camp, as more 'extreme' elements come to the fore.(HRR,I:xviii-xix) The polarization of society will continue until the class struggle is transformed into a military confrontation, an armed civil war which eliminates one of the two competing state machines.(CW,26: 29)

For the Bolsheviks, the process of class polarization was something that occurs in two phases: the first is the period during which "classes became articulate, differentiated, conscious and organized....the period of parley in which the forces of the two sides to the coming physical confrontation... prepare...themselves for the violent resolution of the conflict." (Harding,1977:236) During this first phase, the crisis provides the two main classes with an opportunity to contend for the support of the intermediate strata and the vacillating elements within the main classes. But, the longer a revolutionary crisis lasts, and the greater the pressure on the intermediate classes to pick sides, the lesser the chance the crisis will be resolved in some way other than revolution or counter-revolution.(CW,9: 204) The second phase is, of course, the military confrontation itself, the period of civil war which may come before or after a working class insurrection.(Harding,1977:236)

The reasons for the dynamic of class polarization are pretty clear: the objective pressures of class society demand the existence of a unitary power as the basis of social

organization, rather than an absence of such power (chaos) or dual power (as in a revolutionary situation). The level of class struggle achieved in a revolutionary situation cannot be maintained for long, since it is highly disruptive to production. Thus, dual power is inherently unstable, and there are always severe social pressures to resolve a protracted revolutionary crisis (HRR,I:206-208)

The second major dynamic of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis is best described as the politicization and centralization of sectional struggles. This dynamic has two sides to it: on the one hand, the existence of a revolutionary crisis politicizes what would be -- in normal times -- isolated, non-political, sectional struggles (e.g., a strike over wages); on the other hand, those partial sectional struggles fuel and exacerbate the general political crisis, adding pressure to the need for a centralized national solution to the crisis.

Isolated struggles (often 'economic' in character) which remain sectional during a period of 'normal' class relations, become politicized very rapidly during a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation. The existence of a massive social crisis allows workers to see more clearly the connection between their immediate sectional interests, and the overall position of their class more easily than during non-revolutionary periods.

We must remember what a tremendous educational and organizing power the revolution has, when mighty historical events force the man in the street out of his remote corner...and make a citizen out of him. Months of revolution sometimes educates citizens more quickly and fully than decades of political stagnation.(Lenin cited in Harding,1977:242)

Thus, conventional forms of class struggle (e.g., strikes) all have a very different meaning and character during a revolutionary crisis, because of the objective social context in which they occur.

Furthermore, every isolated sectional struggle during a revolutionary crisis creates additional societal pressure to resolve that crisis, as workers become aware that their profound grievances cannot be resolved on an individual, local or sectional basis. Over time, the politicization of every sphere of life centralizes the isolated struggles into a class-wide struggle making revolution a pressing necessity. Thus, during a revolutionary crisis there are enormous pressures for each episode of struggle to go from the particular to the general, from the 'economic' to the 'political', since all the 'private,' 'sectional,' struggles become self-evidently part of the class-wide struggle. In other words, the class struggle does not remain fragmented, but becomes centralized.

We can best illustrate the Bolshevik analysis of this dynamic of the politicization and centralization of the class struggle, if we examine their analysis of strike action during the revolutionary process.(CW,23:238-239; Larsson,1970:330)¹³ Both Lenin and Trotsky were interested in the way revolution transformed the character of strike action, studying the strikes that occurred during the 1905 revolution for example.(CW,16:395-421; 18:471-477; 23:236-253; 1905:81-102,252-253,294-295) In his studies, Lenin examined the role the revolution played in politicizing the 'economic' strikes of backward sections of the working class, and the tendency for economic strike action to fuel the political strikes and struggles launched by the more advanced sections of the working class. Lenin recognized that the existence of a revolutionary crisis encouraged more backward sections of the working class to engage in strikes for immediate economic demand -- strikes which acted as the training ground for them to raise more political demands.(CW,16:384; 23:242) Thus, the experience of strike action around immediate economic demands is vital to the politicization of whole sections of the working class during a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation.(CW,

23:241) In 1905, the economic struggles by the more backward workers (e.g., the textile workers) were essential to their subsequent involvement in political strike activity.

It is not difficult to see why the existence of a revolutionary situation, invests every strike with new meaning. Many workers need to have the direct link between the crisis of the existing social order and their own immediate situation graphically demonstrated, over and over again. A revolutionary crisis shatters the 'normal' world workers are used to -- a world where isolated struggles around specific grievances seems to be all that is possible, a world where the ruling classes seem all powerful and the social order unchangeable. During a revolutionary crisis, however, every specific grievance is more easily identified as a manifestation of the bankruptcy of the entire social order, posing the need for class wide action to alter the very nature of society.

In addition to politicizing every strike, the existence of a revolutionary crisis means the accumulation of sectional struggles deepens the revolutionary crisis as it fuels the escalating confrontation between capital and labour. Every instance of the self-mobilization of the masses (in mass strikes, factory occupations, street demonstrations, uprisings, land seizures, mutinies, etc.) further destabilizes the old regime because it points to the necessity to acquire state power to resolve grievances that are manifestly class-wide rather than merely sectional. The economic strikes of more backward layers of workers feed into the political strikes of the advanced sections, sustaining and deepening the revolutionary momentum. Harding summarized Lenin's findings about the polarization and centralization of the class struggle during the 1905 revolution, when he wrote that

All sections of the class were shown to stand in a complex chain of relationships. The advanced urged the backward into action, initially in pursuit of purely economic goals. Their economic strikes provided, in turn, the basis of strength on which the advanced could more audaciously and with more credibility generalise the class demands and make them political.

The average workers then began to make the transition to political demands as the...unorganized sections of the class were drawn into the battle.(Harding,1977:287-288)

Thus, the self-mobilization of the underclasses during a revolutionary crisis, even if is for apparently non-revolutionary demands, is the means by which the fragmented components of the class struggle are politicized, and the political struggle is thereby transformed into a social revolution.

Neither the tendency towards class polarization nor the politicization/centralization of the class struggle which we have described here, are characteristic of the class struggle during a normal period. The Bolsheviks viewed them as dynamics peculiar to the class struggle during the revolutionary process -- revolutionary crises being situations that have special properties.

(2.6) The Features of the Revolutionary Process

Having discussed what a revolutionary situation is, its immediate causes and main dynamics, it is now time to mention some of the standard features of these periods of intense social crisis. We can summarize the Bolshevik view of those standard features by looking at Lenin's four symptoms of a revolutionary situation: (a) the crisis in the ruling classes; (b) the deterioration in the living standards of the underclasses; (c) the growth in activity by the underclasses, and especially their creation of new forms of class struggle and class organizations, and (d) their changes in consciousness and political organization.

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As we saw above, Lenin argued a revolutionary situation can only arise if there is a split within the ranks of the ruling classes, a split that is rooted in the structural contradictions that make it no longer possible for the ruling classes to rule in the old way. That split must extend deep into the institutions of the capitalist state (e.g., the army, the police, the bureaucracy, etc.) undermining the repressive capacities of the old ruling classes, discrediting the existing social order, and crippling the ruling classes' material and ideological domination over society.

The Bolsheviks carefully analyzed the affects of a major social crisis on the state machine, especially the army and the police. For Lenin and Trotsky, the breakdown of the army -- a process that could be accelerated by revolutionary agitation and propaganda -- was a particularly important barometer of the depth of the crisis of the old regime. The Government's use of troops to suppress the Moscow insurrection in December 1905 taught Lenin that splitting the army was an absolute precondition for the success of a proletarian revolution.(CW,18:107; 11:174-175; Leibman,1975:103)

Since no insurrectionary force could be as well trained and equipped as an established army, the problem of how to win an insurrection "must always be reduced to the mood and behavior of the troops," and therefore, to their class composition. "Without class kinship between the forces on both sides of the barricades, the triumph of the revolution...would be impossible."(1905:267) Writing before the 1917 revolution -- when the war was a powerful stimulant to the disintegration of the army well before the revolution began -- Trotsky argued that only major clashes with the troops would convince them the working class was determined enough to push a revolution to victory. During any revolutionary crisis there is liable to be a minority of soldiers who are "consciously

revolutionary." But, the majority will need more than propaganda or agitation from revolutionaries to rebel. They need direct experience that proves to them how determined the working class actually is.(1905:268-269)

Although they recognized the development of a revolutionary crisis had a massive impact on the repressive apparatus of the old state, Lenin and Trotsky nevertheless believed revolutionaries must take concerted action to split the army and win a section of it to the revolution, prior to any insurrection. To that end, the Bolsheviks believed not only in the importance of intervening in the army, but also in the need to periodically "test the mood of the troops" in order to time an uprising. They looked to non-insurrectionary confrontations -- general strikes and street demonstrations -- as opportunities to test the relative strength and morale of the opponents of the revolution.

Although the emergence of a revolutionary crisis has a dramatic affect on the ruling classes, they are not just the victims of such a situation. Under circumstances where their 'normal' ability to take the social initiative has been undermined, the ruling classes resort to special, counter-revolutionary forms of activity and organization, as they mobilized to reconsolidate their power and terminate the revolutionary movement. The Bolsheviks believed it was vital to analyze the counter-revolutionary activity of the ruling classes, their organized attempts to eliminate all vestiges of dual power and to negate an actual or anticipated insurrection by the working class.(Brownstein,1981:175-181)¹⁴

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The second symptom of a revolutionary situation is a dramatic rise in the level of suffering among the underclasses. When the living standards and working conditions of the underclasses deteriorate, and when that deterioration is directly attributable to the crisis of

the ruling class and the existing social order, then the underclasses become unwilling to live "in the old way."¹⁵ But, while Lenin argued that a dramatic increase in the suffering of the underclasses was a necessary precondition for the development of a revolutionary situation, he remained adamant that an increase in suffering could never be a sufficient condition for the development of such a situation.(Krasin,1971: 107-108) Since revolutionary situations could not be generated intentionally by the acts of individual, parties or classes, in the absence of the other preconditions for revolution, no amount of suffering could suffice to put revolution on the agenda. Trotsky also argued that "the privations of the masses remain...the most important mainspring of the proletarian revolution."(CI,1:150) But, like Lenin, he stressed that impoverishment was not a sufficient condition for revolution. For the suffering of the working class to increase militancy, it had to arise in a particular set of political circumstances, like a revolutionary crisis.(HRR,II:vii)

Trotsky warned against the abstract idea that it was possible to read political conclusions (e.g., about the level of revolutionary consciousness) directly from the objective state of the economy (whether a slump leading to impoverishment or a boom leading to prosperity).(CI,1:233-234) There is no automatic connection between the overall economic conjuncture and the growth or diminishment of revolutionary consciousness. The relationship between the economic situation of the working class and the level of working class militancy was a complex one of dialectical interdependence.(CI,2:76,83) In his words,

The political effects of a crisis (i.e., an economic crisis-BM) are determined by the entire existing political situation and by those events which precede and accompany the crisis, especially the battles, successes or failures of the working class prior to the crisis. Under one set of conditions the (economic-BM) crisis may give a mighty impulse to the revolutionary activity of the working masses; under a different set of circumstances it may completely paralyze the offensive of the proletariat and...weaken...the defensive potential of the working class.(CI,2:76,83)

Trotsky added That "the alternation of prosperity and impoverishment, the crises, the uncertainty, the absence of stability" were objective circumstances that also promoted revolution.(CI,1:233-234)

Lenin and Trotsky's materialism steered them towards a structural approach to the analysis of the revolutionary process (i.e., one that explained the various developments of that process on the basis of prior structural features and class contradictions of the society in question) rather than a psychological one. But, their 'structuralism' took account of human agency and the importance of situational factors, rather than lapsing into a vulgar economic determinism.(HRR,I:xvii; II:vi-vii)

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The third symptom of a revolutionary situation, according to Lenin, is a qualitative change in the level of collective struggle and self-organization originating from within the ranks of the exploited classes, especially the working class. Thus, revolutionary crises give rise to forms of class struggle peculiar to such periods: mutinies in the army, insurrectionary movements, factory seizures, and so on. And, the self-mobilization of the masses leads to the creation of new institutions -- like soviets, factory committees, soldiers committees, workers' militias, and peasant committees -- that express the embryonic social and political power of the working class. During a revolutionary crisis, the battle for control over society can lead to a struggle for workers' state power through institutions like soviets, a contest for control of industry and production through the development of factory committees, a battle for the control over the means of state repression through workers' militias and so on.

Of course, not all these forms of class organization generated by the underclasses are of equal importance. Dual power may emerge in the army, in the factories, on the land and in other spheres of social life, as it did during the Russian revolution. However, for the Bolsheviks it was dual power at the level of the state which was most important. Indeed, underlying Lenin's conception of a revolutionary situation, is a particular view of what constitutes a successful proletarian revolution. In April 1917, he wrote

the transfer of state power from one class to another class is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a revolution, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of the term....It is the key question determining everything in a revolution's development.(CW,24:44; 25:370)

Lenin argued that unless revolutionaries understood that "the basic question of every revolution is that of state power... there could be no intelligent participation not to speak of guidance of the revolution."(CW,24:38) Thus, a successful proletarian revolution begins with a revolutionary crisis that proceeds through a working class seizure of state power to changes in the social relations of production. Dual power in the factories, on the land or in the army will come to nought unless dual power at the level of the state is resolved in favor of the revolution first. This 'political' definition of the short-term goal in a revolutionary situation -- the seizure of state power -- underestimates somewhat the immediately social content of a working class revolutionary movement.¹⁶ Even though the working class must seize state power before it can fundamentally alter the relations of production, the fight to establish a workers' state must be accompanied by actions that seriously encroach on the economic and social power of capital at the point of production.

If the seizure of state power is the short-term goal of the revolutionary process, then a central question is whether the existing state machine can be captured and used. Following Marx, Lenin argued the capitalist state had to be smashed and replaced by a

new workers' state -- an argument summarized in State and Revolution.¹⁷ In his view the Social Democrats had badly distorted Marx's theory of the state, by suggesting the bourgeois state was a neutral instrument of whichever party gained an electoral majority in a bourgeois democracy. For Lenin, the bourgeois state machine would remain an instrument of the capitalist class, regardless of any electoral victory by a social democratic party. (He started from the assumption the state was "a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms." Therefore the capitalist state was "an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another." (CW,25:392) He described it as "a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class." (CW,25:407) All bourgeois states, including the 'democratic' ones, were examples of the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." (CW,25:418) Since the capitalist state was not neutral, the working class could not capture it and use it as an instrument to win its own freedom. The Russian working class had to follow the example of the Paris Commune and destroy the old state machine headed by the Provisional Government, while constructing a new, specifically workers' state centered on the soviets. (CW,23:325; 25:486; 26:439)

In the context of a revolutionary crisis, soviets (or similar class-wide, workplace-rooted, political institutions of radical democracy) are the key institutional form of workers' potential power. In addition to assisting in the further disorganization of bourgeois state power, they unite the entirety of the working class, regardless of its internal divisions, focusing workers' attention on the possibility of their own state power. Furthermore, soviets allow the political strategies of various currents within the working class to be compared and judged, as a prelude to mobilizing the entire class for various purposes.

(2.7) The Subjective Conditions for Revolution: the Development of Revolutionary Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party

The subjective condition for a successful proletarian revolution, the development of mass revolutionary consciousness embodied in a revolutionary party, is a condition that can only emerge when the objective preconditions for a revolution have come into existence, and dual power has arisen. Only when there is a serious split within the ruling class, an increase in the suffering of the underclasses directly attributable to the crisis of the existing social order, and a massive increase in the organization and activity of the underclasses, can there be a qualitative change in the consciousness of the working class and the growth of a mass revolutionary party. As the Bolsheviks argued, a revolutionary situation can only lead to a successful revolution if there is such a change in the class consciousness and organization of the working class that a revolutionary party is able to win it away from its traditional ideas and organizations, and direct its revolutionary energies in a mass insurrection against the last vestiges of the old state. Thus, for the Bolsheviks, the study of revolutionary situations directs our attention towards an analysis of the changing consciousness of the working class and the role of revolutionary organization in the struggle to establish workers' power.

Prior to 1917, Lenin devoted far more energy to analyzing the subjective side of the revolutionary process (i.e., workers' consciousness and political organization) than any of

its objective features. He did so for two reasons: first, because the inter-related problems of how mass revolutionary consciousness develops and what role revolutionaries play in promoting the revolution, had been neglected by the Marxists of the Second International; second, Lenin believed the subjective side of the revolutionary process -- especially the preparation of a revolutionary party -- was the one thing revolutionaries could do in advance to prepare for a revolutionary situation.

Therefore, Lenin's analysis of the subjective side of the revolutionary process requires close examination. For him, the analysis of the subjective dimension of proletarian revolution meant consideration of several things: the forms which working class consciousness takes; the embodiment of working class consciousness in different political organizations; the unevenness of consciousness within the working class; the social barriers to the emergence of revolutionary consciousness, and the role of a revolutionary party in the revolutionary process.¹⁸

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For orthodox socialists in the Second International (e.g., Kautsky), the socialist party was a mass organization that embraced the entire working class, and which developed gradually and spontaneously from the struggle of the working class for reforms. In this view, working class consciousness changed slowly and cumulatively as a result of the educational efforts of the party leadership. Furthermore, it was the party leadership -- wielding the electoral and industrial muscle of a highly organized and disciplined working class -- that would achieve state power, rather than the working class. (Harman, 1983: 5-7)

Lenin broke from this orthodoxy, albeit in a "gradual and only semi-conscious" way, by arguing three things: first, that the party had to intervene in the class struggle to link

the fight for immediate demands by sections of the working class to the ultimate goal of revolution, and to assist in the transformation of the immediate consciousness emerging from struggle into a specifically revolutionary consciousness; second, the party had to be a vanguard organization of the minority within the working class that was already class conscious; and third, Lenin argued that socialist revolution had to be the conscious act of the majority of the working class elevating themselves to power in a workers' state, rather than being an electoral process that simply installed a handful of party leaders atop the old state machine. (Molyneux,1978:36; Harman,1983) We have already discussed Lenin's view that the immediate goal of a workers' revolution is the creation of a Commune-like workers' state. Here we must look at the other two points. We can start by looking at Lenin's view of working class consciousness.

The central theme of Lenin's book What is to be Done? (1902) was the relationship between the consciousness that arises from workers' spontaneous struggle for immediate demands (e.g., a strike for higher wages) and the class consciousness required to accomplish a revolution. Lenin rejected the fatalistic argument (made by a current within the Russian socialist movement known as the economists) that revolutionary class consciousness would grow gradually and automatically from an accumulation of small scale economic struggles and/or economic changes. He saw too many barriers to the spontaneous development of widespread revolutionary consciousness during the non-revolutionary period before 1905. (After 1914, Lenin would be pre-occupied with attacking the class collaborationism of many socialists, and the reformist consciousness it promoted, as another barrier to revolution.) He criticized the passivity of some socialists for accepting the trade union consciousness of the working class (the conviction that it is necessary to fight the symptoms of capitalist exploitation without any sense of the importance of attacking its root cause), spontaneously generated during a non-revolutionary period, as the highest possible achievement of the movement in the circumstances. Lenin did not oppose either spontaneity in the class struggle, or the fight for immediate reforms. What he was concerned about was the need to transform that spontaneity into a conscious struggle that linked the fight for reforms to the ultimate political goal of revolution. (Mandel, 1977:96-97)

In What is to be Done ?, Lenin advanced two ultimately incompatible views about the nature of workers' consciousness and the tasks of socialists: one which he retained after 1905, and another that he subsequently abandoned. The one which Lenin later abandoned is the elitist argument that the working class by itself can only develop trade union

consciousness, and that therefore revolutionary ideas have to be brought into the working class movement from the outside by bourgeois intellectuals.(SW,1: 143,151) This argument transparently divides the workers' movement in two, employing fatalism to explain workers inability' to develop a revolutionary consciousness, and voluntarism to account for the supposed abilities of party intellectuals and leaders to do so.(Molyneux,1978:47) Ultimately, it leads to the un-Marxist, elitist, and anti-working class conclusion that the revolutionary class is the intelligentsia, not the proletariat, because it implies that workers are only capable of being passive recipients of ideas from other classes. Such a view clearly violates Marx's materialist claim that human beings develop their conception of the world based on their experience in attempting to transform it. This line of argument was clearly incompatible with Marxism, and was rejected by Lenin after 1905.

However, the other reason Lenin suggests revolutionary consciousness has to be brought into the working class movement from without remains critical to a materialist argument about the nature of working class consciousness. As he explained, revolutionary consciousness cannot emerge from the partial and 'mmediate struggles of sections of workers against their bosses.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from...outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes. (SW,1:182)

In this passage "inside" and "outside" no longer refer to the working class and the bourgeois intelligentsia, but to partial struggles between small sections of workers and their bosses, and the general global struggle between the classes. Lenin's point is that revolutionary consciousness is not generated by the former, that the struggle for immediate

demands does not automatically lead to revolutionary conclusions about the world.(Harding, 1977:164-165) In other words,

You cannot achieve what Lenin calls socialist consciousness...from some partial, sectional perspective on society, whether it be that of a group of employees in relation to their employers or some other....Because what revolutionary consciousness consists of is precisely a global understanding -- of all class relationships and at every level of society (economic, political, cultural, and so on) but particularly at the level of the state. That is why the indispensable precondition of socialist consciousness is an all-round propaganda and agitation which relates to every manifestation of exploitation and oppression. (Geras,1986:181)

Thus, Lenin's conclusion is that without a revolutionary party "all the fragmentary struggles, sectional experiences and partial perspectives of different layers of the masses cannot be combined into a successful revolutionary assault on capitalist society."

(Geras,1986:183) While re-affirming the importance of the spontaneous struggle for immediate reforms, Lenin argued that only if revolutionaries (both workers and intellectuals) intervened within such struggles to consciously link them to the ultimate aim of socialism, could revolutionary consciousness be generated.(Molyneux,1978:44-45)

Organizationally two conclusions followed: the party had to differentiate itself from those who exhibited trade union consciousness during the struggle for immediate demands, and yet relate to them in a fashion designed to assist in transforming that consciousness into revolutionary consciousness.

The ambiguity in Lenin's 1902 argument was resolved during the 1905 revolution when he argued the working class was spontaneously revolutionary.(CW,8:92,97; 13:32; Molyneux,1978:59) In the circumstances of revolutionary crisis, Lenin abandoned the elitist version of his argument about working class consciousness, retaining only the non-elitist claim that revolutionary consciousness could not be generated in partial struggles.

Lenin praised the creativity and initiative displayed by the working class during revolutionary crises, as it generated new organizations and forms of struggle. In those special circumstances, Lenin argued, the barriers to revolutionary consciousness that loomed so large in periods of 'normal' class relations (e.g., 1902 in Russia), were greatly diminished. (Larsson,1970:322-323) Thus, for Lenin, the experience of class struggle during a revolutionary situation was qualitatively different from such experience during a non-revolutionary period. In addition to speeding up the tempo and intensity of the class struggle, a revolutionary crisis infused every 'partial' and 'economic' struggle with politics, making possible an accelerated growth of revolutionary consciousness.(Harding,1977:240,243,246) A revolutionary crisis would spontaneously push the working class towards a global understanding of the class struggle as a whole, rather than a limited understanding of their own immediate experience. Thus, the actual experience of revolution, would push the working towards revolutionary consciousness and a revolutionary party -- provided such an organization existed to offer a practical alternative to the working class.(CW,11:228)

Prior to 1905, Lenin saw two types of barriers to the development of revolutionary consciousness: first, the inability of workers to develop a clear and comprehensive revolutionary worldview from within their isolated struggle for immediate reforms, and second, the limitations inherent in the political ideas brought to them from outside their struggle by petite bourgeois "socialists" (e.g., the revisionists and the economists). Lenin's prescription was straightforward: the revolutionary party must guarantee that revolutionary political ideas linking the immediate struggle to the ultimate aim are brought into the struggles of workers. During the 1905 revolution his argument changed. Lenin no longer

believed the barriers to revolutionary consciousness could be overcome simply by having a revolutionary organization carry Marxist ideas into the class struggle to displace the reformists. For the first time, he saw that the collective struggles of the working class could move them spontaneously towards revolutionary consciousness, during a revolutionary crisis. Lenin observed first hand that the rich experience of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis politicized every struggle for immediate demands. He concluded that it is only when the struggles of the working class, and revolutionary ideas (and organization) are joined on the fertile ground of a revolutionary crisis that mass revolutionary consciousness can develop. This profoundly materialist and non-elitist argument about working class consciousness represents the best elements in Lenin's efforts to develop a theory of class consciousness. Implicit in it is the recognition that any explanation of working class consciousness has to refer to both the experience of workers and the stock of ideas and organizations available to them.

What made Lenin's 1905 understanding of working class consciousness so valuable, was his retrospective understanding that it was not simply a matter of who carried ideas into the working class from outside, reformists or revolutionaries. It was the fact that the working class appetite for revolutionary ideas was very different in a non-revolutionary period characterized by fragmentary struggles for immediate reforms, and a revolutionary period when every struggle for reforms was pregnant with the issue of which class should run society. In other words, Lenin's 1905 analysis about how workers' experience during a revolution shapes their consciousness pointed towards the development of a materialist theory of working class consciousness.

At the core of a such a theory is the recognition to explain

the adherence of large numbers of workers to reformist ideas, for example, we have to examine the way rank and file workers determine whether reformism fits their experience, their needs and their understanding of the world. Anybody who purports to explain working class reformism by describing only the processes of manipulation of the working class by its reformist leadership, while ignoring how the working class learns for itself the value or irrelevance of pursuing a policy of class collaboration, is substituting an abstract, idealist theoretical schema, for the patient historical analysis that is really required. What is at stake here is whether the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process would be rooted in a materialist or an idealist analysis of workers' consciousness.

* * * * *

Lenin's 1905 acceptance of the proletariat's ability to spontaneously move towards revolutionary consciousness in the midst of a revolutionary crisis did not mean a reversion to social democratic fatalism. Just because revolutionary crises generate pressures for masses of workers to develop a revolutionary consciousness, Lenin did not conclude that proletarian revolution would automatically happen. In the first place, as Lenin recognized, there is a real gap between the widespread development of revolutionary consciousness and the existence of the organizational means necessary for revolutionary workers to make that consciousness into a material reality. Because the mass revolutionary consciousness Lenin was talking about "does not develop gradually, accumulating steadily and inevitably," but "takes giant and sudden leaps forward" during revolutionary periods, it might well dissipate without the prior organization of a substantial revolutionary party.(Molyneux, 1978:50)

Therefore, revolutionaries had to build a credible revolutionary party with roots in the working class before the arrival of a revolutionary crisis. During non-revolutionary periods

the party intervenes in partial struggles to relate them to the overall goal of proletarian revolution; during a revolutionary period, the party helps to create the means by which the spontaneously developing revolutionary consciousness can establish workers' power.

The second reason Lenin's new view did not mean a reversion to fatalism stemmed from his recognition that the working class is not a homogeneous entity, and that its consciousness develops unevenly and at different speeds, even during a revolutionary crisis. That makes revolutionary organization essential as a vehicle for insuring the more advanced sections of the working class (i.e., those with a revolutionary consciousness) are able to influence the more backward elements, overcoming that unevenness and uniting the class.

When we examined Lenin's discussion of the role of strikes during the 1905 revolution, we mentioned his distinction between "advanced" and "backward" sections of the working class. (More on this below.) He assumed there was an unevenness in consciousness and experience between different sections of the working class, and distinguished between three different groups: the mass of the working class, the vanguard layer of that class (i.e., the minority of workers who acquire extensive experience of the class struggle through their organization and activity in non-revolutionary periods, the natural leaders of the working class), and the revolutionary party. (Mandel, 1977:83) That distinction enabled the Bolsheviks to successfully address the uneven consciousness of the class.

"Backward workers" and "Marxist revolutionaries" are both categories easily identified on the basis of objective criteria. For Lenin, the vanguard of the working class was composed of that minority of the working class which understood the class nature of the struggle against capitalism, and which was dedicated to intervention in whatever

struggles arose "in order to raise...the general level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win." (Lenin cited in Cliff, 1976:165-166) Even before the 1905 revolution, sections of the vanguard of the working class had already come close to achieving a revolutionary consciousness.(Harding,1977:173-174; Ehrenberg, 1979:78-79; Cliff,1976: 165-166) Thus, this vanguard was the natural constituency for a revolutionary party that required a high degree of political clarity to relate the struggle for immediate demands to the ultimate aim of socialism. Lenin argued the revolutionary party should root itself in this vanguard, because it was the natural day-to-day leadership of the working class and could lead the rest of the class in the struggle for power.(Harding,1977:288)

During non-revolutionary periods, the main task for revolutionaries was to win a portion of the vanguard of the working class to the party in preparation for a revolutionary crisis. In Lenin's view, a revolutionary party could only be effective in winning a majority of the proletariat to the revolution during a revolutionary crisis if it had already won at least a significant part of the vanguard of the working class to its banners prior to the crisis.(Mandel,1977:87-89)

Lenin's argument that the revolutionary party should be a vanguard organization embracing only the class conscious minority of the working class, represented a dramatic break from the Social Democratic idea of a broad party that incorporates the entire working class.(Molyneux,1978:36-37) His view cannot be dismissed as simply the product of a voluntarist doctrine of minority revolution. It was partly a response to the general inapplicability of the West European model of a broad, heterogenous and legal socialist party to Russian conditions, and partly sheer innovation. The absence of bourgeois

democracy in Russia made underground organization a necessity, and undercut the Social Democratic view of the party as an organization that embraced the entire working class -- making it possible for Lenin to conceive of a party of the class conscious minority of workers.(Molyneux,1978:37-42)

After 1905, Lenin did not view the relationship between party and class as one in which middle class intellectuals brought revolutionary consciousness into the working class movement through the instrument of a party. Because the 1905 revolution showed workers could spontaneously develop revolutionary consciousness, and made it possible for the Russian revolutionary movement to leave the underground and operate in conditions of semi-legality, Lenin abandoned the notion of a small party of professional revolutionaries in favour of a mass party of the vanguard of the working class.(Molyneux,1978:46-51,59-63; Leibman,1975:45-53,198-205; Cliff,1975:175-176)

Even when Lenin had favored a party of professional revolutionaries -- before 1905 -- he did not conceive that as a party of workers run by middle class intellectuals. In What is to be Done ?, Lenin argues that middle class intellectuals can only become and remain revolutionaries by virtue of membership in a political party that insures them close and regular contact with the day to day struggles of the working class. Party intellectuals were greatly affected by their involvement in the organization, given Lenin's insistence they be bound by the same discipline as working class members. (Indeed, it was the dispute over this aspect of Lenin's organizational proposals that led to the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks -- the latter being opposed to such close party supervision of intellectuals. (Dunayevskaya,1975: 177-181; Molyneux,1978:51-55)) Bolshevik demands on party intellectuals were so great that few middle class members who joined actually

remained within the Party. (Cliff,1975:122-124,178,240-241,300,353-354)

Furthermore, the Bolshevik Party did not just combine a middle class leadership with a working class membership. The Bolshevik party was a party of workers, primarily led by workers, as historians have documented. Within it, workers acted under the discipline of the leadership, composed of self-made worker-intellectuals and radicalized members of the middle class who had proven themselves in the course of many years of activity. (Cliff,1976:159-162; Service,1986:45; Chase,1978:89; Mandel,1983: 55-56) Thus, the Bolshevik Party was not a vehicle for middle class domination of the working class. Nor can it be viewed as something external to the working class, a mere instrument of middle class intellectuals eager to gain state power.

Lenin's revolutionary experience enabled him to ground his Marxist rejection of Social Democratic fatalism in a consistently non-elitist view of the party. After 1905, "the party remains a vanguard, distinct from the class as a whole, but now it is the party of the advanced workers -- a part of the class, not the party of the declassed intelligentsia introducing socialism 'from without'." (Molyneux, 1978:63) Thus, Lenin's original break with fatalism -- the one which was evident in What is to be Done ? --was, after 1905, "maintained and developed, but freed of the elitist foundation he had first given it." (Molyneux,1978:50)

To conclude, Lenin believed that a revolutionary party had four tasks during a revolutionary crisis: first, to propagandize about the ultimate aim of the class struggle, thereby assisting in the crystallization of revolutionary consciousness; second, overcome the unevenness in consciousness and experience within different sections of the working class, and coordinate the struggles of the various sections; third, make the political and military

preparations for a mass insurrection, and then lead it; and finally develop the overall strategy and tactics required for the vanguard of the working class to carry out the previous three tasks. The party could not create a revolutionary situation; it could create neither the crisis of the ruling class, nor the mass activity and organization characteristic of the working class during a revolutionary period, both of which were pre-requisites for a successful revolution. But the party could channel the spontaneous struggles of the working class during such a period, helping to make them conscious and giving them the shape and direction necessary to topple the existing order. In this fashion, Lenin succeeded in developing a new position on the party, one which transcended the limitations of Blanquist style voluntarism and Social Democratic fatalism.

(2.8) The Immediate Outcome of a Revolutionary Crisis

The Bolsheviks argued there are two stages in the process by which a capitalist society (with a balance of power appropriate to a 'normal' period of class relations) gets transformed into a workers' state: first, the pre-revolutionary period, which may evaporate, end through reactionary or counter-revolutionary repression, or escalate into a full fledged revolutionary situation and, second, a revolutionary situation that again, may evaporate, be suppressed through counter-revolution, or escalate into an insurrection and/or civil war. If an insurrection is successful, then a workers' state emerges.

Which of these potential outcomes to a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation is realized depends on a variety of factors. In the case of a revolutionary situation, which outcome occurs is determined not just by the actions of the major classes, but also by the

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clarity of their consciousness and their degree of class organization. If a mass revolutionary workers' party fails to emerge along with the development of dual power, then the working class will begin to falter as it loses confidence in its own ability to provide solutions to the crisis. The result will be a gradual erosion of the morale of the working class, with the revolutionary situation either fading away or being brought to an abrupt end by bloody counter-revolution.

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For a revolutionary crisis to be resolved in a successful workers' revolution, an organized insurrection is required to eliminate the last vestiges of the old state power, and to give the new institutions of workers' political power (e.g., soviets) a monopoly of force. Lenin first considered the political and technical problems associated with a proletarian insurrection -- problems like the timing of an uprising, the need for a centralized command of the revolutionary forces, and the splitting of the army -- in 1905. By favoring the idea that revolutionaries should organize an insurrection, Lenin guaranteed he would mistakenly be accused of Blanquism -- all because he rejected the social democratic assumption that revolutions simply happen by themselves.(CW,8:563; Cliff,1975:195) Lenin understood that while it was impossible to create a revolutionary situation, once such a situation existed, it was both possible and necessary to set the time for an insurrection.(Larsson,1970:329; Cliff,1975:192) A resolute party, with credibility and deep roots among the working class could plan and execute an insurrection, given the objective circumstances of a revolutionary situation. (CW,8:153)

Lenin rejected both the Blanquist style reduction of a proletarian insurrection to an apolitical question of military and conspiratorial technique, and the fatalism of the Second

International theorists -- who expected the working class to automatically achieve power without preparations for an insurrection. Unlike the Blanquists, Lenin refused to abstract the problem of insurrection from the living struggle of the mass of the working class. For him, as for Marx, insurrection remained first and foremost a political question, with the technical questions (e.g., obtaining weapons) remaining subordinate to political preparations (e.g., winning mass support for the idea). (Cliff,1975:194-195) But Lenin also condemned the social democrats' unwillingness to make the political and technical preparations necessary for mass insurrection. Social democrats restricted their approval of insurrection to the sort of spontaneous uprising that occurred in February 1917 -- one which could destroy an existing regime, but which could never give birth to a workers' state.(HRR,III:168) For a proletarian uprising to do more than change the clique in control of the state, for it to create a workers' state and transform the class structure of society, it had to be a conscious act by a vast majority of the working class, as planned and organized by a revolutionary party. Without the organization and planning of a revolutionary party, the proletariat -- deprived of all the economic and social advantages the bourgeoisie enjoyed during the bourgeois revolutions -- could not transform a revolutionary movement against an old regime into one capable of creating a new workers' state.(HRR,III:169,170; LO:60)

Lenin's view of the type of mass insurrection necessary to establish a workers' state, was a dramatic departure from both the conspiratorial coups organized by followers of Blanqui, and the unplanned mass uprisings of 1871, 1905 and February 1917 (which the social democrats would defend). In a critical innovation to the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution, Lenin envisaged a third kind of proletarian uprising -- one which combined the centralized military planning characteristic of Blanqui and the mass support and

participation typical of 'spontaneous' uprisings. The insurrection in October 1917 is the main example of this new kind of proletarian uprising, since it combined both a centralized and conspiratorial plan with mass popular involvement.

FIGURE 2.2: THREE TYPES OF PROLETARIAN INSURRECTION

	centralized & conspiratorial leadership	popular support & involvement among masses
Coup d'etat favored by Blanquists	+	-
Spontaneous mass uprising (e.g., Feb. 1917) favored by Social Democrats	-	+
Planned mass insurrection (e.g., Oct. 1917) favored by Lenin and Trotsky	+	+

Against those who might be tempted to reduce insurrection from a political question to a technical/military one, as Blanqui had, Trotsky argued that conspiracy could not replace politics in the proletarian revolution. The mere existence of a conspiracy is not sufficient to bring about a revolution. "An active minority of the proletariat, no matter how well organized, cannot seize the power regardless of the general conditions of the country." (HRR,III:170) (If a Blanquist style conspiracy succeeded, it would "only replace one clique of the...ruling class by another....Only mass insurrection has ever brought the victory of one social regime over another."(HRR,III;167)) An insurrection could "no more be evoked at will than the revolution as a whole."(HRR,III: 167) It has as its essential precondition the existence of certain objective social conditions, namely the development of a genuine

revolutionary situation that includes the existence of soviets (or other organs of dual political power). But, for an insurrection to succeed, there must also be mass revolutionary consciousness and a mass revolutionary party.

The combination of mass support and conspiracy required for a planned mass insurrection requires the "definite combination" of soviets (or other similar class organizations) and a revolutionary party.(HRR,III:171,284)

For the Bolsheviks, acceptance of the need for a mass insurrection implied there were two key problems: first, the political question of how to determine whether the objective conditions necessary for success existed, and second, the technical and military question of how to actually organize the decisive blow. Since success required a correct assessment of the balance of class forces, the leadership of a revolutionary party was "presented with a task of correct diagnosis. They must feel out the growing insurrection in good season and supplement it with a conspiracy" regarding the technical details.(HRR,III:172, 173-174; CW,27:24-25; 31:63; LO:38-39) Differentiating the Bolshevik view of insurrection from that of Blanqui, Lenin argued there were three preconditions that justify attempting an insurrection. First, any proletarian insurrection that is simply the product of a conspiracy or of a party's desire for revolution, will fail. Insurrection can only succeed when it is consciously and actively sought by a majority of the working class. Second, a successful proletarian insurrection can only occur at a point during the revolutionary process when the working class movement is on the offensive against the ruling class. Third, the best time for a proletarian insurrection is when the balance of class forces is such that "the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest."

(CW,26:22-23,133-134; HRR,III:174-175)

To end a situation of dual power in favor of the working class, a revolutionary organization that enjoys mass support, must pick the appropriate time for an insurrection, and organize it militarily. Implicit in Lenin's discussion of the preconditions for insurrection, particularly his insistence that a certain balance of class forces was necessary for success, was the claim there was an optimum time for insurrection. If no insurrection occurred within a specific period, the opportunity would be lost, as the balance of power shifted, weakening the revolutionary party and the revolutionary working class in relation to its opponents. Thus, one of the most important tasks for a revolutionary party was to distinguish between that point in a revolutionary crisis "when an attempt to summon an insurrection must inevitable prove premature...and the moment when a favorable situation must be considered hopelessly missed."(HRR,III:154,173) Although Lenin and Trotsky agreed it was the responsibility of the Party leadership to decide when an insurrection should take place, he argued for an activist party composed of members that would "not have to 'sit about and wait' for the call for an uprising," but through its regular political activity of propaganda and agitation, would "cultivate the ability to estimate correctly the general political situation and, consequently the ability to select the proper moment for an uprising." (cited in Cliff,1975:184) Both Lenin and Trotsky put great emphasis on the need to test the actual balance of class forces through periodic non-insurrectionary but class-wide confrontations with the forces of the ruling classes.(CW,11:344)

Even if the revolutionaries determined the right time for an insurrection, they are still faced with the problem of actually co-ordinating a centrally directed assault on the remnants of the state machine. That meant procuring arms, establishing a plan, and

designating the leadership, once the political argument for an insurrection had been won. Once the conditions for an insurrection were ripe, a centralized leadership was necessary to guarantee the working class launched a united action, rather than getting sidetracked by diversionary struggles, or provoked into premature local battles before the entire class was ready.(CW,8: 373,374,538-539)¹⁹

(2.9) - Conclusion

The Bolsheviks adopted Marx's basic theory of proletarian revolution (as against the voluntarism of Blanqui or the determinism of Kautsky) and sought to enrich and develop it on the basis of their revolutionary experience and their insights into a host of new social phenomena that Marx had never encountered (e.g., soviets, factory committees, etc.). In the process they made a variety of valuable and innovative contributions to the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution, starting with their identification of the revolutionary process as a key concern of Marxist theory -- after that point had been obscured by the theorists of the Second International.

The 1905 revolution in Russia revealed, for the first time in history, some of the standard features and dynamics of a revolution in which the proletariat played the leading role (e.g., the importance of general strikes, the need for a revolutionary party to organize and lead the insurrection at the proper moment, etc.). Careful analysis of those novel forms of organization and struggle allowed revolutionaries like Lenin and Trotsky to develop the concepts and arguments they needed to analyze events in 1917.(CW,15:53; Cliff,1975:234) Although they had not developed an adequate theory of the revolutionary process prior to

1917, the Bolsheviks had at least pondered some of the most important questions about how a proletarian revolution might take place, thereby arming themselves politically and analytically for the experience of 1917. (Lenin later deemed the experience of 1905 so vital to the Bolsheviks' success in 1917, he suggested that "without such a 'dress rehearsal' as we had in 1905, the revolutions of 1917...would have been impossible." (CW,29:310)

On the eve of the 1917 Revolution in Russia, only the revolutionary current within the Second International -- people like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg -- had really studied and absorbed the lessons of the 1905 Russian revolution. (CW,31:342) The only 'Marxists' to actually begin the task of developing a theory of the process of proletarian revolution, were those most dedicated to the idea of workers' power. (Neither the reformists nor the ultra-leftists needed a theory of the revolutionary process in the same way the Bolsheviks did.) Analyzing the revolutionary process, both Lenin and Trotsky explicitly sought to avoid the political and theoretical pitfalls associated with Blanqui's voluntarism and Kautsky's fatalism.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER (2.0)

1. In Marx's day, a version of the objectivist position, the one taken by Kautsky, was held by Proudhon.(Horowitz,1969:31; Marx,1963:8)
2. The inspiration for this section comes from Larsson (1970), who devotes three chapters to a systematic comparison of Blanqui, Marx and Kautsky. Additional sources for this discussion include: on Blanqui, Draper (1986), Lichtheim (1968), Braunthal (1966), Callinicos (1983), Jellinek (1937), Lindemann (1983), Spitzer (1957); on Kautsky, Salvadori (1979), Kautsky (1909,1913; 1983), Schorske (1955), Colletti (1972), and Molyneux (1983); and on Marx and Engels, Callinicos (1983), Blackburn (1977), Draper (1978), Gilbert (1981) and Lowy (1981).
3. A proletarian revolution puts state power in the hands of a propertyless class, the working class. By contrast, in a bourgeois revolution, the class which is trying to gain state power already possesses considerable economic and social power. The bourgeoisie uses the social institutions its power is vested in (employers' clubs, universities, etc.) to plan its campaign for state power. But, the working class cannot follow the same pattern. Because the proletariat must conquer political power before it achieves economic power, it requires its own political institution within which it can prepare itself for the struggle -- a revolutionary party.(LO:68; Draper,1978:28-31)
4. The ultra-leftists of that era (e.g., Pannekoek) and our own (e.g., Boggs,1978), fail to distinguish between the revolutionary process and the construction of socialism, the means and ends of revolutionary activity. For an excellent Marxist critique of the tendency for the 'prefigurative' tradition to conflate process and outcome, means and ends, see Geras (1976:147-150).
5. For a critique of Lenin's position, see Trotsky's 1905 (314-318), Leibman (1975:78), Cliff (1975:205-206), and Larsson (1970:306-307).
6. In fact, there is only one way in which the events of 1917 differed from Trotsky's strategic perspective. He had argued the overthrow of the Czar would lead directly to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, without any intervening stage in which the bourgeoisie held power. The rise of a bourgeois Provisional Government in March 1917 was a development Trotsky had not anticipated.(Molyneux,1981:32-33; LO:13,19; HRR-BL:25-27; CW,24:62-63) But, that did not fundamentally undermine Trotsky's strategic perspective.
7. Lenin's new strategy was worked out in his Letters From Afar, the April Theses and The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, which served as the cornerstone for the tactics he advocated throughout 1917.(CW,23:295-342; 24:21-26,55-91) However, the theoretical basis for his new strategic view was established during his wartime study of Hegel and the world economy.(Molyneux,1978:69-78; Lowy,1976:15; Harding,1981)

8. Unlike those Bolshevik leaders who dogmatically defended the old strategy despite the new reality, Lenin did not seek to fit the February revolution into some supra-historical evolutionary schema. The starting point of his analysis was the living reality -- a reality quite different from what he had anticipated.(CW,24: 43-44; 33:477; Cliff,1976:95)

9. The events of 1914 forced Lenin to reconsider his assessment of the Second International, and of the state of the class struggle throughout all of Europe. In his wartime writings, Lenin laid the theoretical and political foundation for the tactics the Bolsheviks would employ throughout the revolutionary period in Europe. He also undertook a major (though not comprehensive) reappraisal of the Marxism of the Second International. For the impact of 1914 on Lenin's thought, see Dunayevskaya (1975:167-176;1973:95-120), Lowy (1976), Harris (1968:138-152), Molyneux (1978:69-78), Harding (1977:304-305;1981).

10. We must be very careful not to confuse these symptoms of a revolutionary crisis with its causes. The causes of a revolutionary crisis are not the split in the ruling class, the growth of workers' activity and consciousness that Lenin used to define the existence of such a situation. The causes are those long-term contradictions of the society in question, and the short-term event which explain why the government split, why workers' activity increased, etc. (Taylor,1984:145,153-154)

11. For example, see (AR:222-224), where Lenin used the term "revolutionary situation" to analyze wartime Europe, a situation that was clearly "pre-revolutionary" in character, since the growing crises of the ruling classes had not yet been matched by mass activity on the part of the working class. Sometimes, the Bolsheviks call a situation where all three of Lenin's objective features of a revolutionary crisis exist "pre-revolutionary" rather than "revolutionary." On the other hand, they often use the term "revolutionary" to refer to situations where the objective preconditions for revolution are present and the working class is fully conscious of the need for revolution (whether or not a revolutionary party adequate to the task exists).

12. There is an important distinction to be made between an isolated revolutionary situation, and a more general world revolutionary crisis (the Bolsheviks frequently spoke about the "world revolution") associated with the synchronized appearance of a wave of revolutionary crises -- like the one that swept the world capitalist system during the years after World War I. In Chapter 4 we will further consider the relationship between specific cases of revolutionary crisis, and the worldwide crises of capitalism that occasionally arise.

13. Lenin and Trotsky's analysis of strike action during the revolutionary process is not that different from Luxemburg's more detailed discussion in The Mass Strike.

14. Although the Bolsheviks used the concept of counter-revolution in the analysis of several different types of phenomena (e.g., Bonapartism, fascism, etc.), it is their use of that term in connection with the reaction by various classes and elements in defence of the existing social order against a proletarian revolutionary movement, that is of interest to us here.(Brownstein,1981:177-181; Mayer,1971:86-101)

15. Lenin's view that the suffering of the underclasses must become more acute "than usual" for a revolution to take place, only commits him to the claim the economic situation of workers must worsen relative to what it had been during the 'normal' period of development. It did not commit him to the proposition there must be an absolute deterioration in living standards throughout the history of capitalism. Nevertheless, both Lenin and Trotsky followed Kautsky in mistakenly attributing to Marx a the claim that capitalist development necessarily brings about a general lowering of real wage levels until they are below subsistence.(LTKM:25-27; CW,18:435-436; Zeluck,1985:12; Riddell, 1987:224) However, Marx did not argue capitalist development would lead to the absolute immiseration of the working class. (Shaikh,1983:362-363; Rosdolsky,1977:300-312) Lenin and Trotsky's confusion on this matter does not adversely affect their theory of proletarian revolution, since neither believed that changes in working class consciousness were a simple effect of a rise or decline in real wages.

16. Lenin and Trotsky underestimated the importance of the social side of the revolution (e.g., the struggle to achieve control over the process of production). That deficiency in Bolshevism --which is discussed further in Chapter 4 -- stems from three circumstances: first, the deterministic and mechanical version of Marxism the Bolsheviks inherited from the Second International; second, the backwardness of Russia, which made it unnecessary for Lenin and Trotsky to consider how to build a specifically socialist economy in Russia, and third, those portions of Marx's writings available at the time (especially those on the Paris Commune) did not emphasize his analysis of the alienation of labour in the labour process.

17. Prior to 1916, Lenin did not connect the experience of the Paris Commune and Marx's argument about the need to smash the capitalist state apparatus, with the soviets that had developed during the 1905-1907 revolution. That connection was made in Lenin's notes on the state just weeks before the February uprising.(MOS:50-51) Having made the connection between the Commune and the Russian soviets, he immediately identified the new soviets of March 1917 as the embryo of a workers' government. (Harding,1981:92-94; Sawyer,1977; Molyneux,1978:69-78)

18. Much of the discussion in this section relies heavily upon the following sources: Molyneux (1978,1981), Geras (1986), Harman (1983a), Leibman (1975), Cliff (1976).

19. The Bolsheviks believed a successful mass insurrection would shift the class struggle to a new stage -- one of open civil war. Lenin and Trotsky both recognized the remnants of the old ruling class and their supporters (both domestic and international) would regroup and attack the new workers' state some time after a successful seizure of state power. Hence the absolute necessity of spreading any successful workers' revolution throughout the remainder of the world capitalist system.

CHAPTER (3.0) - BOLSHEVISM, THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE PROCESS OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

There are four important reasons why we need to examine the revolutionary process in Russia during 1917: first, it is the only case of a positive outcome to a revolutionary crisis (i.e., a workers' seizure of power), and analysis of it makes it easier to explain crises that have been resolved without a workers' revolution (i.e., with a negative outcome);¹ second, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process really crystallized in 1917 in conjunction with the experience that Lenin and Trotsky gained in leading the revolution; third, the Russian Revolution is possibly the most studied and documented revolutionary process in history; finally, the events of 1917 provide an important verification of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution.

Not only has the Russian Revolution been closely studied, but its political significance has been widely debated, as adherents of various political creeds have interpreted the events of 1917 through the prism of their own theories. As a result, the vast literature on the 1917 revolution spans the political spectrum from the work of cold-warriors and hardened Stalinists, through the analyses of liberal and Social Democratic historians, to work done by Bolsheviks, and their sympathizers.² Here, we rely primarily upon the historical research done by the Bolsheviks, their sympathizers, and the new body of research produced recently by radical social historians studying the Russian Revolution 'from below.'³

In this Chapter we examine the revolutionary process in 1917 in light of the Bolshevik argument about the features and dynamics of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis.⁴ We do not provide a complete narrative of the events, nor a

comprehensive survey of all aspects of the class struggle. Instead, we analyze the revolutionary process from February to October 1917 in an analytical fashion, using key elements of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process as a thematic guide to analyze the urban revolutionary process.

(3.1) The Structural Contradictions of Russian Society on the Eve of the 1917 Revolution

We can start our discussion of the revolutionary process in 1917 with an account of the class structure and contradictions of the Czar's Russia. To begin, we need to place Czarist Russia in its international context: the economic and military competition within the European state system of the period 1850-1914. (Skocpol,1979:19-24) The contest with the other great powers meant the Czarist state had to initiate a program of state induced capitalist development to remain militarily competitive. The Crimean War in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrated the need for Russia's military power to be backed by an industrialized system of transportation and arms production. (Service,1986:2; Kemp, 1969:123-124; Nove,1969:11; Shanin,1985: 55; Skocpol,1979:83-84) However, despite the efforts of the autocracy to sponsor a limited industrialization, by 1900 Russia could no longer be counted as one of the major world powers. (Hobsbawm,1977:100-101; Shanin,1985:191) Even worse, the state-induced program of capitalist development created the proletarian grave-digger of Czarism.(Kemp,1969:119,123)

Industrialization in Russia was financed by squeezing the peasantry and by importing foreign capital.(Skocpol,1979:91) By 1914, Russia was the world's fifth largest

industrial power, but industrial productivity and production per capita both remained very low.(Service,1986:5-7,22; Shanin,1985:103-104) The contradictory combination of dynamic, state sponsored and foreign backed industrialization (with production often concentrated in large modern plants), side by side with an antiquated, stagnant system of agricultural production (only slowly being penetrated by the market), added up to the peculiar social and economic structure Trotsky labeled "combined and uneven development." Because Russia's economic and military position in the world capitalist system was declining relative to its competitors, Czarism was ill equipped for a prolonged military confrontation against more advanced countries.(Nove,1969:13-16; Shanin,1985: 124; Kemp,1969:141,150; Skocpol,1979:94)

Czarist Russia was caught in a long term structural crisis, that stemmed from the economic and military priorities of the Czar and the economic interests of the landowning nobility. Czarism had only survived the 1905 revolution because of the loyalty of the army. By 1914, revolution of some sort was likely, given the persistent refusal of the Czar to grant the political reforms demanded by those sections of Russian society linked to the development of capitalist industry.(Haimson,1964,1965; Medvedev,1979:16; McCauley,1984:6-7) From 1914 to 1917, the Czar's protracted war against the more economically advanced German and Austro-Hungarian regimes wore down Russia's economy, crippled its inadequate rail system, diverted valuable capital from basic infrastructural investments and industries (e.g.. the production of agricultural implements), created shortages of food, raw materials (like fuel and iron) and military supplies. and deprived it of the 20% of its industrial capacity in territories lost during the war.(Service,1986:26-28; Burdzhakov, 1987:18,51-52) All those problems were compounded

by demoralizing military defeats and a resurgence of working class opposition to the Czarist state in 1915 and 1916. Heaping such problems upon the long term structural contradictions of Czarist Russia made the likelihood of a specifically revolutionary transition from autocracy much greater.(Medvedev,1979:16)

* * * * *

In 1917 the class structure of Russia consisted of several distinct but inter-related sets of class relations: first there was the class relation between the landed nobility and the peasantry (which adopted a wide variety of forms); second was the class relation between capital (composed of state backed capital, domestic capital, and foreign backed comprador capital) and labour; and third, superimposed upon those two sets of class relations, as well as those characterizing other classes and strata (e.g., the urban intelligentsia, the independent rural petty bourgeoisie, etc.), was the Czar and his state machine (including the bureaucracy and the army).(Shanin,1985:202) Thus the ruling classes -- in the broadest sense of the term -- included the Czar, the state bureaucracy, the generals, the capitalists (both domestic and foreign based), the landed nobility, and sections of the intelligentsia.

The bourgeoisie was a small, and quite provincial section of the world capitalist class, internally divided, oriented to commerce rather than industry, and politically conservative because it had been tied from birth to the Czarist state.(Shanin, 1985:119; Smith,1983b:75) Prior to 1917, it displayed a chronic inability to fight for the political changes needed to transform the agrarian social structure in a manner that would foster rapid capitalist development. The Russian bourgeoisie grew up dependent upon the state for capital and markets, and military protection from the growing working class. However, "while the autocracy was the bourgeoisie's best customer," the Czar's resistance to serious

agrarian reform undermined the growth of the domestic market Russian capital required.(Moore,1950:23)

The bourgeois politicians who led the ruling classes throughout 1917 were hardly united. The Russian bourgeoisie was internally divided "according to industrial and regional base, degree of dependence on foreign capital, degree of dependence on the state, differences in industrial and commercial policy and differences in political outlook."(Smith,1983b:74) Despite these divisions, the Russia bourgeoisie was partially united by its common hatred for working class revolution. (After the horrifying experience of 1905, the bourgeoisie had completely abandoned its 'revolutionary' aspirations, hoping instead to unite with the monarchy and the nobility to improve its position in the world market through imperialism.(HRR,I:23-24))

When the February revolution began, the Russian working class included about 3.6 million industrial workers (together with another 12.8 million non-industrial wage earners) out of a total population of about 180 million people. In Petrograd, the industrial working class was about 417,000 people out of a total population of 2.4 million, while in Moscow it was about 200,000 out of a total of 1.7 million people. (Smith,1983b:10;Mandel, 1983:44; McCauley, 1975:2-3; 1984:135; Koenker,1981:24-25) These industrial workers were employed in a wide variety of industries and occupations (the metal industries and textiles were the two key industries in Petrograd and Moscow), with production in the metal trades being concentrated in huge plants. (Petrograd "had the most highly concentrated workforce of any city in the world at that time -- with 70% of its workers employed in enterprises of more than 1000 workers."(Smith,1983a:xiv)) The industrial working class, was concentrated in certain key urban areas, but was without

substantial, and independent class organizations because of the autocracy. Both the trade unions and socialist parties were quite small. (Koenker, 1982:ix-x; Service, 1979:43; Rigby, 1968:52-53)

To analyze the class struggle in 1917, we need to distinguish between three groups of workers: first, the unskilled labourers and textile workers (usually women, youth and recently urbanized peasants), who faced low wages and poor working conditions, were often illiterate, and whose political loyalties were with the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) - a huge populist party; second, the skilled metal workers, who enjoyed better living and working conditions, were literate and highly conscious politically, and condemned any fraternization between workers and the exploiting classes, while supporting the Bolsheviks;⁵ and third, a stratum within the second group, a highly skilled 'labour aristocracy,' which consisted of the printers (and other highly paid workers, like some skilled workers in the state's factories), who regularly brushed shoulders with the liberal professions, fraternized with them, and who usually supported the Menshevik strategy of political coalition with the bourgeoisie. (Mandel, 1983:9-39; Smith, 1983b:254) Throughout 1917, the two larger groups, the vanguard of skilled metalworkers (who had extensive experience in the class struggle prior to 1917) and the more backward unskilled and recently arrived workers, "played different, but largely complementary roles in the revolutionary process." The knowledge, politics and organizational abilities of the skilled workers combined with the turbulence of the more oppressed unskilled workers to yield an explosive mixture. (Smith, 1983b:255)

* * * * *

By late 1916, the ruling classes were in real turmoil over the Czar's disastrous conduct of the war, and the rising wave of social unrest. Unable to suppress the opposition,

and unwilling to liberalize the government, the Czarist regime had become one of "permanent crisis." (Cliff, 1976:65) Recognizing that without immediate reforms the underclasses might launch an uprising, the ruling classes openly debated whether the monarchy should continue, with the international bourgeoisie backing those who favored some kind of palace coup. But, the various factions of the ruling classes proved unable to act before the February revolution. (Cliff, 1976:62-77; HRR, I:27-31, 64-77)

(3.2) The February Uprising and the Birth of Dual Power: The anti-Czarist Revolution as the Cause of the Revolutionary Crisis in 1917

The war was the immediate cause of the February revolution, the short term development which brought the structural contradictions of the Czarist regime to the surface in the form of the strikes, demonstrations, street fighting and mutinies that overthrew the Czar in Petrograd. (CW, 23:299, 330) Poverty and hunger were endemic to the Petrograd working class before 1917. But, the war exacerbated the situation, providing the sharp increase in suffering that was a precondition for the development of a revolutionary crisis. During 1917, the class struggle would be fueled by galloping inflation that undermined real wage levels (official fixed prices in Petrograd increased 2.3 times during 1917), forcing workers to organize and strike just to maintain their miserable standard of living. The combination of state repression, intensified exploitation, galloping inflation, food shortages and full employment combined to create the conditions in which the workers of Petrograd could mount a serious strike wave. (Mandel, 1983:62-63; Smith, 1983b:44-48, 116)

The wartime crisis of European capitalism was more acute in the Czar's empire,

because Russian capitalism was weaker and its economy more vulnerable to distortions than other countries. (CW,25:364) The suffering and sacrifice the war inflicted on the masses in Russia was more severe than elsewhere. Certainly the massive carnage in the Russian army had much to do with the revolt of the soldiers in 1917.(Smith,1987:62) The festering crisis in Russia surfaced after a series of military defeats that "shook up the old machinery of government and the old order and roused the anger of all classes of the population against them."(CW,23:299-301)

The February revolution -- the period from the first demonstrations in Petrograd on February 23 to the formation of the bourgeois Provisional Government (PG) on March 3 -- was the event that triggered the 1917 crisis of Russian society.* It was the culmination of a series of strikes by the Petrograd working class, that grew during 1915 and 1916. During those years, economic hardships and political disaffection with the war intermingled to produce food riots, then economic strikes and finally political strikes -- as the vanguard of the industrial working class -- the skilled metalworkers in Petrograd took the lead.(Burdzhalov,1987:16-29,52-53; Smith,1983b:49-52 Koenker, 1986:621; HRR,I:36-42)

The February revolution began with a strike by women textile workers in Petrograd, to protest the shortage of bread. Within three days, the protest had escalated from demonstrations and meetings to street battles with the police and a general strike. The decisive turning point came when troops ordered to fire on the demonstrating crowds, mutinied and joined the crowd.(HRR,I: 113-124) Attacks on police stations and other symbols of Czarist authority followed, uniting workers and soldiers. In eight days, the

* The dates used in this Chapter refer to the Julian calendar (in use in Russia at the time of the revolution), which was thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar used in western Europe.

centuries-old monarchy was toppled.(CW,23:298; 29:311) Workers and soldiers in Petrograd began to elect delegates to a city wide soviet, modelled on that of 1905.

State power passed to a bourgeois PG that took control of what remained of the old Czarist state apparatus, with the approval of the moderate socialists who led the soviet (i.e., the Mensheviks and the SRs). The simultaneous creation of the Petrograd Soviet, which enjoyed the loyalty of the masses, established the beginning of a situation of dual political power: the PG embodied the power of the bourgeoisie, the landlords and the generals, while the soviet was the embryo of workers' power. In turn, dual power opened up the possibility the anti-Czarist 'political' revolution might penetrate the factories, the barracks and the countryside, and become a 'social' revolution.

The superior organization and consciousness of the bourgeoisie enabled them to assume state power amidst the social vacuum left by the fall of the Czar and the inadequate consciousness of the workers and soldiers who actually made the revolution.(CW,23:303-304,350-351;25:232) But, the state machine the bourgeoisie inherited had been badly damaged; the revolution had virtually eliminated the police force in Petrograd, and the garrison was no longer trustworthy. That left the PG quite weak by comparison with the mass movement of workers and soldiers that supported the Petrograd Soviet. Being unwilling to resolve the contradictions of Russian society by granting the major reforms needed (e.g., peace, land, bread, freedom), and fearing the power of the workers' movement, the bourgeoisie opposed the revolutionary movement from the very beginning.(CW,23:288-289; 25:131-132; Cliff,1976:90-91) After February, the ruling classes did not debate the extent of reforms, but the best method for terminating the dual power established by the masses.

The fall of the Czar was not a full-fledged bourgeois revolution (i.e., a social revolution), since the new regime (which was composed of a loose alliance of the capitalists, landlords and generals) did not undermine the existing urban or agrarian class relations. However, in bringing down the Czar and establishing a bourgeois government, the political revolution in February damaged the old Czarist state machine and created the soviets. That meant a tremendous shift in the balance of power between workers and the ruling classes, and the opening of a period of revolutionary crisis that made social revolution a distinct possibility.

The brevity of the February revolution was caused by the opposition of both the Russian and international bourgeoisie to the continued rule of the Czar.(CW,23:303,350-351; 26:52) The English and French ruling classes pressured the Russian bourgeoisie to replace the Czarist regime with one more capable of advancing the war effort.(Haimson,1964,1965; Burdzhakov,1987: 17-71; Hasegawa, 1981:40-62,172-197) At the same time, the workers and soldiers in Petrograd wanted bread, peace and an end to the war.(CW,23:302) The temporary coincidence of interests in opposition to Czarism, meant the February revolution was a joint blow against the old regime by both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat -- even if the actual work of overthrowing the Czar was left to the latter.(CW,23: 299,302)

* * * * *

Trotsky argued the February uprising was 'spontaneous,' because it was not centrally planned by anybody. That does not mean the strikes and demonstrations were leaderless. The masses in Petrograd were guided by vanguard workers, political activists who interpreted events, drew revolutionary conclusions from what they observed, and

argued with others about the need to continue the movement.(HRR,I:150-152; Hasegawa,1981:579-580) But, Trotsky insisted that while the movement was united "by a common hostility against the old regime," it did not have "a clear aim" and "deliberated methods of struggle" that went beyond destruction of the old regime.⁶ Thus, February was a 'spontaneous' revolutions -- the only kind deemed acceptable by social democrats (because it did not exhibit the consciousness and organization necessary to create workers' power.)(HRR,III: 168,169)

(3.3) The Bolsheviks and the Dynamics of the Revolutionary Process in 1917

In this section we examine the main dynamics of the class struggle during 1917, focusing on the shifting balance of power between the classes, and the various stages in the development of the revolutionary crisis. When Lenin analyzed the revolutionary process, his account identified certain key turning points -- those noted in Figure 3.1 below.(CW,27:87-88) Using those five turning points in the class struggle, Figure 3.1 identifies four stages in the revolutionary process of 1917.

Prior to February 1917, a non-revolutionary period existed in Russia, albeit one in which there was a growing crisis for the Czarist regime. What transformed the situation into a revolutionary crisis, were the strikes, demonstrations and mutinies that led to the downfall of the old regime.

FIGURE 3.1: KEY EVENTS AND MAIN PERIODS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN 1917

<u>KEY EVENTS</u>	<u>MAIN PERIODS</u>	<u>BALANCE OF POWER</u>
	prior to Feb. 23	"normal" <u>non-revolutionary</u> situation
FEB. REVOLUTION (Feb.23-28)	FIRST PERIOD (Mar.1 - April 20)	<u>pre-revolutionary</u> situation, working class offensive; creation of dual power
APRIL DAYS (April 20-21)	SECOND PERIOD (April 22 - July 2)	<u>pre-revolutionary</u> situation, working class offensive
JULY DAYS (July 3-4)	THIRD PERIOD (July 5 - Aug.26)	<u>pre-revolutionary</u> situation, ruling class offensive leading to attempted coup
KORNILOV REVOLT DEFEATED (Aug. 27-30)	FOURTH PERIOD (Aug. 31 - Oct.23)	<u>revolutionary</u> situation, working class offensive leading to insurrection
OCTOBER REVOLUTION (Oct. 24-25)	POST OCTOBER 1917	<u>civil war</u>

The first period in the revolutionary crisis (March 1 to April 21) was one in which two apparently contradictory processes were at work. First, there was the celebration of victory against the Czar by the workers and soldiers. Optimism reigned as the workers'

soviet extended its conditional support for, and 'control' over the new bourgeois PG. The second was a profound deepening of that situation of dual power as the masses took advantage of their political victory and the destruction of the old state's repressive machine to launch a spontaneous and fragmented offensive to democratize Russia, improve their living standards, and gain greater control over their lives. Strikes and demands for better treatment on the job led to the creation of factory committees, while the troops created soldiers' committees and a state of dual power in the army. The new forms of organization the masses built, and the diverse types of struggles they launched began to transform the political revolution into a social one.⁷

After the February revolution, the ruling classes avoided direct confrontation with the mass movement, making concessions to the demands from below, while seeking ways to subvert and limit the gains of the underclasses and preparing their counter-thrust. The 'peaceful' period of the 'anti-Czarist' revolution ended with the fall of the bourgeois PG during the 'April Days'. Revelations about the Government's secret deals with the allies to continue the war led to major demonstrations in Petrograd.

The second period in the revolutionary process (April 22- July 4), began in the aftermath of the April demonstrations, and continued until another series of demonstrations in Petrograd in early July. During this period, the working class continued its spontaneous and uncoordinated offensive, while ruling class efforts to subvert the revolution became far more open. However, if the counter-revolutionary views of the bourgeoisie became clearer after the April days (through economic sabotage, attacks on the soviets, the continuation of the war) the character of the bourgeois government was obscured when the moderate socialists joined the second PG in early May. Still, the coalition government that resulted

could not mask the growing contradictions of a society plagued at every level by dual power. By late June a majority of Petrograd workers were demanding the PG be replaced by a soviet one, in accordance with the Bolshevik slogan "All Power to the Soviets."

In June, a new military offensive by the PG -- designed to restore discipline in the army and prepare it for suppression of the revolution -- backfired, leading to further working class support for a soviet government. In early July militant workers and sections of the garrison in Petrograd spontaneously launched a series of semi-insurrectionary demonstrations to force the moderate socialist leadership of the soviet to take power from the PG. But, that uprising -- known as the 'July Days' -- did not occur during a genuine revolutionary situation. Revolutionary sentiment was concentrated in Petrograd alone, and even there, most workers had not yet identified the moderate socialist ministers in the PG as an unreformable obstacle to the complete democratization of Russian society. Furthermore, the counter-revolutionary ruling classes were not yet fully split over strategy for dealing with the revolution, and the peasantry was not yet in open revolt. The 'July Days' ended when the Bolshevik leadership aborted the premature uprising, in recognition that a genuine revolutionary situation did not yet exist.

The July days marked a critical test of the balance of power between the revolutionary movement and the counter-revolutionary forces. It showed that while a majority of the Petrograd working class was unwilling to live under the PG any longer, it was still profoundly confused by the unwillingness of the moderate socialists to break with the regime. That confusion was the rock upon which the initiative and momentum of the most militant section of the movement temporarily foundered. After July, it was the employing class that was on the offensive.

The third period of the Russian revolution (July 5 - August 30), began in the aftermath of the failed uprising of early July, and continued until the defeat of the military coup launched by General Kornilov in late August. During these two months, the counter-revolutionary forces went on the offensive on all fronts. The dual power that had been created in every sphere of Russian society came under attack: employers locked out workers, closed plants and sabotaged production; the PG drove the Bolshevik party underground with arrests, beatings and the closure of its newspapers; troops were used against peasants who occupied land; the generals reintroduced the death penalty at the front, and launched an offensive against the gains made by rank and file soldiers since February, and finally, the PG -- with the assistance of the moderate socialists -- assumed greater political power as the influence of the soviets waned.

But, the ruling class offensive proved too shallow to destroy the deeply rooted structures of dual power created during the first four months of the revolution. Instead of eliminating the basic organizations created by the underclasses, the offensive by the reactionaries left them more or less intact. Because the months of July and August brought a deepening economic crisis, continued failure of the PG's war effort, and an escalation of land occupations by the peasantry, the resilience of the working class institutions of dual power in the face of the ruling class offensive led to a split within the ruling class over counter-revolutionary strategy. In late August, that split led to armed confrontation, as the more active counter-revolutionaries threw their support to General Kornilov's attempt to drown 'Red Petrograd' in blood with a military coup. Meanwhile, another, smaller section of the ruling class (grouped around Kerensky and the PG) was forced into a temporary alliance with the soviets, factory committees, and the Bolsheviks to "defend the revolution"

against the coup. The encouragement given the working class and the garrison to initiate their own plans for the defence of Petrograd, breathed new life into the revolutionary movement in Russia's most important city. Both the defeat of the coup (by rail workers who sabotaged troop movements, and political agitators who encouraged Kornilov's soldiers to mutiny and defect) and the initial connivance of the PG with Kornilov, pushed the majority of delegates in the crucial Moscow and Petrograd Soviets to swing their support to the Bolsheviks -- as the only organization untainted by complicity with the counter-revolutionary ruling classes.

The failure of the Kornilov coup opened the fourth and final period of the revolutionary process (August 31 - October 25), the period leading to the October insurrection: In the wake of Kornilov's defeat, a genuine revolutionary situation opened up, as a weak, divided and dispirited ruling class went on the defensive, in the face of a working class that had used the preparations against the coup to rebuild its confidence, its basic organizations and to arm itself. By September, most sections of the working class could directly tie the employers' attack on their standard of living to the continued existence of the PG. Furthermore, by September, the moderate socialists had thoroughly discredited themselves, first by their close association with the repression of working class militants during the July Days, and second, by their persistent refusal to lead the soviets to full state power. Finally, the massive agrarian revolution in the countryside hit full speed by September. Thus, in the sixth month of the revolution, all the objective preconditions for a revolutionary situation existed. When the working class moved sharply to the left, giving the Bolsheviks majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow soviets, Lenin began his campaign inside the Bolshevik party for an insurrection.

By September, most workers could identify the continued power of the ruling classes as the source of the crisis in Russia, and see that soviet power was the only feasible solution. The disparate elements of the class struggle had been centralized, as workers increasingly identified soviet power as a prerequisite for solving their other problems. All that remained was to find a way to put the soviets in power. The Bolshevik Party provided the means. The growing power and resolve of the revolutionary working class provoked the PG into a desperate and premature attempt at counter-revolution on the eve of the October Congress of Soviets, which planned to declare soviet power. The Bolsheviks used the opportunity to lead an insurrection and smash the PG in Petrograd. That move was then copied, as soviets across the country deposed the local representatives of bourgeois power. With the Soviet seizure of power, a new stage of the revolutionary process began -- the post-insurrectionary civil war that coincided with the attempt to build socialism and spread the revolution internationally.

* * * * *

Lenin identified these four periods in the post-February development of the revolutionary process as phases in the transition from the anti-Czarist stage of the revolution to a specifically proletarian stage of revolution that developed in September/October. (CW,23:297,306-307,322-323,340,358) In his view the revolution had surpassed an "ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution," the moment it established dual power. (CW,24:61; HRR,I:206,208) The unstable balance of power between capital and labour helped to create an escalating spiral of attack and counter-attack between the two main classes. The result was a process of class polarization leading to civil war, as the two main classes each tried to assert its power over society as a whole. The proletariat had --

spontaneously -- come close to starting a civil war in April and again in July, with their militant armed demonstrations in Petrograd. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie and the landowners had conspired to start a civil war with the Kornilov revolt in August. On each occasion the escalation of the class struggle into a full fledged military confrontation had been short circuited. The spontaneous efforts by some workers to initiate a civil war had been blocked by the Bolsheviks, since they opposed a premature attempt at insurrection in April and July. On the other hand, the effort by the ruling classes to initiate a civil war in late August was undercut by their lack of support among Kornilov's troops and their internal divisions.(CW,26:35)

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Lenin's overall strategic view suggested the transition from the political revolution against Czarism to a social revolution against capitalism would occur without a return to conditions of capitalist stability, without an intervening period of 'normal' class relations. Throughout the spring of 1917, Lenin argued the Bolshevik party must win a majority of workers and poor peasants throughout the country to the need to continue the revolution until the soviets acquired state power. However, that majority had to be won through "patient explanation" (i.e., through propaganda and agitation), rather than minority putsches.(CW,24:232; Leibman, 1975:166) That was why the Bolsheviks opposed any attempt at a insurrection in Petrograd in April or July.

The July days confrontation made the actual balance of class forces in the revolution clear to vanguard workers. Because of their alliance with the bourgeoisie the moderate socialists mobilized troops and repressed the revolutionary movement, making it clear to many workers that there was no chance of a peaceful road to a soviet government.

Only two alternatives remained: armed insurrection by the working class or counter-revolution. 'The 'peaceful' period of the revolution, the period that had lasted since February, had come to an end.(CW,25:192)

When the Bolsheviks did call for and prepare an insurrection in September, several changes in the balance of class power made the time opportune. By then, unlike the six months previously, the ruling class was split and in disarray, the agrarian revolution was in full swing, most sections of the urban working class had finally linked their suffering to the continued existence of the Provisional government and the absence of Soviet power, and there were clear signs the majority of workers had consciously accepted the need for some type of insurrection. By Lenin's definition, a fully revolutionary situation had developed by September.

The February revolution had altered the balance of power between the classes, but it did not immediately create the conditions suitable for a successful proletarian seizure of state power. It took six more months of class struggle and revolutionary experience, for the polarization of the class struggle to become so acute, that even the vacillating segments of the petty bourgeoisie (the leadership of the moderate socialist parties, the soldiers, the poor and middle peasants) were forced to pick sides. Only then could the anti-Czarist revolution give way to a specifically proletarian one.

(3.4) Forms of Organization and Activity Among the Russian Working Class

The revolutionary process of 1917 shows the enormous creative capacity of the exploited and oppressed classes, who generated a wide variety of new organizations and

launched many new struggles in the effort to deepen and consolidate the political revolution of February, a fact which transformed the movement into a genuine social revolution.

In this section, we examine the new forms of self-organization and struggle created by the working class. The Russian revolution was rich in the variety of forms of struggle and organization it created. An exhaustive study of the revolution-from-below would have to include an examination of forms of organization that we cannot consider here (e.g., the peasants' organizations and land seizures; the national minorities and their struggle for national liberation or autonomy, etc.). Since limitations on space prevent us from examining every manifestation of the class struggle from-below, we will concentrate on four: the soviets and the battle for workers' power; the factory committees and the struggle for workers' control of industry and production; the workers' militias and the struggle for control over the means of state violence, and the soldiers and sailors' organizations and the struggle for peace.⁸ Those four organizations, one political, two military and one economic, capture the essence of the proletarian revolution in 1917.

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The February uprising in Petrograd established the power of the Petrograd Soviet, as the institution which had at its disposal the greatest control over the means of violence and within the city, and as the only institution that could command the loyalty of the insurrectionary workers and soldiers. By comparison, the PG created by the bourgeoisie had no military power at its disposal in the aftermath of the uprising, and therefore little real power. The repressive wing of the old Czarist state apparatus had ceased to exist.(Wade,1984:67-69; Ferro,1980:59-61) The PG only acquired a measure of state power

in March, after the Soviet transferred its own de facto state power to the new 'democratic' government.(HRR,I:358-359; Sukhanov,1983:258; Medvedev,1981:101)

The political arrangement of dual power after the February revolution was inherently unstable. But unitary political power could not be re-established until one of the two contending states managed to regain a monopoly of the means of violence. From March to October, the bourgeoisie and the PG sought to construct a reliable state apparatus, complete with a counter-revolutionary military force to back it up -- but without much success. During the same period, the moderate socialists who dominated the soviets tried to divest the new institutions of any political and military power, while the class struggle and the actions of the Bolsheviks hampered their efforts.

The same system of dual state power that arose in Petrograd, was reproduced across the country, as soviets "mushroomed everywhere," rapidly becoming the dominant institution of the revolutionary movement.(Anweiler,1974:111) By June 1917 there were about 500 soviets, and by the October revolution, approximately 900.(Anweiler,1974:113) The soviets were organs of proletarian democracy, institutions that enabled workers and soldiers to review, recall and re-select their delegates from the factories and regiments in accordance with changes in their political perceptions of the revolution. The workers voted for political parties and programmes rather than candidates, the delegates then being designated by the political parties. Thus, the soviets were highly sensitive to the political views of the working class during the revolution.(Reed,1974:20)

Three types of Soviet institutions developed during 1917. First, were the city wide soviets (usually composed of both workers delegates from the factories and the soldiers in the garrison), like the one in Petrograd.(Ferro,1980:185) The second type of institution was

the smaller raion soviet, based on the existing city districts.⁹ Finally, there were the centralized, multi-soviet institutions, like the regional conferences of city-wide soviets and, most importantly, the All-Russian Congresses of Soviets (which met in June and October).

The city wide soviet in 'Red Petrograd' was by far the most important body of dual power in the country. Because the February uprising had taken place in Petrograd, and because it was the most proletarianized city in Russia, the Petrograd Soviet's leadership provided the national political leadership for the entire working class movement, something that was formalized by the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets in June.(Anweiler, 1974:122-125) (That Congress gave the leadership of the entire soviet movement to the moderate socialists who dominated the executive of the Petrograd Soviet until September.) Although the

Petrograd Soviet had been organized simultaneously from above (by Menshevik political leaders), and from below (by political activists in the factories, often Bolsheviks), it was initially led by the moderate socialists, members of the Menshevik and SR parties.(Anweiler,1974:104) (In March, less than 3% of the delegates to the Petrograd Soviet were Bolsheviks.(Keep,1976: 146)) Because it doubled as both the counterpart of the city Duma and the national bourgeois government (i.e., the PG), the Petrograd Soviet rapidly assumed the responsibilities of an alternative government, employing hundreds of people, and creating an administration with a wide range of government like departments, from health and international affairs to economic planning. (Sirianni,1982:67)

Despite some problems with bureaucratization and lack of accountability of the executives of the soviets, these bodies were critical to the success of the revolution.¹⁰ The soviets were class-wide, workplace-based organs of workers' democracy that focused

workers' attention on the debate between reformists and revolutionaries over the course of the revolution -- thereby helping to centralize the fragmented class struggle. Through the soviets, the experience and political analysis of each section of the working class was generalized, discussed and then relayed back to the entire class, giving workers a sense of their situation as a class. The lessons of each episode in the struggle were debated in a forum where the reformists and revolutionaries could present their competing evaluation of events. That process enabled the working class to compare the political options, and the Bolsheviks to win the political confidence of a majority of soviet delegates and Russian workers by October.

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In the months after the February uprising, the Bolsheviks, the moderates (both the Mensheviks and the SRs) and the Cadets (the main bourgeois party) had three different attitudes towards the situation of dual political power. Both the Cadets and the Bolsheviks stood for the liquidation of dual power in favor of the dictatorship over society by a single class -- the Bolsheviks favoring the proletariat and the Cadets favoring the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the moderate leaders of the Petrograd Soviet sought to maintain dual power and their own position as official arbiters between labour and capital, revolution and counter-revolution, until such time as a full fledged bourgeois democracy (i.e., a Constituent Assembly) was established. Throughout 1917, the moderates tried to use the soviets alternately to pacify the masses, to protect the new regime from counter-revolution, and to 'supervise' the PG's virtually non-existent efforts to create a bourgeois democracy.(Anweiler,1974:142)

The first serious crisis of the new regime -- the April Days -- put the dual power arrangement in jeopardy. The moderate socialists found themselves caught between a mass movement that demanded an open break with the bourgeoisie and their commitment to a political alliance with the PG. They had to either lead the soviets to power, or join a coalition government and prop up the PG.(Anweiler,1974:132-134) They chose the latter course. As ministers in the PG, the moderate socialists found themselves "postponing democratic and rural reforms, and...repressing the actions of their own constituencies."(Sirianni,1982:77) The Soviet leadership faced a working class intent on the use of direct action to advance its interests and to democratize every aspect of life. Whenever workers and soldiers protested the government's lack of action in ending the war, feeding workers, giving land to the peasants and democratizing society, the Soviet was used by the Cadets to restrain the movement.(Sirianni,1982: 77) The moderate socialists' commitment to their class alliance with the bourgeoisie, and their absolute opposition to workers' revolution, meant the Petrograd Soviet under their leadership was transformed from an instrument of the class struggle into the bourgeoisie's instrument for co-opting and restraining the underclasses.

The moderate socialists' policy of conditional support for the PG was undermined by the polarization of Russian society. As the revolutionary crisis deepened, the moderates vacillated between outright support for the reactionary aims of the PG (e.g., during the July Days) and defence of the existing balance of power within the revolution (e.g., during the Kornilov revolt). The moderates faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they wanted to halt the revolutionary movement, even if it necessitated supporting repression against the working class.

But, the moderates were so suspicious of their bourgeois 'allies' that they refused to liquidate the Soviet, for fear the bourgeoisie would suppress all working class parties. The Menchevik and SR leaders hoped to phase out the soviets and dual power, once a Constituent Assembly had been elected and bourgeois democracy was 'secure.' However, the continuation of the war, and the bourgeoisie's refusal to hold elections for a Constituent Assembly meant continuation of the social crisis.

The position of the moderates deteriorated when the class struggle exploded during the July Days. The repression of the demonstrations, sanctioned and assisted by the Soviet leadership in Petrograd, left more than 400 working class opponents of the regime and the war dead. By the time Kornilov launched his attempted coup, working class support for the moderate socialist parties had fallen dramatically, and their leadership of the soviets was no longer secure.

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The Bolsheviks defined short-term success in a revolutionary crisis as a working class seizure of state power and the establishment of a workers' state. In a sense, everything else --including changes in the factories, on the land, and in the army -- is secondary, because without the establishment of a workers' state, other institutions of dual power (e.g., factory committees) cannot survive. The establishment of a soviet-type state with a monopoly of the means of repression is a necessary condition for the working class to exercise any power in other spheres of society. Recognizing the centrality of state power, and seeing the Soviets as the embryo of the kind of workers' state advocated by Marx, was a major contribution to the theory of the revolutionary process. That insight enabled the Bolsheviks to integrate the soviets into their analysis of the revolutionary

process.

Trotsky defined the soviets as offensive organizations of the entire working class, by contrast with the trade unions which were essentially defensive organizations for a section of the class, and the revolutionary party, which was an offensive organizations of a section of the working class.(HRR,II:292) In addition to being the basis of a future workers' state, the soviets were the only institutions which united the entire working class during the revolutionary process, mobilizing it and acting as a mechanism for registering the opinion of the working class as a whole.(SW,2:579; Medvedev,1981:102) For that reason, the soviets provided a critical link between the vanguard of the working class and its more backward sections, allowing the former to influence and lead the latter.(LTOC:320) After the experience of 1917, the Bolsheviks argued that a successful proletarian revolution absolutely requires the presence of both soviets and a revolutionary party:

Soviets are organs of preparation of the masses for insurrection, organs of insurrection, and after the victory, organs of government. However, the soviets by themselves do not settle the question. They may serve different goals according to the program and leadership. The soviets receive their program from the party. Whereas the soviets...comprise the whole class with the exception of its altogether backward, inert or demoralized strata, the revolutionary party represents the brain of the class....When headed by a revolutionary party the soviet...gets ready the military bases of the insurrection, unites the shock troops upon a single scheme of action, works out a plan for the offensive and for the final assault. (Thus-BM) the problem of conquering the (state-BM) power can only be solved by a definite combination of party with soviets -- or with other mass organizations more or less equivalent to soviets. (HRR,III:171)

When the Bolsheviks campaigned to continue the revolution in 1917, their activity focused on the soviets, rather than the factory committees or the trade unions. They used the soviets as a public forum in which to debate with the moderate socialist leaders in front of the entire working class. The slogan, "All power to the soviets!" was at the center

of their propaganda about how the working class could win real reforms (e.g., peace and bread).(Gluckstein,1985:216) And, the Bolsheviks made the degree of their political support among soviet delegates a key indicator of whether the working class supported them. When the Bolsheviks achieved a majority among soviet delegates, that indicated the working class had swung behind the demand for soviet power. (Lenin's attitude towards the soviets demonstrates his complete rejection of a Blanquist strategy of minority insurrection.(CW,24:48-49))¹¹

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As suggested above, the working class took advantage of their political victory over Czarism to launch a massive offensive to democratize all of Russian society -- a movement that rapidly assumed the proportions of a social revolution. That decentralized and uncoordinated movement was evident in two developments in the workplaces: the widespread use of strike action (both economic and political) to win the struggle over the degree and existence of exploitation, and the formation of factory committees to win control over the production process. (Smith,1983b:139-140)

After the February revolution, the vanguard of the Petrograd working class formed factory committees and continued the general strike that had brought down the Czar. Workers demanded immediate improvements in their living and working conditions -- the most popular demand being for the eight hour day.(HRR,I:239-243) Despite repeated efforts by the moderate socialists to get a resumption of work, the strike only ended after the Petrograd employers conceded shorter hours and the right to form factory committees. (The

factory committee movement then spread across the country.) The working class had served notice the political revolution had to have a substantial social content to satisfy them.(HRR,I:239-243; Mandel,1983:86-89) Coming on the heels of their initial political victory, these concessions by the employing class did not placate the working class. During the spring, workers fought for higher wages and for a democratization of the factories.(Mandel,1983:85; Smith,1983b:68-72) But, as the revolution continued, the factory committees and the workplace based struggles would radicalize, with workers eventually contesting not just the degree of bourgeois control over production, or the degree of exploitation, but the continued existence of the bourgeoisie itself.

With the old Czarist state machine badly tattered, the employers were in no position to counter the strike wave of March and April with outright repression. They bought time by making concessions, as they looked for a way to channel the class struggle into the strait jacket of government conciliation. But, the PG's efforts to promote class harmony, with the assistance of the moderate socialist leaders, were a miserable failure. For example, a law designed to undercut the effectiveness of factory committees backfired, as well established factory committees ignored those portions of the law they disliked, while the poorly organized factories took legalization of the committees as an indication they should join the movement.(Sirianni,1982:25-28; Smith,1983b:76-79) The PG never did succeed in co-opting the factory committees.

Throughout the revolutionary process, strike action was a form of working class struggle which further destabilized the new regime. The general pattern of strike action was complicated. In Petrograd, economic strikes during 1915-1916 led to the political strikes that brought down the Czar in February 1917. In, turn that political victory fueled

economic action to achieve wage increases and the eight hour day in March and April. After that, different sections of the Russian working class pursued different strategies.

The less politicized sections of the working class -- unskilled workers in Petrograd (e.g., textile workers) and workers elsewhere in Russia -- engaged in conventional 'economic' strikes beginning in the spring of 1917.(HRR,I:420-421) However, most of them did not take action until later in the revolutionary crisis. (More on this below.)

After the first two months of the revolution, vanguard began to give up striking for 'economic' reasons, believing there could not be any "serious improvement" in their situation, without a fundamental political change in the character of the regime.(HRR, I:420-421) Instead, metalworkers used overtly political strikes (and demonstrations) to express their dissatisfaction with the PG, to pressure the moderate socialists to establish a soviet regime, and to mobilize less politically conscious sections of the working class. For example, political strikes served as the starting point for the massive demonstrations that brought hundreds of thousands of Petrograd workers into the streets in April and July, to demand the soviets assume state power. (Koenker,1986:612-613,623; Mandel,1983:164)

After the political defeat suffered by the Petrograd metalworkers during the July days, political strike action faded in importance. Political defeat, and the worsening economic situation forced vanguard workers to shift to a defensive struggle to keep the factories open in the face of bourgeois sabotage of the economy.¹² Henceforward, vanguard workers channeled their energy into the struggle to get control over the economic situation, and support for the Bolshevik Party's leadership in the struggle to establish soviet power.(Smith, 1983b:118-121) By waging the struggle inside the factories for control of production (and in some cases for complete self-management), vanguard workers were able

to rebuild their political confidence after the July days defeat.

More backward sections of the working class (e.g., outside Petrograd), who were largely unaffected by the 'political' defeat suffered by the vanguard workers in Petrograd, began to awaken to the revolution during the summer. They launching 'economic' strikes on an increasing scale through July, August and September.(Mandel,1984:284-285,427; Koenker,1981:293-328; 1986: 608-614; HRR,II:266; Smith,1983b:118) Nevertheless, because of the employers' economic offensive, these 'economic' strikes increasingly focused on issues of control (e.g., over hiring and firing, layoffs, etc.) rather than wages or benefits, as unskilled workers were forced to respond to the employers' summer offensive of lockouts and plant closures. These strikes by backward sections of the working class had a massive impact on the workers involved, politicizing them.(Koenker,1981:293) Because the strikes occurred in the midst of an economic offensive by the employers, the workers involved

saw with their own eyes how employers were going on an investment strike, engaging in lockouts, refusing to accept new contracts or to repair plant, how the government was colluding with the employers, curbing the factory committees.... The strikes were important ...in making hundreds and thousands of workers aware of political matters and in making the policies of the Bolshevik party attractive to them. (Smith,1983b:117-118)

Thus, in the highly politicized atmosphere of the summer, when Russian society was polarizing between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps, the economic strikes by the unskilled displayed an increasing tendency to become 'political'.(Koenker, 1981:293) By the late summer and early fall, the distinction between 'economic' and 'political' forms of struggle would begin to fade, as the general crisis politicized every struggle and centralized the attention of workers on soviet power as the only possible solution to their problems. The majority of both skilled and unskilled workers came to realize the inextricable link between soviet power and workers' control over the economy and production.

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To fully understand the role economic struggles played in the revolutionary process, we need to examine the factory committees more closely. After the February revolution, the skilled metalworkers in the largest factories -- moved very quickly to elect factory-wide committees and establish a rudimentary form of dual power, asserting their right to control hiring and firing, negotiate wages and conditions, purge factory managers guilty of abusing workers, and generally democratize the factories.(Smith,1983a:xiv; 1983b:40-44,57-59,64-73; Sirianni, 1982:21,24, Mandel,1983:100) Workers were determined that the brutal factory regimes of the employers "would be swept aside in the workplaces, just as it had been swept aside in society at large."(Smith,1983b:54) These factory committees, which emerged well before the trade unions, were elected by the entire workforce for short terms, and subject to recall. They met on the factory premises, and reported back to the workers in general meetings, where the crucial decisions were made.(Smith,1983b:203-208; Sirianni,1982:29-30)

The factory committees did much to improve wage levels and working conditions, establishing themselves as highly responsive instruments through which the mass of the working class could directly prosecute the social side of the revolution. Unlike virtually every other institution the working class established in 1917 (e.g., the soviets), the factory committees moved steadily leftward, providing the moderate socialists with little opportunity to use them to control the working class.

From early on, the decentralized factory committee movement began to create more centralized structures, uniting factory committees by districts, industries and by city (e.g., the important Petrograd Central Council of Factory Committees), in order to more

effectively deal with the problems posed by the economic situation.(Smith,1983a:xv; 1983b:82-84; Sirianni,1982: 35) Finally, in October, the All-Russian Conference of factory committees was formed.(Suny,1972:121; Raleigh,1984:155-156; Sirianni,1982:39)

In establishing the factory committees, and imposing workers' control over certain aspects of production, Russian workers unilaterally imposed dual power on factory management -- in accordance with the proletarian interpretation of what the February revolution meant. By asserting the workers' right to monitor the conduct of factory management, the factory committees laid a basis for the subsequent radicalization of their movement. In the spring, few workers denied management's right to manage the technical and economic sides of production. However, the demand to democratize the workplace provided the "basis out of which such a denial could grow, given the right conditions." (Mandel,1983:102) Throughout 1917, dual power in the workplace would lead to an escalating spiral of moves by both sides to undercut the power of each other. Dual power in the workplace

was born of the workers' mistrust of the capitalists. But at the same time it implied a belief that the workers and the owners could cooperate, even if the latter required some rather forceful prodding from time to time. In essence workers' control meant that the workers entrusted the administration with running the factory, while they reserved for themselves the right to monitor managements's activities and to intervene if there was any abuse of this trust.(Mandel,1984:274)

But the working class and employers were unlikely to discover common interests in the midst of a revolutionary crisis. With each turn in the spiral of confrontation, management discovered new reasons to suspect the 'socialist' motivations of the workers, while the latter found new evidence of capital's intentions to strangle the revolution through lockouts and economic sabotage.(Mandel,1983:109; HRR,I:412-415; II:128,266-267) The polarization

in the struggle led naturally towards efforts at counter-revolution and workers' insurrection.

After the political confrontations of April and July, the employers turned increasingly to layoffs, plant closures and economic sabotage to undermine the revolution.(Mandel,1983:151) Severe shortages of food, fuel and raw materials, plus the economic sabotage saw the level of manufacturing in Petrograd fall by 40% between January and September 1917.(Smith 1983b:145-147,168; Gill,1979:176-184) That was the context in which the factory committees began to radicalize, as the desire to democratize the old social order gave way to the call for a new one. In those circumstances, the factory committees became the principle vehicle through which the working class defended itself, by assuming ever greater control over production.(Smith, 1983a:xvi) As the class struggle intensified, and workers radicalized, some factory committees shifted from the demand to democratize the workplace to support for working class self-management of the production process and the economy. In other words, the factory committees were being transformed from organs of workers' self-defence into weapons of a revolutionary offensive against capital.(Sirianni,1982:25,26; Smith,1983a: xviii; 1983b:148,181) Thus, the content of the demand for workers' control was transformed during the course of the revolutionary process.

Broadly speaking, in the eight months between February and October, workers' control went from being reactive, defensive and observational to being active, offensive and interventionist. From being concerned essentially to supervise production, workers' control developed into an attempt to actively intervene in production and drastically limit the authority of capital.... (Smith,1983b:148-149)

While unskilled workers radicalized around the workplace struggle against economic sabotage, vanguard workers -- who had suffered a political defeat in July -- used the same

struggle to rebuild their confidence. That is why the 'economic' struggle of the summer months was so critical to the outcome of the revolution. By the fall, "the spiral of attack and counter-attack, or owner resistance and direct intervention in production by the workers" had escalated to the point where the dual power in the factories had to be resolved in favour of either capital or labour.(Sirianni,1982:91) Under the impact of the revolutionary crisis, the struggle for the democratization of the factories "soon ceased merely to operate at the point of production and spilt over into a struggle for the abolition of the capitalist system itself."(Smith,1983b:140)

To conclude, the factory committees and the struggles they engendered for control of production, played a decisive role in the radicalization of the working class throughout 1917. Indeed, it is doubtful that the revolutionary movement in Petrograd could have sustained itself throughout the months of July and August, if the factory committees had not moved relentlessly in deepening their demands and building their workplace organizations in response to the counter-revolutionary offensive on the economic front.

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The Bolsheviks were the main beneficiaries of the radicalization of the factory committees. Party members were heavily involved in the movement, being greatly assisted by the party's position on workers' control. Lenin rejected the views of the anarchists (who argued for the complete autonomy of each factory) and the moderate socialists (who favored state control of the economy by the PG), in favour of what we might call "workers' state control" -- state regulation and control over production and the economy by a soviet government, with the assistance of the working class organized through the factory committees and the trade unions.(Sirianni,1982:49-52; Smith, 1983a:xxiii-xxiv;

CW,26:105,328) In his view, given the impossibility of an immediate transition to socialism in backward Russia, workers' control over the Russian economy was limited to regulation of the capitalist social relations of production by the workers' state, rather than immediate expropriation of the capitalist class.(CW,24:24; 25:44-45; Harding,1981:73-82,183-186; Sirianni,1982:54)

There was overwhelming support for the Bolshevik view on workers' control -- at the First All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees in October 1917 -- showing that "factory committees on the ground recognized that grass roots activity by itself was not enough (to stave off economic collapse-BM) and that to be effective, 'control' must be centrally coordinated" by a soviet state.(Smith,1983b:158) Resolutions passed by factory committees during August and September show "an overwhelming preference" for the Bolshevik conception of workers' control, over that of the Anarchists or the Mensheviks.(Smith,1983b:165-167)

By the summer of 1917, some factory committees had passed from workers' control to full working class self-management of factory, where the old management had abandoned the plant -- a development the Bolsheviks' position did not allow for. In fact, Lenin's view of workers' control glosses over a problem that would be raised in a specifically 'socialist' revolution: how to combine working class self-management in the factories (with all that suggests regarding the transformation of the labour process), with state planning and regulation of the economy. (Smith,1983:xxiv)

There are at least three reasons why the Bolsheviks never tackled the issue of the transformation of the labour process under socialism. First, they had no need to deal with the issue in the case of Russia, since they started from the assumption a revolution in

backward Russia could not immediately establish socialism. Therefore, the question of what a specifically socialist economy might consist of (including the question of how socialism would be organized in the workplace) was speculative in character. Second, the Bolsheviks had no knowledge of Marx's analyses of alienation and the labour process. Moreover, Lenin's interpretation of Marxism was still somewhat influenced by the Second International -- a tradition which conceived of production in a technicist fashion, omitting any notion of workers' self-activity in the realm of production.(Smith,1983b:264)¹³ Finally, the Bolsheviks believed that the key to success in the revolutionary process was smashing the state machine of capital rather than immediately seizing control of the means of production. Thus, it is hardly surprising the Bolsheviks did not attach as much importance to the self-organization of the working class at the point of production, as they did to the soviets.

Lenin's failure to theorize the nature of workers' power at the point of production during 1917 or the years thereafter, undermined his ability to see the critical role factory committees must play in the revolutionary process -- let alone in the creation of socialism. Because the battle for workers' control over production was the way in which vanguard workers rebuilt their confidence after the July days, and because it politicized the more backward layers of the working class, the class struggle in the factories was more important to the outcome of the revolution than either Lenin or Trotsky acknowledged. In underestimating the importance of the factory committees somewhat, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process is slightly deficient. (We will return to this point in the next Chapter.)

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The development of dual power in Petrograd deprived the PG of a reliable instrument of repression within the city. The police had disappeared only to be replaced by a workers' militia that was independent of the Soviet and openly hostile to the government, and a civil militia that was unsuitable for large scale repression. (More on this below.) That meant the ruling class was dependent upon the military for support against the revolution. However, the soldiers garrisoned in Petrograd and other towns, the sailors in the Baltic and the Black sea, and the soldiers at the front were not immune to the revolution.¹⁴ Their organization of soldiers' committees, their demands for a democratization of the army and the navy, a quick peace, and land for the peasants, dramatically undercut the ability of the PG to halt the revolution.

To understand the impact of the February revolution on the troops, it is important to realize that of the 15.5 million men conscripted, about half of them were either killed, wounded or missing by 1917. The rest faced horrible living conditions, insufficient and poor equipment, incompetent officers and severe discipline. Successive defeats, food shortages and disease led to poor morale, weak discipline and desertions even before the revolution began. Naturally, the disintegration of the army was greatly accelerated by the February revolution -- an uprising in which the mutiny by the Petrograd garrison had played a major role.(HRR,I:248,260,267; L&T:254,256; Cliff,1976:188-189; Mawdsley,1978:2-5) Decisive in winning the Petrograd garrison (300,000 soldiers and sailors were in the region) to support for the uprising was the fraternization that occurred between crowds of workers demonstrating in the streets and the troops sent out to repress the crowds.(Wildman,1980:124,132-135; Hasegawa,1981: 278-292; HRR,I:114,120-121)

In March, the Petrograd Soviet, dominated as it was by soldiers delegates, proclaimed Order # 1, which granted the troops certain basic civil liberties, established the right for soldiers in the Petrograd garrison to elect committees in each regiment and delegates to the Soviet, and obligated them to follow only those orders which did not violate the orders and decisions of the Soviet. That measure effectively ratified the dual power created during the February uprising.(McCauley,1975: 23-24; Wildman,1980:180-192; HRR,III:89) Subsequent efforts by the moderate socialists to countermand the original order, and to limit its application to the Petrograd area, were totally ineffective.(HRR,I:276-277; Cliff,1976:191-193)

The uprising in Petrograd sparked similar revolts at the front and in the fleet. Almost immediately, the Baltic fleet, which consisted mainly of conscripted proletarians, followed the example of Petrograd. Dual power would take longer to establish at the front, but even there, the "peasants in uniform" would prove too rebellious for the PG and the officer corps to control. The creation of dual power meant soldiers and sailors everywhere would question and sabotage those aspects of military authority, military operations, and government policy they disapproved of. Henceforward, the army -- which had been "the chief bulwark of the old order" prior to February -- would no longer play that role.(Wildman,1980:374)

The development of dual power throughout the entire army and navy forced the new PG and the general staff to search for ways to restore their control. The June military offensive was intended to overcome the "anarchy" that afflicted the army -- a renewal of military discipline being the first critical step towards launching a counterrevolution. (HRR,I:382-383; Ferro, 1971:494) In Petrograd, preparations for the June campaign

included plans to ship portions of the untrustworthy garrison to the front. Agitation against those plans contributed to the pressure leading to the 'July days' demonstrations.(HRR,I:334; II:8; Cliff,1976:258-264)

At the front, some soldiers accepted the generals' argument that a new offensive would immediately end the war. But, when the offensive encountered stiff resistance, the army quickly crumbled.(HRR,I:385-387) During the summer, desertions increased astronomically, as peasant land seizures tempted the "peasants in uniform" to get a share of the spoils. Thus, the generals never won the battle to restore discipline within the army. Hence the susceptibility of Kornilov's troops to revolutionary agitation during the attempted military coup in late August.(HRR,II:204-206,223-227,236-246)

Developments in the army and the navy mirrored those in society at large, with a growing class polarization between the officers who increasingly favored a military coup, and the ranks who wanted the revolution to continue.(HRR,I:373) Efforts to stem the tide of disintegration in the army and the navy all came to naught.(HRR,I:249; Cliff,1976:178-179) The troops participated in the revolution to end the war, not to continue as cannon fodder for landowners and capitalists. That left the PG and the ruling class in serious trouble as they tried to halt the revolution.

By October, the Petrograd garrison was quite hostile to the Government, and therefore unavailable to the counter-revolutionary opponents of the Bolshevik insurrection. But, the Bolsheviks could not rely on it either, since the revolution had destroyed its discipline making it wholly inadequate as a military force.(HRR,III:183) Hence the Bolshevik reliance upon the sailors and the Red Guard to actually carry out the insurrection. (Rabinowitch,1972:191)

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The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process points to the vital importance of the military, the repressive arm of the old regime, to the outcome of a revolutionary situation. The Bolsheviks sought to deepen and entrench the dual power created by soldiers and sailors. For a mass insurrection by the working class to succeed, the overwhelming majority of soldiers and sailors had to refuse to defend the old regime, even if they would not actively support the revolution.

For Lenin and Trotsky, clarity about the nature of the class struggle in the military was essential to effective political analysis and action during the revolutionary process. Trotsky argued that "the fate of every revolution...is decided by a break in the disposition of the army. Against a numerous, disciplined, well-armed and ably led military force, unarmed or almost unarmed masses of the people cannot win a victory."(HRR,I:120) Therefore,

revolutionaries had to know how to intervene in the military to win sections of it to the revolution and how to neutralize the rest.(HRR,I:120-123) Not surprisingly, the Bolsheviks made a greater effort than any other party to intervene in the Petrograd garrison, and in the remainder of the military.(Rabinowitch, 1972:175) The Bolsheviks endorsed and advocated all the measures taken to democratize the military, while promoting the soldiers' demands for an immediate end to the war, and for the peasants to receive land.(HRR,I:262; CW,24:100-101,105,137-138,318-320; Cliff,1976:199-200)

Given their limited resources, the success of the Bolsheviks' intervention in the military was impressive. By October, virtually the entire Petrograd garrison of 160,000 was either committed to the insurrection (a small percentage) or neutral (the vast

majority).(Rabinowitch,1972:181) By October, the Bolsheviks had almost 6,000 party members within the garrison, with most of the remainder being anti-war and pro-Soviet rather than pro-Bolshevik.(Rabinowitch,1972:189,191) By contrast, the Bolshevik intervention at the front was far less effective. At the time of the February revolution, the Bolsheviks had no more than a couple of thousand members in the army. However, by linking the struggle for land and peace to the soldiers' struggle for the democratization of the army and elimination of the old authoritarian practices, they were able to recruit about 90,000 soldiers altogether.(Cliff,1976:202-204; HRR,I:123; Ferro,1971:501,511) In the Baltic Fleet, the Bolsheviks had somewhere between five and ten thousand members, about 10-15% of the sailors in the fleet.(Mawdsley,1978:154)

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Not only was there dual power in the military, a similar development took place in the cities, with the rise of factory- based workers' militias, juxtaposed to the civil militias formed by the bourgeois dominated municipal dumas (councils).(Smith, 1983b:98-99; Wade,1984:40-46) The destruction of the old Czarist police force during the February revolution, left an enormous vacuum in urban policing, which both the working class and the bourgeoisie tried to fill.

Factory based workers' militias were first established in Petrograd during the February uprising, to lead the struggle against the police and gain control of the streets for the working class.(Boll,1979:20-36; Wade,1984:40-44,55) Afterwards, the militias continued, to protect the factory committees from incursions by the Government or the employers. These factory based units operated under the control of the factory committees, and were composed of workers who volunteered or were elected. (Slightly less than half the

members of the militias were Bolsheviks in October.(Mandel,1984:306) Most often the workers involved In Petrograd the workers' militias numbered between 10,000 and 20,000 workers, and formed the nucleus of the Petrograd Soviet's Red Guard in the fall of 1917. During the revolutionary process of 1917, they would develop from factory based units of workers' self-defence into the means of city-wide insurrection in October, and ultimately into the core of the Red Army that defended the revolution during the post-insurrectionary civil war.(Wade,1984:40-46,59-64; Smith,1983b:98-99)

In March, the moderate socialist leaders of the Petrograd soviet cooperated with the PG in trying to absorb the workers' militias into the civil militia. But, such plans were always rejected by the factory committees, who argued their militias must remain independent of other classes and of unrepresentative institutions like the Dumas.(Smith,1983b:99; Wade,1984:59-64) With no ability to impose their decisions on the militias, the Soviet simply ignored the problem thereafter.(Wade,1984:57-59,81)

Besides helping to tip the society-wide balance of power towards the working class, the existence of a workers' militia rooted in the factories, also altered the balance of power between management and labour in the plant, creating conditions in which the demand for workers' control could be imposed on an unwilling employer.(Wade,1984:67-68) When the PG and the employers launched a joint offensive against the workers' militias, as part of the ruling class offensive after the July days, all it did was persuade many rank and file workers of the continued need for an armed militia to protect their interests and their revolution.(Wade,1984:122,126-127; Smith,1983b:102)

In August, the Bolsheviks led a campaign to unite the disparate elements of the militias into a Red Guard under a central leadership, an initiative the Petrograd soviet

endorsed as part of the mobilization to defend the revolution from the Kornilov coup.(Wade,1984:129; HRR,III:186) As a result, thousands of workers' poured into the Red Guard to fight against the counter-revolutionary threat.(Wade,1984:133-137) When the Bolsheviks won a majority in the Petrograd Soviet in September, the workers' militias "became an official instrument of the Soviet."(HRR,III:187; Wade,1984:153-156) As a result, the Red Guard played a decisive role in the actual seizure of power. (Wade,1984:198-200)¹⁵ Outside Petrograd, the workers' militias and Red Guards played a similar role in the revolutionary process which brought the Bolshevik dominated soviets to power.(HRR,III: 184-185; Wade,1984:208-238,275-276,306-308; Raleigh,1986:244-245,285-287; Koenker,1981:338)

Trotsky acknowledged the importance of the militias to the final outcome of the revolutionary crisis.¹⁶ Above all, he noted the enormous initiative displayed by the militia, even without adequate direction from the soviet.(HRR,III:189-190) Until the Kornilov coup, the Petrograd garrison still supported the moderate socialists rather than the Bolsheviks. After Kornilov's defeat, most of the garrison was either neutral or mildly sympathetic to the Bolsheviks.(HRR,II:88) But, defeat of the revolution was made much less likely because the Petrograd Soviet had its own independent base of military support in the workers' militias. Despite their lack of training, the voluntary workers' militia, composed of class conscious workers committed to the revolution, was more valuable than the crumbling edifice of the compulsory army -- even where units had endorsed the call for soviet power.(HRR,III:190)

To conclude, the workers' militias that sprang up during the 1917 revolution, were organs of proletarian military self-defence, and ultimately organs of insurrection. Even more

than the soviets or factory committees, these militias are a testimony to the revolutionary determination and creativity of the Russian working class in 1917. Created from below, and languishing without adequate political direction until September, the activists of the workers' militias nonetheless persisted in arming the working class for self-defence and for an insurrection.(Wade,1984:133-137) In the struggle for a monopoly over the means of violence and repression, the creation and growth of the workers' militias and Red Guards was an important index of the political consciousness and determination of the working class.

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Through the soviets, factory committees, soldiers' committees and the workers militias, the underclasses in Russia had launched a spontaneous and fragmented offensive to follow the political revolution by democratizing the old social order. That offensive deepened the crisis of the old order, which had been badly shaken, though not toppled by the February revolution, and effectively transformed the political victory against Czarism into a social revolution. As the struggles of the underclasses for greater control in the factories, the barracks, the trenches and the villages met with reactionary and counter-revolutionary resistance from the old ruling classes, the drive to democratize Russian society was transformed into a conscious struggle for workers' revolution. Through their own practical experience in the social struggle, the underclasses learned that the existing state was a major obstacle to solving their day-to-day problems.

When the national struggle for state power and the day-to-day struggle for better living standards and improved working conditions had been tied together in the direct experience of the masses (i.e., when the processes of politicization and centralization had occurred),

the possibility for a conscious struggle to establish workers' power was created.

(3.5) - Political Parties and Revolutionary Consciousness Among the Russian Working Class

Having examined the forms of organization and struggle generated by the working class during the revolutionary process, it is now time to turn our attention to the subjective side of the 1917 revolution. For the Bolsheviks, the consciousness of the working class had to be considered in relation to its organizational expression and embodiment in political parties. In this section, we examine the role of the moderate socialist parties and the Bolshevik party in the revolutionary process in relation to the development of revolutionary consciousness within the Russian working class.

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In 1917, the moderate socialists devoted their energies to containing the revolutionary movement, trying to restrict it to the consolidation of bourgeois democracy.(HRR,I:241) In their efforts to prevent the February uprising from becoming the first phase of an immediate proletarian revolution, the Mensheviks tried to subordinate the immediate interests of the working class in winning improved living and working conditions, to their 'longer term interests' in the maturation of Russian capitalism and bourgeois democracy. Thus, throughout 1917, the Mensheviks promoted class collaboration to preserve the alliance between capital and labour against the monarchists on the one hand, and the advocates of workers' revolution on the other hand. As a consequence, they opposed every manifestation of workers' struggle against the power of capital, fearing it

would split their alliance with the Cadets (i.e., the main bourgeois party) and push the latter into an alliance with the monarchists against the existence of bourgeois democracy.(Mandel,1983:77)

During 1917, the Menshevik party grew from about 44,000 members in early May to about 200,000 during the summer of 1917, only to seriously decline in numbers after that. By October, the Mensheviks hardly existed in Petrograd.(Garcia,1980:423,428; Ascher,1976:30) The party was led by and expressed the class interests of the radicalized petite bourgeoisie in the cities and the highly skilled workers the Bolsheviks called the "labour aristocracy." Internally, it was divided into three distinct 'factions' with political differences so great that unified action was virtually impossible throughout 1917.¹⁷

The other moderate socialist party was the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), a mass party of more than a million members, led by the rural intelligentsia and rooted among the rural petite bourgeoisie.(Radkey,1950:236) It was the largest, and during the early stages of the revolution, the most influential political party among the underclasses, because of its populism.(HRR-BL:57-58) During 1917, the SRs lost their influence, first within the working class, than among the soldiers, and later within the peasantry. That coincided with the rise of the Left SRs, a political grouping that reflected the radicalism of the poorest peasants, and many soldiers.(HRR-BL:58-59,74)

Throughout 1917, there was an alliance between the leadership of the Mensheviks and SRs, in which the political ideas of the former predominated over the latter.(HRR,I:226) The petite bourgeois democrats in the leadership of the Menshevik and SRs parties acted as middle men between the exploiters and the exploited classes, a vehicle through which the PG and the bourgeoisie could attempt to control and limit the scope of

the revolution.(HRR,II:67; Garcia,1985:256-261; L&T:186)

But, the moderate socialist policy of supporting the PG and sowing illusions about the soviets' ability to 'control' the bourgeoisie failed to deliver the reforms being demanded from below, and it failed to halt the class polarization within Russian society. Therefore, sections of each of the moderate parties abandoned the alliance with the Cadets and argued for an alliance with the Bolsheviks to form a soviet government of the socialist parties.(CW,25:368) The Menshevik Internationalists and the Left SRs failed in their efforts to ally with the Bolsheviks, because they refused to break with the moderate socialists, despite the involvement of the latter in various counter-revolutionary schemes.(Mandel,1983:125) These 'centrist' factions vacillated back and forth between the moderates and the Bolsheviks, seeking some compromise between the two, never finding one.

After the military ambitions of the PG created the April crisis, it became clear the PG had neither the authority nor the repressive apparatus required to keep the working class of Petrograd under control. That is when the Soviet leaders joined a coalition government with the Cadets to prop up the bourgeoisie. The moderates' strategy proved sufficient to prolong the life of the PG in the short term. Because many workers in Petrograd believed the 'socialist ministers' would insure soviet control over the bourgeoisie, the moderates were temporarily able to build support for the PG. However, that support was short-lived. It soon became clear that it was the bourgeoisie that was 'controlling' the moderate socialist ministers, as the latter assumed responsibility for bourgeois policies such as continuing the war, using repression against the underclasses, and demanding economic sacrifices from the working class.(Garcia,1980:i-ii)

The working class believed the moderates entered the government to act on the demand for further reforms (e.g., an end to the war, land distribution, elections, etc.). In reality, the Soviet leaders were prepared to sacrifice all the demands of workers, soldiers and peasants in the interests of preserving their alliance with the bourgeoisie. When the contradictory aims of the working class and the moderate socialists became apparent in June and July, workers in Petrograd abandoned their support for the moderates and flocked to the banners of the Bolshevik party. Most workers saw collaboration with the bourgeoisie as a means to democratize Russian society rather than an end in itself. Once conditional support for the PG proved to be a barrier to furthering their aims, the working class abandoned the policy and those organizations which advocated it. (Mandel, 1983: 120-122) The fate of the moderate socialists was sealed with the July Days. Once the PG with its moderate socialist ministers used force against large sections of the Petrograd working class, as it did in July, continued support for the Mensheviks and the SRs was tantamount to a renunciation of the aims of the democratic revolution. The moderate socialists' strategy of class collaboration meant the basic demands of the masses for land, peace and bread remained unfulfilled until October.

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Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolsheviks aimed for the revolutionary overthrow of the PG rather than its consolidation. They did everything in their power to promote the revolutionary consciousness required for a mass workers' insurrection and the establishment of soviet power.

The party Lenin led proved invaluable to the success of the revolution. During the period from February to October, the Bolshevik Party grew from something like 24,000 to

ten times that size -- a rate of growth only possible for an already substantial party (in size, composition and experience) active before the revolutionary crisis.(Cliff,1976:150) In January 1917, the largest portion of the membership, perhaps as much as 60%, was drawn from the working class, with an additional 25% coming from among white collar workers.(Cliff,1976:160) By October, the Bolshevik Party embraced about 5.4% of the factory workers in the major towns.(Schapiro,1971:173) Thus, there can be little doubt the Bolshevik party was a mass organization of the working class.

(Service,1979:43-48; Chase,1978:89; Mandel,1983:55-56)

The Bolshevik Party was rooted in party cells formed in the factories, and barracks. Those cells were grouped together under a hierarchical structure of elected committees, town and suburb committees, regional committees and the nation wide Central Committee. Despite the stereotypical bourgeois and Stalinist view of the Bolshevik party as a tightly disciplined, undemocratic monolith, it was nothing of the sort.(Service,1979:7;Cliff, 1976:ix) Quite the opposite, the Bolshevik party in 1917 was characterized by quite an extraordinary degree of internal democracy, with members having lots of opportunity to pass judgement on the leadership and the disputes that raged within the party.(Service,1979:3,49-57; Cliff,1976:150-158) The success of the Bolsheviks "did not result from their fictitious obsession with matters organizational.... What really counted was that the Bolshevik political program proved steadily more appealing to the mass of workers, soldiers and peasants as the social turmoil and economic ruin reached a climax in late autumn."(Service,1979:62) The political clarity of the party's strategy and the appeal of its slogans "All Power to the Soviets," and "Land, Peace and Bread," gave the party a unity and coherence the moderates could not attain. The essential unity of the Bolshevik party

was increased by its relative homogeneity. The Bolsheviks viewed their organization as the independent political expression of a single class, the proletariat. It embodied the desire of the most revolutionary section of the working class for a political vehicle free of any theoretical, ideological or organizational dependence upon the bourgeoisie. (Ehrenberg, 1979:75)

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In the remainder of this section, we have to answer two questions: first, does the historical record confirm the Bolshevik argument about the role of the party in a proletarian revolution? Second, how do the Bolsheviks explain the early predominance of non-revolutionary ideas and the later shift towards revolutionary consciousness among Russian workers ?

Our answers to those questions is developed through an assessment of the four main tasks the Bolshevik party undertook during the revolutionary crisis of 1917: first, it used propaganda and agitation tailored to the revolutionary experience of Russian workers to "patiently explain" to the working class why continuing that revolution until the achievement of soviet power was necessary to win their immediate demands, avoid counter-revolution, and create a new form of society; second, it addressed the unevenness in the levels of consciousness and experience that existed between different segments of the working class -- especially between the vanguard of the class and its more backward layers -- to increase the degree of political homogeneity and unity of that class, making a successful insurrection possible; third, it carried out the political and technical preparations for the staging of a mass insurrection, to eliminate the Provisional Government and install the soviets in power, and fourth, its leadership developed the strategy and tactics party

members required to raise the level of confidence, organization and militancy within the working class, enabling the party to lead a successful insurrection. Let us look at how the Bolshevik party fulfilled each of these tasks in turn.

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First, we will examine the role of Bolshevik Party's propaganda and agitation in the generation of revolutionary consciousness during 1917.¹⁸ The first task the Bolshevik party undertook in 1917 was to "patiently explain" to the Russian working class that to win real reforms, end the threat of counter-revolution and abolish capitalist exploitation, the revolution had to continue until the soviets assumed state power. The Bolsheviks were only able to win the mass of the working class to support for soviet power, to promote revolutionary consciousness, because the objective experience of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis created a receptive audience for their propaganda.

Of course, the working class was not immediately and spontaneously revolutionary after the February revolution. There was a huge gap between the anti-Czarist sentiment of Petrograd workers in February and the revolutionary consciousness of a majority of Russian workers in October. Despite the experience of February, the majority of politically conscious workers in Petrograd (including most of the metalworkers) were prepared to accept the moderate socialist strategy of collaboration with the new PG and the bourgeoisie in March and April.(Koenker,1981:363: Bonnell,1984:55,57) (Only the most class conscious workers -- the metalworkers of the Vyborg District in Petrograd -- refused to endorse the Soviet's deal with the PG in March.) Most workers in Petrograd hoped to change society through conditional support for the soviet/PG political deal, and a society-wide process of democratization, carried out from below. This willingness by Petrograd workers to tolerate

the dual power arrangement between the soviet and the PG, when taken together with their initial conception of workers' control as merely supervision over management by the factory committees, is an indication of the non-revolutionary consciousness of workers in the first months of the revolution.(Suny,1987:5-6)¹⁹

When vanguard workers in Petrograd workers were toppling the first PG with their April demonstrations, they were still not fully revolutionary. Between April and July, after the metalworkers had abandoned their conditional support for the PG, they still had illusions the moderate socialist leaders of the soviet could be pressured into accepting state power.(CW,26: 23-24) Much of the vanguard of the working Petrograd class had a mixed consciousness, "combin(ing) a most radical understanding of the task (i.e., the need to gain state power for the soviets-BM) with illusions as to its methods."(HRR,II:77) Only after bourgeois rule, coalition government, and a campaign to pressure the moderate socialists to accept soviet power had all failed, did the vanguard of the Petrograd working class swing massively behind the Bolshevik call for soviet power -- even if that power had to be established by force of arms against the moderate socialists.(HRR,I:458-460)

There are several reasons why it took four months for vanguard workers in Petrograd to become fully revolutionary.

Part of the explanation lays in the unavailability of a revolutionary alternative to the moderates during March and April. (Until Lenin's return in April, the Bolshevik Party supported the soviet/PG deal.) Revolutionary euphoria and a desire for working class unity played an important role, as did doubts about whether the revolution would spread beyond Petrograd. In addition, the PG certainly paid lip service to the soviet's goals for a democratic revolution.(Mandel;1983:80-85)²⁰

In the spring of 1917, when Lenin analyzed the still non-revolutionary consciousness of Petrograd workers, he did so with a clear materialist argument. Lenin examined both the class interests, strategies and arguments of the ruling classes and the reformists (i.e., the two partners in promoting class collaboration in Russia), and the actual day-to-day experience of the working class that gave non-revolutionary ideas and arguments some resonance. On the latter point, Lenin argued that the bourgeoisie benefited from "the lack of class consciousness and organization, the routinism and downtrodden state of the masses" that is inherent in workers' experience under capitalism.(CW,24: 22.47) Thus, Lenin did not treat the working class simply as passive recipients of ideas manufactured from above. He tried to explain proletarian consciousness on the basis of an appraisal of their daily experience of powerlessness within society.

Lenin's analysis of revolutionary defensism -- the view that it was justified for the PG to continue the war because Russia had become a "revolutionary democracy" after February -- illustrates the point.(CW,24:411) Lenin attributed the strength of revolutionary defensism among the masses to three things: first, bourgeois efforts to deceive the workers, soldiers and poor peasants about the 'changed' political character of the war after the downfall of the Czar; second, the self-delusions of the moderate socialist parties, and third, the political inexperience of the masses.(CW,24:22,64-65,236) In other words, Lenin's argument refers to both the propaganda efforts of other classes and the experience of workers themselves.

Lenin argued that having conditionally 'accepted' the notion of a multi-class alliance in defence of the revolution -- an alliance supposedly embodied in the Soviet's deal with the PG (and later in the coalition Government) -- many workers were predisposed to

believe the PG would conduct its military policy in the 'national' interest and withdraw from the war.(CW,24:407-408; 25.29-30) In this context, when the PG talked about military defence of the revolution, Most Russian workers believed that meant protection of their newly won freedoms. But, the bourgeoisie used the defencist argument to pursue its imperialist interests and to mobilize the army for counter-revolutionary activity.

Recognizing the critical differences between the defencism of the masses and that of the moderate socialist leaders who supported the PG, Lenin argued that defencist workers should not be dismissed "as social chauvinists" (like the more sophisticated moderate socialists). because these workers were "only just awakening to political life."(CW,24:236) Provided the Bolsheviks "patiently explained" why the war was still imperialist in character, the discrepancy between the 'honest' defencism of the masses and the dishonest 'defencism' of the moderate socialists would soon become apparent.(CW,24:64) The defencism of many vanguard was seriously undermined in April, with public revelations about the PG's imperialist ambitions being communicated to Russia's military allies.

Thus, Lenin tried to explain the non-revolutionary consciousness of most workers by examining both the ideas promoted by the bourgeoisie and the moderate socialists, and the still limited experience Russian workers had to that point in the revolutionary process. The Bolsheviks argued that for Russian workers to develop a fully revolutionary consciousness, required both extensive experience of the class struggle during the revolutionary process, and the presence of revolutionary ideas. As we saw in Chapter 2, for the Bolsheviks, direct experience of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis was a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the widespread development of revolutionary consciousness.(CW,25: 229; 31:93; Lundquist,1982:155; Harding,1977:243) Only if the

majority of workers directly experienced both the bankruptcy of the old social order and the collective power of their own class, could revolutionary consciousness emerge on a mass scale. The Bolsheviks argued that prolonged involvement in the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis would create an appetite for revolutionary ideas (about their class, the nature of society, and the possibilities for revolutionary change) within the working class.

Since the Bolsheviks considered the experience of struggle to be the driving force of the revolution, they repeatedly urged party members to build the basic organizations of the working class (e.g., soviets, factory committees, etc.).(HRR,I:357) Without continuing organization and struggle, Russian workers could not maintain the level of activity required to alter their consciousness in a revolutionary direction.(CW,24:223-224,316; 25:374) But, the Bolsheviks did not assume the working class would automatically become revolutionary because the Czar had been overthrown in February. They believed it would take some very sharp class confrontations to instruct the working class about the real balance of class power, the possibility of counter-revolution, and the need for a soviet revolution if the democratization of the social order was to succeed.(CW,24:213) Furthermore, the Bolsheviks knew they had to intervene in the soviets, factory committees and other organizations to link the immediate demands of workers for reforms with political arguments about the overall nature of the crisis and the ultimate goals of the revolution.

During the revolutionary crisis, the dynamics of the class struggle created the necessary conditions for the emergence of mass revolutionary consciousness. Struggles over immediate issues that would not 'normally' promote the development of revolutionary consciousness (e.g., the defence of living standards and jobs) pushed workers towards the revolutionary ideas articulated by the Bolsheviks.(Smith,1983b:2-3) Because of the existence

of a revolutionary crisis, even the 'economic' struggles of backward workers (i.e., struggles that reflected their trade union consciousness) became politicized, as workers were forced by circumstances to relate their own experience to the general crisis of Russian society. They were being pushed to search for class-wide solutions to their problems, rather than personal or sectional ones.(Smith,1983b:3)

The polarization of Russian society between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps, made it apparent to Russian workers that the moderate socialists' strategy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie was not working. As the economic crisis worsened, bourgeois sabotage of the economy grew, and the moderate socialists were implicated in counter-revolutionary activity, Russian workers concluded "class collaboration and reform could not work.(Koenker,1981:363-364; Suny,1982:46) By October, most Russian workers had learned through experience that there were only two choices: revolution, which meant working class power in government and in the workplace, or counter-revolution.(Koenker,1981:252)

In 1917, the experience of collective struggle during a revolutionary crisis was crucial to the widespread development of revolutionary consciousness. But, that very new experience had to be interpreted. And the propaganda of the Bolshevik Party played a critical role in enabling workers to draw revolutionary conclusions about their experience.

In 1917, Lenin argued that while the masses would "learn from their own experience," that mere experience would not overcome the weight of past ideas. Without the consistent intervention of those vanguard workers who already adhered to the revolutionary interpretation of events, most workers would fail to develop a revolutionary consciousness. For example, Lenin predicted that when the working class learned (through

experience) that the alliance between the PG and the moderate socialists would not solve their problems, tens of thousands would flock to the banners of the Bolshevik party. But, that could only happen if the Bolsheviks offered a clear and consistent critique of the moderates, and if they retained their political and organizational independence from the Mensheviks and SRs.(CW,25:120) Events proved him right; experience did push Russian workers towards a revolutionary understanding of the world. But not before they had first tried to explain their experiences on the basis of their old, pre-crisis ideas.

Lenin addressed the contradiction between the revolutionary experience and the non-revolutionary consciousness of many Russian workers by arguing the need for the Bolsheviks to "patiently explain" the meaning of workers' new experience. He was confident that Bolshevik propaganda would reach an increasingly receptive audience. Lenin displayed his willingness to "patiently explain" the real situation to the working class, commenting that the Bolsheviks did not "want the masses to take our word for it. We are not charlatans. We want the masses to overcome their mistakes through experience."(Lenin, cited in Leibman,1975:190; Wolpe,1970:268) On another occasion he wrote, "the class conscious workers stand for the...power of the soviets...made possible not by adventurist acts, but by clarifying proletarian minds, by emancipating them from the influence of the bourgeoisie."(CW,24:41)

The majority of workers only developed a clear revolutionary consciousness because the Bolsheviks were able to provide a systematic, coherent and meaningful explanation of what transpired during the revolutionary process -- one that was propagated in every factory committee, soviet and unit of the workers' militias by tens of thousands of party members. The Bolsheviks translated general Marxist ideas into specific arguments and

slogans that analyzed the crisis in concrete terms and posed a meaningful solution (e.g., "All power to the soviets", "Land, peace and bread"). Furthermore, the Bolshevik press tried to explain the various episodes of the revolutionary crisis in light of the goal of soviet power. Thus, the main contribution of the Bolsheviks to the radicalization of the working class was to insure "the actual policies of the government and of census (i.e., bourgeois-BM) society were known to the workers." (Mandel, 1983:178)

The Bolshevik Party press was the main weapon the revolutionaries used to promote their view of the revolution. The Bolsheviks sponsored at least 41 newspapers and journals (17 of them daily newspapers), which provided the main link between the party leaders and its members and supporters. (Cliff, 1976:145-164) The thousands of Bolshevik party members propagated the Bolshevik view of the revolution, and then won the right to lead the revolution, by proving their ideas in practice. That was the only way Russian workers discovered the existence of a revolutionary solution to the crisis of Russian society. (Molyneux, 1978:169; Wolpe, 1970:268)

Thus, the emergence of revolutionary consciousness in Russia did not happen spontaneously; it was the product of a clash between workers' new experience in the class struggle and their old ideas (e.g, about the incapacities of their class, the permanency of the social order, etc.). That disjunction between experience and ideas forced them to search for a new explanation of their experience -- an alternative explanation that could be found in the revolutionary ideas, arguments and slogans of the Bolshevik party and its rank and file members. Through their consistent class analysis of events, the Bolsheviks "provided workers who had no theoretical understanding of Marx with a familiar conceptual tool with which to understand the actions of the PG." (Koenker, 1981:363-364) They gave the

spontaneously developing sentiments of militancy (i.e., trade union consciousness) the shape and form required to become revolutionary consciousness, by tying the specific grievances of workers to the overall crisis of Russian society.

- The Bolsheviks themselves did not create popular discontent or revolutionary feeling.... The(ir) contribution...was rather to shape workers' understanding of the social dynamics of the revolution and to foster an awareness of how the urgent problems of daily life related to the broader social and political order. The Bolsheviks won support because their analysis and proposed solutions seemed to make sense. (Smith,1987:77)

When a majority of Russian workers were forced to link the escalating threat to their living standards and jobs to the overall crisis of Russian society, then previously routine and mundane aspects of everyday life become politically charged national issues. Then, workers found themselves unable to operate on a day to day basis without a 'global' understanding of political events, leading to a constant search for ideas that would explain their experience. Few workers can develop a systematic and global analysis of the fast changing world they find themselves in during a revolutionary crisis, let alone develop a strategy for resolving that crisis. That task can only be preformed by a revolutionary party like the Bolsheviks.

* * * * *

A second task any revolutionary party must undertake during the kind of revolutionary crisis that gripped Russia in 1917, is to address the unevenness in experience

and consciousness between different sections of the working class (e.g., between the metalworkers and textile workers, between Petrograd and the provinces, etc.). In 1917, the Bolsheviks had to use their influence within the working class to alternately restrain the premature movements toward insurrection by the vanguard in Petrograd (in July), and politicize the struggles of the more backward sections of the class (e.g., the strikes by unskilled workers). Only if the Bolshevik party could politically unite the divided working class, and raise the consciousness of the less advanced sections to a higher level, could a mass insurrection succeed. (Cliff, 1976:149,166)

The Bolsheviks analyzed the problem of the unevenness in working class experience and consciousness on the basis of the distinction between the mass of the Russian working class (e.g., the unskilled textile workers), the vanguard layer of that class (e.g., the skilled metalworkers), and the revolutionary party, which is composed of members of the vanguard. They understood that each of these three groups requires different objective circumstances to develop revolutionary consciousness. Critical to understanding the revolutionary process is the recognition that the vanguard and the more backward workers "played different, but largely complementary roles in the revolutionary process." (Smith, 1983b:255; Goodey, 1974:33) The political consciousness and discipline of the skilled metalworkers combined with the explosive economic militancy of the unskilled, to create a largely united and very powerful revolutionary movement by September/October. But, before that the movement was not united.

In Petrograd, the Bolsheviks had won a majority of workers' delegates to the soviet before the July Days. The vanguard of the class became revolutionary as soon as it became clear the employers and the PG were trying to reverse the political and economic gains

made by the working class in February and March.(Mandel,1983:129-140) For the metalworkers, tolerance of the new PG had been conditional upon the new regime carrying out a prompt and wide sweeping democratization of Russian society. By July, when the Mensheviks' support for the new regime was shown to be completely unconditional, the Bolsheviks had won the support of the vanguard of the working class.(Mandel,1983:177-178)

However, after July the ideas of defencism and toleration towards the PG continued to hold sway among more backward sections of the working class. The unskilled workers only swung their support to the Bolsheviks during the late summer, after direct experience of the economic crisis and the counter-revolutionary intentions of the bourgeoisie.(Mandel,1983:122-125; Gluckstein,1985:32-33) For them, "it was the struggles...in the world of work, and the activities of work-based organizations, such as the factory committees...which were of critical importance in promoting revolutionary consciousness." (Smith,1983b:3; Koenker,1981:219) When the unskilled majority of the Russian working class shifted its support away from the SRs to the Bolsheviks, they were choosing to support the only party which put forward a clear and consistent solution to the apparent impasse of the revolution, the only party not tainted by involvement with the government.(Mandel,1984:218)

Thus, the radicalization of the different sections of the Russian working class occurred at different times and around different issues. Political confrontations (like the April crisis over continuation of the war, the crisis over the resumption of the offensive in June, etc.) between workers and the government radicalized the vanguard of the working class, while the economic crisis radicalized the backward sections of the class during the

summer. The political struggles that pushed the vanguard towards revolutionary consciousness forced them to confront the need for a class-wide solution to the obvious shortcomings of the new regime. They turned to the Bolsheviks as a national organization capable of unifying the working class and launching a decisive action to install soviet power. The unskilled workers were forced out of their isolation from the central political struggle between the metalworkers and the regime by the economic crisis, the threat of counter-revolution and the revolutionary agitation of the Bolsheviks. (Bonnell, 1984:56; Koenker, 1981:129; Smith, 1983b:145) The early political 'apathy' and 'moderation' of unskilled workers evaporated as the 'economic' and 'political' dimensions of the class struggle became synchronized after the Kornilov affair.

The uneven process of radicalization is well illustrated by comparing Petrograd and Moscow -- two cities with very different working classes. In each place, the development of revolutionary consciousness occurred at different speeds and around different kinds of struggles. (Petrograd's industrial working class was dominated by metalworkers (60% of the labour force) rather than unskilled textile workers (only 11% of the labour force), while in Moscow -- as in most provincial cities -- the proportion of metalworkers was much smaller (26% of the factory workers, with 37% of factory workers in the textile industry).) When the July days demonstrations occurred in Petrograd, the majority of Moscow's factory committees were still dominated by the moderate socialists. As a result, Moscow workers did not participate in the semi-insurrectionary demonstrations that swept Petrograd. Yet, after six weeks of counter-revolutionary offensive (especially in the factories), virtually the entire Moscow working class staged a general strike against a Government sponsored conference on the future of Russia, despite the opposition of the moderate dominated

Moscow soviet.(Mandel, 1984:226)

This belated radicalization of the main mass of the less skilled workers...can be explained by the much more tangible character assumed by the counter-revolution and the economic crisis (in the workers' minds the two were closely connected) after the July Days. These were issues that even the most apolitical and cautious workers could no longer ignore or dismiss. All the arguments in favour of soviet power that they had heard earlier and rejected, were now being proven correct 'on their own hides'....(Mandel,1984:227)

Bolshevik propaganda, and direct experience of the meaning of counter-revolution had to be combined to win the backward workers' to the need for soviet power. The unskilled "required something more personal and tangible" than the political developments that radicalized the metalworkers, "to convince them of the need to re-evaluate their support for the coalition" government of moderate socialists and the liberals. "Soviet power was an unknown and risky business, and only immediate material necessity could move most of them to embrace it."(Mandel,1983: 179; Suny,1982:46)²¹

Because both the skilled metalworkers and the more 'backward' unskilled workers radicalized at different times and around different issues, the Bolshevik Party -- which sought to unite the working class -- had to be aware of the unevenness in consciousness in order to intervene effectively in the working class. For example, although the Bolshevik party was composed overwhelmingly of vanguard workers, it had to avoid mistaking the consciousness of that vanguard for the consciousness of the entire working class.(Cliff,1976:166) That the Bolsheviks were able to make that distinction, was evident during the July days, when the party was able to prevent the Petrograd metalworkers and soldiers from launching a premature insurrection -- one that would have failed, through isolation from other more backward sections of the class (e.g., textile workers, workers in other cities, etc.).(HRR,II:9-10,73,77) In that way, the Bolshevik party prevented the

Petrograd working class and the revolution from suffering a fatal defeat.²²

Another thing the Bolshevik party did to overcome the unevenness in working class consciousness and experience, was to intervene among the more backward sections of the working class -- the unskilled, women, youth and peasant workers -- to politicize their struggles and win them away from apathy or support for the moderate socialists.(Lundquist,1982:241; Cliff,1975b:47) The mere existence of the Bolshevik party made "it possible to coordinate, plan, consciously synchronize and continuously shape th(e) intervention of the vanguard elements in the 'spontaneous' mass struggle(s)" that developed.(Mandel, 1977:97) Metalworkers acted as "opinion leaders" in dealing with the unskilled workers, often mobilizing them to support radical demands, like the demand for soviet power.(Koenker,1981:258; 1987:90) It was the skilled metalworkers who "built the factory committees and trade unions after the February revolution." (Smith,1983b:190) After those organizations had been created, the vanguard of the workers' movement set out to convince the more backward sections of the class that sectional and spontaneous actions were insufficient to deal with the employers. Once the the employers' economic offensive undercut the effectiveness of strike action as a method for protecting jobs and living standards, the Bolshevik argument (that class-wide action to create soviet power was the key to solving economic problems) carried by vanguard workers was accepted by many unskilled workers.(Smith,1983b:191-192) Without that alternative, "the unskilled workers would in all probability have turned to unorganized spontaneous economic actions on the factory level or else would have sunk back into political apathy." (Mandel,1984: 227-228) Instead, the Bolshevik were able to unify both the skilled and the unskilled for the October insurrection.

The unevenness of working class consciousness put a premium on leadership, making it necessary for the party to alternately restrain and mobilize different sections of the working class. When the crucial moment to mount an insurrection arrived, the determination and credibility of the vanguard would be decisive in allowing them to mobilize more backward sections of the working class in a bid to create soviet power. (HRR,III:178) It was the armed sections of the vanguard (i.e., the workers' militias) and the sailors that provided the nucleus of the insurrectionary force in October. Less resolute sections of the working class wanted the Soviet Congress to take power, but were unwilling to take up arms and participate in an insurrection.

David Mandel argues the Petrograd working class exhibited four distinct attitudes towards an insurrection: the vanguard of the class (together with the Red Guards, the sailors, several regiments within the garrison, and sections of the unskilled workers) strongly favored it, and another, smaller section (i.e., the labour aristocracy) strongly opposed it, while yet a third section of demoralized and very backward workers was almost entirely passive (i.e., those unskilled workers and recent arrivals from the countryside who ignored or rejected political action).²³ Finally, a fourth section of the working class strongly favored soviet power but was hesitant to engage in an insurrection. This last group -- the "hesitators" Mandel calls them -- would not take the initiative in an insurrection, and needed to be led by another group. Composed of some demoralized metalworkers and indecisive unskilled workers, the hesitators were themselves unwilling to launch an insurrection, out of fear of civil war, memories of the July defeat, and growing economic insecurity. (Mandel, 1984:295-298) In the event, the section of the working class which consciously favored insurrection and was prepared to act, the vanguard, managed to unite

behind them the hesitators, making a mass insurrection possible. Thus, despite the support of the majority of workers for the establishment of soviet power, the insurrection could not take place without the initiative of "a resolute minority."

All that was required was for them to begin, to force the issue, to inject a new dynamism into the movement and to make it impossible to procrastinate further. The others would rally.... But without this initiative, the...yearning for revolutionary change would have had little real impact....In October the Bolshevik concept of the revolutionary party as the authentic vanguard of the working class was to be put to the crucial test. (Mandel,1984:309)

The October revolution proved the working class can develop a revolutionary consciousness, overcome its internal divisions and act together to abolish the existing social order and begin the process of creating a new one. It certainly proved the value of the Bolsheviks' analysis of uneven consciousness within the working class. But, it also demonstrated there were some problems with the Bolshevik treatment of working class consciousness.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Lenin operated with three major concepts in analyzing working class consciousness: reformist consciousness, trade union consciousness and of course revolutionary consciousness. But, there were at least two aspects of working class consciousness during 1917 that Lenin's theory of class consciousness did not account for. First, the consciousness of 'backward' sections of the working class is not really explained by any of Lenin's three concepts. Second, when the Bolsheviks talked about the 'conditional acceptance' of the new regime by many skilled workers in March and April, they were pointing to another phenomenon not easily analyzed on the basis of Lenin's categories. This is a problem we will return to in Chapter 4.

* * * * *

Once a majority of the Russian working class had learned, through practical

experience, that only the overthrow of the PG could solve their difficulties, the Bolshevik party had a third task: to carry out the political and technical preparations for, and execution of a mass insurrection. Although the October insurrection was made in the name of the Soviet, the actual decision to initiate the uprising was made by the central committee of the Bolshevik party, while the main drive towards insurrection came from the working class itself. (Leibman,1975:199-200) The decision to launch an insurrection had to be taken by the party rather than the soviets, because of the political heterogeneity of the latter. "Only a disciplined and politically united body, the party, could discuss the tactical pros and cons of the insurrection and plan its execution." (Molyneux,1978:80) The decision to organize an insurrection came after extensive debate inside the Bolshevik Party over whether the situation was fully revolutionary, whether the balance of class forces was right. Throughout the revolutionary process, the balance of class forces was constantly being re-assessed by the Bolshevik leadership -- partly on the basis of information about the 'mood' of the class from the ranks of the party.(LO:36-38; HRR,I:115-116)

Furthermore, the organization of the resolute minority of workers (i.e., the section of the class prepared to take decisive action when a revolutionary situation develops) is essential if other, less confident workers are going to be led into active involvement in a workers' insurrection.(HRR-BL:43-44) That leadership was critical to inspiring the confidence the mass of the workers required to join the insurrection in October 1917. As Trotsky suggested,"the proletariat can become imbued with the confidence necessary for a governmental overthrow only if a clear (revolutionary-BM) prospect opens before it, only if it has had an opportunity to test out in action a correlation of forces which is changing to its advantage, only if it feels above it a far-sighted, firm and confident leadership."

(HRR,III:175)

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There is a final task a revolutionary party must perform for a revolution to succeed. It must develop the theory, the strategy, and the tactics required for the revolutionary layer within the working class to be able to generate meaningful propaganda, address the unevenness within the working class, and carry out the political and technical preparations for an insurrection. In other words, a revolutionary party must have a skilled leadership, in addition to a mass membership within the vanguard of the working class. In the Bolshevik party of 1917, that task was performed first and foremost by Lenin and Trotsky.

For example, Lenin was the main architect of the Bolshevik strategy in 1917, reorienting the Bolshevik Party towards soviet revolution with his April Theses. When major debates over the Bolsheviks' strategy erupted (e.g., in April), Lenin played the key role in winning a majority of the organization to the struggle for soviet power. He succeeded because his arguments about strategy and tactics fit the experience, consciousness and aspirations of the party members better than those of competing party leader.(Cliff,1976:139)²⁴ And, it was Trotsky who organized and led the military preparations for the insurrection and then carried it out, in the process addressing the real problems of the continued unevenness in the consciousness of the mass movement.(Rabinowitch,1982; HRR,III:281-282)

Both clear political leadership and an active and informed membership were necessary features of a revolutionary organization that hoped to lead a workers' revolution. The strategy and tactics developed by Lenin and Trotsky presupposed the existence of a mass organization of revolutionaries able to knowledgeably debate the actual balance of

class forces (on the basis of experience from each section of the working class and evidence from every corner of the country) and ready to act on the decisions of the majority. Thus, the success of the Bolshevik Party stemmed in part from "the party's relatively open, decentralized, and democratic structure and method of operation ...(which-BM) facilitated broad and lively exchange of opinion and the adoption of programs and tactics which were finely tuned to popular aspirations." (Rabinowitch, 1978:xxi, 311; 1982:199) The October revolution also succeeded because of the resolute and disciplined character of the revolutionary majority of party members, the vanguard that led the revolution.

* * * * *

To conclude this Section, the revolutionary process of 1917 confirmed the Bolshevik argument about the subjective side of the revolutionary process, in several ways. First, it shows the moderate socialists were badly handicapped by their inability to understand the nature of the class struggle during the revolutionary process. Conversely, the Bolsheviks, who had a superb grasp of the features and dynamics of the revolution, used their analysis to great effect. Second, the Russian revolution demonstrates that a majority of the working class can actually become consciously revolutionary -- given sufficient experience of class struggle during a revolutionary crisis, and the presence of a credible and mass revolutionary party.

Finally, the experience of 1917 confirms the need for a revolutionary party if workers' revolution is to succeed. Such an organization is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the working class to achieve state power. Without a mass party that incorporates the vanguard of the working class, it is impossible for revolutionaries to

win the majority of workers to a revolutionary solution to the sort of profound social crisis that plagued Russia in 1917. Only a revolutionary party can restrain sections of the class from premature insurrection while building the confidence and revolutionary consciousness of other sections. And only a revolutionary party can plan and execute a mass insurrection. Furthermore, only a revolutionary party can provide the analysis, strategy and vision of an alternative future the working class requires to become fully conscious of its revolutionary ability.

The Bolshevik party maintained its Marxist principles, and yet grew to become a mass party with widespread support and deep roots in the working class. Despite its initial lack of support in the soviets, the mere existence of the Bolshevik party in March 1917 meant that it could become a major factor in the revolution. Critical to the success of the revolution was the fact that the political views of the Bolsheviks "were not disembodied ideas, but were represented in thousands upon thousands of proletarian cadres who had been forged during years of struggle. Only because of this was it possible for Bolshevism to translate words into deed...and lead a successful revolution." (Cliff, 1976:159) Because the Bolshevik party, existed as a credible political alternative in 1917, there was a Marxist explanation of the revolutionary crisis available, a revolutionary strategy for solving that crisis, and the leadership to actually make it happen.

(3.6) The October Insurrection as the Immediate Outcome of the Revolutionary Situation

The final aspect of the revolutionary process that we need to discuss is the immediate outcome of the revolutionary process: the October insurrection, during which the

Bolshevik led soviets seized state power. Although this aspect of the revolutionary process is no less important than the others, it will only be given very brief treatment here. Since none of the cases we will examine in Part II of this dissertation involved any attempt at a proletarian seizure of state power, and for the sake of brevity, we will make just a few points.

Neither Lenin nor Trotsky viewed the outcome of the revolutionary situation in 1917 as inevitable, acknowledging the possibility of non-revolutionary outcomes. In particular, they viewed two alternative outcomes as realistic possibilities: first, a counter-revolution that would terminate dual power (whether through a military coup, German invasion, or a grab for power by Kerensky); second, a prolongation and then evaporation of dual power, as the revolutionary situation disappeared and Russian society degenerated into anarchy, due to the inability of either the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary camps to impose their solutions on the crisis. Discounted was any possibility of a stabilization of dual power, leading to the development of a new, radical form of bourgeois democracy. Naturally, the Bolsheviks worked to bring about a fourth outcome -- a proletarian insurrection that would eliminate the PG and create a soviet government.(Suny,1983:49-51) For that particular outcome to occur, the Bolshevik party had to enjoy mass support within the working class, pick the appropriate time for an insurrection, and then finally organize it. Both Lenin and Trotsky wrote extensively on the question of how and when an insurrection should be attempted. Here, we consider their argument.

In mid-September Lenin argued that the objective preconditions for a successful insurrection had developed. The Bolsheviks had won majorities in both the Moscow and Petrograd soviets, the peasant based agrarian revolution had dramatically escalated in the

countryside, ferment continued among the soldiers and sailors at the front and in the garrisons, and both the moderate socialists and the bourgeoisie were confused and on the defensive after the failure of Kornilov's coup.(Geyer,1969: 219-220; Cliff,1976:335) Most importantly, Lenin believed an insurrection would succeed because the Bolsheviks had the active support of a majority of the working class.(CW,26:19) Contrasting the genuinely revolutionary situation of September/October with the merely pre-revolutionary one that had existed in July, Lenin argued that in July the revolution had still not penetrated the countryside and the provinces. And, the bourgeois/moderate socialist alliance was still intact. Furthermore, the Bolsheviks had not won support from a majority of the working class -- even in Moscow and Petrograd. Finally, the support the Bolsheviks did have for a soviet revolution was still soft, because the moderate socialists had not yet shown their true counter-revolutionary colors. Lenin concluded that in July the supporters of a soviet revolution "could not have retained power... because...the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd."(CW,26:23-24)

Although there was great controversy inside the Bolshevik Party about Lenin's analysis and his proposal for an insurrection, only one aspect of that debate concerns us here. Some Bolshevik leaders objected to Lenin's claim the working class would support an insurrection, claiming that reports from party activists showed the working class had become demoralized. Lenin countered by arguing that the reports indicated that -- although the mood of the masses was different from that in July -- it was also "tense and expectant." In his view, the reports indicated prolonged experience of the revolutionary crisis and the development of a revolutionary consciousness made Russian workers unwilling to mobilize for demonstrations or individual strikes, since such actions could not

solve the political crisis.

By October, Russian workers would only act collectively if they believed that action would finally solve the political crisis. (CW,26:209) Lenin described the characteristics of revolutionary consciousness on the eve of an insurrection in this way:

What is needed for an uprising is...on the one hand a conscious, firm and unswerving resolve on the part of the class conscious elements to fight to the end; and on the other, a mood of despair among the broad masses who feel that nothing can now be saved by half measures.... The development of the revolution has in practice brought...the workers...to precisely this combination of a tense mood resulting from experience (among the class conscious) and a mood of hatred towards those using the lockout weapon...that is close to despair (among the broadest masses). (CW,26:210)

Thus, the signs of demoralization some Bolsheviks detected among the class conscious workers, stemmed from a growing doubt the Bolsheviks would ever take the decisive action necessary to establish soviet power.(Cliff,1976:336; Rabinowitch,1978:218; LO:40)

By September sections of the working class had grown wary of all the talk about insurrection, creating a situation where the insurrection could not be delayed for long, without the revolutionary crisis simply evaporating. As Trotsky notes,

A revolutionary situation cannot be preserved at will. If the Bolsheviks had not seized the power in October and November, in all probability they would not have seized it at all. Instead of firm leadership the masses would have found among the Bolsheviks that same disparity between word and deed which they were already sick of, and they would have ebbed away in the course of two or three months from this party which had deceived their hopes, just as they had recently ebbed away from the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. A part of the workers (i.e., the more backward sections - BM) would have fallen into indifferentism, another part (i.e., sections of the vanguard-BM) would have burned up their force in convulsive movements...in a terror dictated by revenge and despair.(HRR,III:154-155)

Trotsky's comments are important. While we will not have occasion to analyze another case of an attempted insurrection in this dissertation, we will encounter the phenomenon of a growing demoralization of the working class in the late stages of a revolutionary crisis.

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The details of the October insurrection in Petrograd and beyond have been well analyzed elsewhere and need not be discussed here. (Rabinowitch, 1976; Cliff, 1976; Geyer, 1969; Chamberlin, 1963; Wade, 1984; Raleigh, 1986) The unprecedented character of this proletarian insurrection in Petrograd, an event which combined both the centralized, conspiratorial element of a coup, and the mass character of a spontaneous uprising, makes it critical for those who oppose Marxism to distort the event -- usually by denying or underemphasizing the truly mass character of the insurrection. (HRR, III: 168-169) (Often, the "coup" in October is compared with the "spontaneous" mass insurrection in February, a procedure that denies the possibility of conscious revolutionary action in which the proletariat creates a workers' state.) The October insurrection in Petrograd cannot be dismissed as a coup by a tiny minority of conspirators.

In the first place, the evidence suggests that tens of thousands of workers, soldiers and sailors in Petrograd actively and consciously participated in the insurrection -- including the Red Guards, members of the Bolshevik party, sections of the garrison and sailors from Kronstadt. Many of those participants were members of political parties other than the Bolsheviks, or even non-party socialists, who fervently supported soviet power.

Secondly, the Bolsheviks did not try to mobilize the majority of workers for the Petrograd insurrection. On the contrary, they organized the uprising in a manner which deliberately kept most workers in the factories. (Mandel, 1984: 320-321) Unlike February, the October uprising did not require mass confrontations between workers and soldiers, to win the latter to the cause of the revolution. Since the garrison was already under the control of the Petrograd soviet, "the insurrectionists" (only-BM) task was to occupy

buildings and disarm the last supporters of the old regime. There was no room for mass action." (Mandel,1984:320)

And third, there is abundant evidence suggesting the majority of the workers, soldiers and sailors who did not directly participate in the Petrograd insurrection, either actively or tacitly supported it. They showed their support for soviet power both before and after the insurrection. As we saw above, during the months of September and October, the Bolsheviks gained majority support throughout most of the large urban Soviets, including those in Petrograd and Moscow. In the factories, during the same period, workers passed numerous resolutions indicating their support for the immediate establishment of soviet power. (Koenker,1981:260-268; Mandel, 1984:291) On the 'Day of the Petrograd Soviet', a day of mass meetings and city-wide Bolshevik agitation just days before the insurrection, hundreds of thousands of Petrograd workers turned out to support soviet power.(HRR-BL:66-67; Sukhanov,1983:58, 585; Chamberlin, 1963:303-304; Mandel,1984:292; Rabinowitch,1978: 242-243) Thus, the Bolshevik revolution was a mass popular insurrection, something even the more honest Mensheviks and Left SRs acknowledged.(Sukhanov,1983:648-649; Mandel,1984:291-292; Molyneux,1978:79)

The political campaign of the Bolsheviks throughout 1917, leading to the October insurrection, shows the remarkable political skills of the Bolsheviks. But, it also demonstrates their superior understanding of the revolutionary process, their acute powers of analysis, and their ability to correctly judge the balance of power between the classes. In that respect, the October insurrection provides critical confirmation of many of the arguments Marx, Lenin and Trotsky had advanced prior to then.

(3.7) Conclusion: The Bolshevik Theory of the Revolutionary Process and the 1917 Revolution

In 1917, the Bolshevik Party was guided by an analysis of the crisis in Russia (and world capitalism), an understanding of the revolutionary process and a vision of socialism. The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, which crystallized during 1917, proved adequate to assess the shifting balance of power between February and October, enable the Bolsheviks to develop the tactics they needed to contribute to the radicalization of the working class, time the insurrection and steer the soviets to power. In that sense, the Bolshevik analysis of the nature and the dynamics of the revolution was generally confirmed.

After 1917, both Lenin and Trotsky further analyzed the Russian revolution, as well as other cases of revolutionary crisis. But, their theory of the revolutionary process contained two problems which partially undermined their analysis of subsequent revolutionary crises: an underdeveloped analysis of working class consciousness, and an underestimation of the importance of the class struggle at the point of production -- both problems that can be traced to the origins of the theory in the analysis of a proletarian revolution in a backward autocracy. But, those are points we will pursue in Chapter 4.

Despite its shortcomings, the Bolshevik analysis of the origins, processes and potential outcomes of the revolutionary crisis of 1917 proved far superior to that of their political opponents. Indeed, the Bolshevik explanation of the revolutionary process in Russia is still superior to that offered by subsequent generations of Cadet and Menshevik sympathizers -- the bourgeois, Stalinist and social democratic commentators of today. For

one thing, the Bolshevik account explains features of the revolutionary process that are left unexplained by historians with anti-Bolshevik political assumptions (e.g., the inherent tendency for the class struggle to escalate towards civil war in 1917, the development of dual power at all levels of society, the development of revolutionary consciousness, etc.). Moreover, the Bolshevik analysis of the revolution represents a serious -- though not complete -- break from the elitist assumptions underlying non-Marxist accounts of the revolution. The accounts developed by non-Bolshevik historians assume the working class is incapable of self-emancipation, and ignore the central and driving force of the entire revolutionary process: the self-activity of the working class. By contrast, the Bolsheviks acknowledged that driving force theoretically and did everything they could to enhance it politically.

Despite the meager resources Lenin, Trotsky and subsequent writers from the Bolshevik tradition have been able to devote to analyzing the events of 1917, their fundamental explanation of the revolutionary process has stood up well to the tests of time and criticism. That is a tribute, not only to the abilities of Lenin and Trotsky, but to the power of the theoretical and political perspective they employed.

The obvious strengths of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process recommend it as a guide for research in the analysis of other revolutionary crises. A theory which can account for the success of the proletarian revolution in 1917, can explain why proletarian revolution failed in other cases. Bolshevism provides us with the concepts, arguments and insights that are the essential starting point for any Marxist attempt to explain why all the other proletarian revolutionary movements during the twentieth century have failed to achieve state power.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER (3.0)

1. The Paris Commune of 1871 was also a case of a positive short-term outcome to a revolutionary crisis. But the Commune did not produce many of the features and dynamics that have been characteristic of more proletarian movements during the twentieth century (e.g., factory committees, soviets, revolutionary parties, etc.). In that sense, the Paris Commune should be thought of as a transitional phenomenon, an early, and not yet fully developed version of the revolutionary process that became typical in later decades.

2. The literature on the revolution is vast. Several categories of literature have been used here, including: (1) the work of social democratic historians like the Mensheviks (e.g., Sukhanov, 1983); (2) analyses done by left-wing but anti-Leninist historians (e.g., left Social Democrats like Sirriani, 1982 and Claudin, 1975); (3) work done by ultra-leftist and anarchist commentators (e.g., Gombin, 1979; Brinton, 1970); (4) the work of pro-Bolshevik historians, including the work of Trotskyists, writing since the rise of Stalinism (e.g., Cliff, 1976; Rabinowitch, 1968, 1976; Medvedev, 1979; Leibman, 1970, 1975), as well as Bolshevik historians (e.g., Reed, 1961; Trotsky, 1957; etc.) who had first hand experience of 1917; and finally, (5) the work of a new breed of leftist social historians, influenced by Marxism and sympathetic to Bolshevism, but disenchanted with the conventional political history of the revolution (e.g., Mandel, 1983, 1984; Smith, 1983; Koenker, 1981; Uldricks, 1974; Suny, 1983; Kaiser, 1987; etc.).

3. In our view, pro-Bolshevik historians like Cliff (1976), Medvedev (1979), Leibman (1970, 1975) and Rabinowitch (1968, 1978) easily refute the bourgeois and Stalinist interpretations of 1917. But, in doing so they engage in a rather conventional form of political history, concentrating on developments in the Bolshevik Party and its leadership, giving us a top down view of the revolutionary process. In that respect, these commentators elaborate upon rather than surpass the work done by Bolsheviks like Trotsky. (HRR, I: xvii-xix; Cliff, 1976: ix-xi) Because Bolshevik accounts of the revolutionary process do not study the revolution 'from below', they overemphasize the importance of the propaganda of the revolutionary party to the outcome, and underemphasize the revolutionary experience of the masses. Luckily, in the past decade, a new generation of Marxist inspired social historians have begun to study the experience of underclasses in the revolution, allowing us to redress the imbalance. (Suny, 1983, 1987) (Some of the hallmarks of this new historiography of the revolution include: Haimson, 1989; Bonnell, 1983; Hasegawa, 1981; Kaiser, 1987; Koenker, 1981, 1989; Mandel, 1983, 1984; Mawdsley, 1978; Service, 1979; Smith 1983b; Wade 1984; Wildman, 1980.)

4. Lenin and Trotsky's analysis of the 1917 revolution can be found in the following sources. For Lenin, see: volumes 23-26 of his Collected Works (and portions of volumes 35, 36, 41, and 43), and Left Wing Communism. An Infantile Disorder (1920). For Trotsky, see The Proletarian Revolution in Russia (1918) and Leon Trotsky Speaks (1972), History of the Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk (1918), The Lessons of October (1924) The History of the Russian Revolution (1930).

5. This vanguard "had experience of organizing strikes and trade unions, of informal shop floor organization and of job-control before the February revolution. They were the ones who provided the momentum behind the workers' organizations created in 1917 and they served as the leaders and spokesmen for their fellow workers." (Bonnell, 1984:58; Mandel, 1983:15-21)

6. Trotsky was quite clear that a spontaneous uprising by the working class can destroy an oppressive state, but it cannot construct an alternative one. (HRR, III:168) What differentiates spontaneous actions and planned ones is that in the former, "the nature of the intervention of the vanguard elements is unorganized, improvised, intermittent and unplanned." By contrast with February, the October insurrection involved a centralized leadership that made "it possible to co-ordinate, plan, consciously synchronize and continuously shape this intervention of the vanguard elements..." (Mandel, 1977:96-97) Also, see Wade's discussion of spontaneity in the Russian revolution. (1984:4-5)

7. Trotsky extended the analysis of dual power from the political sphere to the economy and society. (L&T:243-244)

8. Here, we do not analyze the various struggles of the oppressed -- the struggle for liberation by the various oppressed nations contained within the old Czarist empire, the new women's organizations and their struggles for emancipation, or the struggles of youth - all of which were important to the social revolution of 1917. The interested reader should consult the following sources for information on the national struggles: Suny (1972), Ezergailis (1974), Cliff (1976:246-257), Carr, (1950:259-435), Ferro (1980:91-111); for information on the struggles of women during the Russian revolution, consult Clements (1979, 1982), Porter (1980), Cliff (1984), Bobroff (1974), Donald (1982). Nor do we analyze the struggles of the peasantry or the role of the trade unions. For information on the former, consult the following sources: Sirianni (1982:159-175), Ferro (1987:112-139), Gill (1979), Kingston-Mann (1985), Radkey (1950) and Cliff (1976:205-225). For information on the trade unions, see Koenker (1981, 1982), Smith (1983b), Sirianni (1982), Koenker (1986), Mandel (1983, 1984).

9. The raion soviets, were organized at the level of districts within the cities, and were either set up from above by city-wide soviets, or from below by factory or party committees, like the famous one in the Vyborg district of Petrograd. (Wade, 1972:226-229) These raion soviets were involved in a wide variety of activities that touched the everyday lives of Russian workers, including assisting factory committees and trade unions in economic struggles and collective bargaining, organizing armed defence, liaison with soldiers, the provision of food and various social services (e.g., unemployment aid, housing, care of widows, etc.), recreation and culture, and local justice. (Sirianni, 1982:68, 71; Wade, 1972:230-231) In Petrograd, the raion soviets were grouped into an interdistrict conference (IDC), and swung towards the Bolsheviks much earlier than the city-wide soviet. (Wade, 1972:235-240; Sirianni, 1982:68-69; Ferro, 1980:188)

10. All the soviets were subject to certain pressures towards bureaucratization, with the lower order institutions (i.e., the raion soviets) being less bureaucratic and more radical in character. (Ferro, 1980:194-195; Smith, 1981b:456-458; Sirianni, 1982:69-76;

Anweiler,1974:183) There were numerous problems with the direct democracy instituted in the Soviets. For example, in the Petrograd soviet, there was a serious over-representation of soldiers and workers from small factories.(Cliff,1976:92; Anweiler,1974:109; Ferro,1972:169) That is the main reason for the early predominance of the petite bourgeoisie in the Petrograd Soviet and the revolution,

11. Lenin was not guilty of fetishizing the soviets as the only possible form of proletarian class organization through which a revolution could be made. In fact, for a brief period after the July days, when the moderate led soviets supported state repression against the working class and the Bolsheviks, Lenin considered the possibility a workers' revolution might be based on the factory committees instead of the soviets.(CW,25:186-190,191) He abandoned the idea as unnecessary, after the Kornilov coup. (Rabinowitch,1968:216-217; 1978:59-60) Although the Bolsheviks recognized that soviets (or similar sorts of institutions) were indispensable to the creation of a workers' state, neither Lenin nor Trotsky made the mistake of fetishizing the soviet form. For them, the substance of the problem remained paramount: how to put the working class in power.

12. The only major political strike after July was the Moscow general strike of August 12. It saw 400,000 workers disobey the moderate socialist leadership of the Moscow Soviet, and strike during the State Conference -- a meeting of thousands of representatives of various organizations and classes, convened to offer advice to the Provisional Government. (HRR,I:148-150)

13. Lenin was not hostile to workers' initiative at the point of production. On the contrary. Before workers' control and workers' self-management began to collapse in 1918, Lenin regularly stressed the importance of working class initiative in the struggle for workers' control over the economy.(Smith,1983b:156)

14. The best sources on the role of the military in the Russian revolution include Mawdsley (1978), Wildman (1980), Rabinowitch (1972), Saul (1978), Ferro (1971), Trotsky (HRR) and Cliff (1976).

15. Since the Petrograd insurrection put a premium on political confidence (which the militias displayed in abundance) rather than marksmanship and fighting ability, the "morale and determination" of the workers proved decisive to the success of the revolution.(Wade,1984:168; 206-207)

16. During the revolutionary crisis itself, the Bolshevik leadership seems to have payed relatively little attention to the workers' militia.(Wade,1984:113,342)

17. For example, each faction had a different position on the war: the right wing, or Defencists had supported the war since 1914, and favored continuation of the war until victory (e.g., Potresov); the majority faction, the Revolutionary Defencists advocated defence of the February revolution by arms, until there was a general negotiated peace without annexations or indemnities (e.g., like Tsereteli), and the left wing of the party, the Menshevik Internationalists (led by Martov), opposed continuation of the war, but refused to break with the defencist portion of the party. Throughout most of the revolutionary

period from February to October, it was the Revolutionary Defencist faction of the party that determined the direction of the soviets and joined the Cadets in coalition governments.

18. The classic definition of these two terms comes from Plekhanov, who wrote "a propagandist gives many ideas to one or a few people, while an agitator gives only one or a few ideas but to masses of people." (cited in Cliff, 1975:45-46)

19. Not surprisingly, the most revolutionary party, the Bolsheviks had less than 10% of the delegates to the Petrograd soviet in the spring. (Hasegawa, 1981:380; Burdzhakov, 1987:309-311)

20. For some additional reasons why defencism was so prevalent, see Trotsky's argument. (HRR, I:166-167, 417-442)

21. Ironically, when the unskilled workers radicalized and moved onto the offensive during the summer, they were out of step with the Petrograd metalworkers who had lost some of their momentum after their defeat during the July days. (Mandel, 1984:241-243, 299) Thus, the most militant action between the July days and the Kornilov coup came from unskilled workers in Moscow, a city where the slower radicalizing labour force of mainly unskilled workers had not tasted defeat.

22. Even the Bolshevik party could not entirely restrain the metalworkers during the 'July Days'. Because 'spontaneous' action had succeeded in February and in April (in bringing down the first PG), Petrograd workers had not realized such action would not suffice in bringing the soviets to power. As Trotsky suggests, "Only experience could teach them that." (HRR, II:15) Nevertheless, because the Bolshevik party had taken its place "at the head of the movement, it was able to stop the masses at the moment when the demonstration(s) began to turn into an armed test of strength. Therefore, the victims were counted by tens and not by tens of thousands. The working class issued from the trial, not headless and not bled to death. It full preserved its fighting cadres, and these cadres had learned much." (HRR, II:83)

23. Interestingly, what distinguished the unskilled workers who strongly favored an insurrection, from those who did not, was "the time of their conversion to soviet power." "Those...who had participated in the July days, were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the political struggle. But others who had supported the (PG/moderate socialist-BM) coalition in July were showing new enthusiasm and energy. Here the movement for soviet power was still fresh. It had no directly experienced defeats or disappointments behind it." (Mandel, 1984:299) Lenin argued there were sections of the Russian working class which were so backward, they could not develop a genuine revolutionary consciousness until after the insurrection, when they had the opportunity to administer their society through the workers' state. (Harding, 1981:170-173; Leibman, 1975:32)

24. "Years of common struggle and membership in the party" gave Lenin the authority to initiate the debate about revolutionary strategy, while the strength and clarity of his argument -- which articulated the views of the revolutionary workers flooding into the

party -- enabled him to win it within a few weeks.(Cliff, 1976:137; Molyneux,1978:83; HRR,III:144; Longley,1972)

CHAPTER (4.0) - THE BOLSHEVIK THEORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND THE ANALYSIS OF OTHER REVOLUTIONARY CRISES

The failure of the western working class to succeed in establishing workers' power during the period from 1918 to 1923, plus the backwardness of Russian society, condemned the Russian revolution to failure. The counter-revolutionary overthrow of workers' power in Russia was accomplished by Stalin's party bureaucracy, which became an independent, state capitalist ruling class.(Cliff,1974; Binns,1987) That process, which was completed by 1928, meant an abandonment of the Bolshevik theory of revolution by the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International (CI). The rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR combined with the rise of Naziism in Germany, guaranteed the liquidation of many of the remaining adherents of the Bolshevik tradition. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process suffered enormous neglect after the mid-1920s. The scientific research program that Bolshevism represented remained largely undeveloped, as a result of the pathetically small size and relative isolation of the inheritors of the revolutionary tradition of the Bolsheviks -- the Trotskyists. Thus, much of the theoretical work required to further develop the Bolshevik theory of revolution and to generalize the theory of the revolutionary process to cases other than Russia, has not yet been done. Since the 1920s, Bolshevism has been a neglected and discredited research program, for political reasons, rather than sound scientific ones.

In this Chapter, we deal with some real and alleged problems posed by the use of Bolshevism to analyze the processes of recent revolutionary crises. Generalizing the Bolshevik analysis of the revolutionary process to cases other than Russia in 1917 requires us to consider a series of potential problems. For example, we have to consider whether

the changes in the objective structure and dynamics of capitalism since 1917 have undermined the usefulness of the Bolshevik argument about the revolutionary process for the more recent period of capitalist development. Another problem is posed by the obvious differences between more developed capitalist societies and backward Russia, and the possibility that a theory developed in the analysis of the revolutionary process in Russia might not be generalizeable to the west. Furthermore, there are the problems we identified in Chapter 3: the Bolsheviks' incomplete analysis of working class consciousness, and their inadequate treatment of the role of factory committees in the revolutionary process. Those are some of the issues we will deal with in this Chapter.

We do all this to demonstrate that the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process can explain the failure of recent revolutionary crises to result in a workers' revolution, and that the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process provides us with the best theoretical starting point in any study of revolutionary crises which involve the working class.

(4.1) Generalizing from Russian Experience to the World: The Bolsheviks on the Revolutionary Process in Western Europe

One of the key tasks of this chapter is to outline what Lenin and Trotsky thought about the significance of the Russian revolution for revolutionary socialists in other countries. In analyzing the features and dynamics of the revolutionary crises in western Europe after World War I, did the Bolshevik leadership generalize too much from their own experience in 1917? What did Lenin and Trotsky think about the theoretical problems posed by the attempt to generalize from one revolutionary crisis to another? How did they differentiate between what was unique and what was of general significance in the experience of 1917? Those are some of the questions we need to consider in this section.

Some critics have accused the Bolsheviks of over-generalizing in the comparison between the 1917 events in Russia and revolutionary crises in western Europe, and of ignoring the real differences between the revolutionary process in a backward country and that in the advanced capitalist countries --especially the bourgeois democracies. In their view, the Bolsheviks dogmatically insisted on viewing the crisis in the west through the prism of 1917.(Carr,1966:185-187; Claudin, 1975:58-62,603-604) In this section, we will suggest such concerns are ill founded.

During the crucial years of 1917-1923, Lenin and Trotsky provided an assessment of the international significance of the revolutionary process in Russia, describing what was specific and what was general in that experience. That judgement was shaped by their interpretation of the class struggle in western Europe, and debated in the Communist International (CI). A survey of Lenin and Trotsky's views during 1918-1919 shows that far from dogmatically insisting that revolutionary crises in the west must necessarily have the same features and dynamics as the revolutionary process in Russia, they were initially very hesitant to generalize from the Russian case to the west. But, as the revolutionary crisis throughout western Europe developed, and as the Bolsheviks gained more knowledge about the events in the west, they became more convinced that their analysis of the revolutionary process -- derived from their experience of 1905 and 1917 as well as their understanding of Marxism -- was generalizable to the west.

* * * * *

The Bolsheviks made the Russian revolution on the assumption that their workers' revolution in backward Russia would soon be joined by a socialist revolution in western Europe -- a development which would make it possible for Russia to make the transition to

socialism. Over and over again Lenin repeated the same essential message: "It is the absolute truth that without a German revolution we are doomed." (CW,27:95,98) Therefore it is hardly surprising that the Bolsheviks tried to follow events in western Europe closely. However, until the German revolution of November 1918 ended the war, Russia was effectively isolated from the west. As a consequence, the Bolsheviks had very little information about the progress of the revolutionary movement.

During 1917-1918, Lenin and Trotsky were both hesitant to generalize from their immediate experience of the revolutionary process in Russia to the situation of western Europe. Like many revolutionaries in western Europe (e.g., Rosa Luxemburg), the Bolsheviks were not inclined to see the revolutionary process in 1917 as any kind of model automatically applicable to the west. While they insisted that the objective crisis of western European capitalism guaranteed that revolutionary explosions were inevitable in the near future, the Bolsheviks remained uncertain about the specific forms and dynamics the revolutionary process in the west would take.(Lindemann,1974:34-36,42)

Once the revolutionary offensive in western Europe began in earnest -- with the November 1918 overthrow of the German government and the end of World War I -- the Bolshevik leaders became more confident about projecting their own experience of the revolutionary process in Russia onto the situation in the west. The Bolsheviks interpreted the events in Germany as a confirmation that European capitalism had entered the long predicted revolutionary crisis, and that the western working class was finally becoming revolutionary. They believed the political bankruptcy of the social democratic parties would cause the mass of newly radicalizing workers to simply bypass their old leaders, and spontaneously create the soviets required to establish workers' power.(Hessel,1980:xvi-xvii)

Because the German uprising had spontaneously given birth to soviet-like workers' councils, Lenin and Trotsky concluded that soviets were the undeniable form working class political power must take in the revolutionary process and beyond.(Medvedev,1981:110)

The view that soviets were the key institutional form to be generated in the revolutionary process became the main theme of the First Congress of the Comintern (1919), an insight that was then reinforced by the development of soviets in the failed Hungarian and Bavarian revolutions. Trotsky spoke for the Bolsheviks when he argued that "the unity of methods in the struggle for socialism" displayed in Russia and Germany meant there was a close parallel between the revolutionary process in Russian and in the more advanced countries.(CI,1:49; TRMTI:17) Little wonder that at the First Congress of the CI, the basis used to distinguish revolutionaries from reformists was not their support for a specific political party, but their attitude towards the soviet form of government.

Lenin and Trotsky were initially hesitant to insist that any aspect of the Russian experience in 1917, apart from the soviets, was of immediate relevance to the western revolutionaries. That hesitancy is well illustrated by Lenin's comments on the Hungarian revolution of March-August 1919. Although the Hungarian supporters of the CI gained power without a working class uprising, and on the basis of an alliance with the social democrats, Lenin did not automatically rule out the possibility the 'revolution' might work.(Lowenthal,1971:178; Cliff,1979:12-15; Hallas,1985:47-48;Lindemann,1974:66) Lenin's opposition to the mechanical transposition of Bolshevik experience to the west was so great that in March 1919 he warned Hungarian revolutionaries "that it would be a mistake merely to imitate our Russian tactics in all details in the specific conditions of the Hungarian revolution."(Lenin, cited in Leibman,1975:410) If anything, the example of the

Hungarian revolution shows the Bolsheviks were initially too cautious about generalizing from the experience of 1917.(Harding,1981:236)

At the First Congress of the Comintern in March 1919, Lenin had suggested the role of a Bolshevik style party in the revolutionary process was to make propaganda about the need for soviets, act to extend those soviets within industry, the military and the countryside, and create a stable communist majority within them.(Cliff,1979:6) Lenin did not mention the need for a revolutionary party in western Europe to organize an insurrection.(TRMTI:7-20) Around the same time, Trotsky analyzed the immediate prospects for success in the German revolution. Although he noted the absence of a mass revolutionary party, he still concluded the German revolution was "approaching the critical moment when, having mobilized and trained all its forces in advance for combat, the revolution will deal the class enemy the final mortal blow." This raises an obvious question: Who were the revolutionary forces Trotsky was referring to? Not the few thousand members of the recently formed Communist Party (KPD). Trotsky saw the "tens and hundreds of thousands" of radicalized workers who had previously been social democrats -- politically and culturally sophisticated workers with "superlative... organizational habits and capabilities" -- as the key to the revolution. Echoing the general spontaneism of the Bolsheviks during this period, Trotsky explained that through "the harsh experience of this creeping revolution," these workers were awakening, and could be expected to lead the revolution to success.(CI,1:46,47) In other words, the Bolsheviks believed that revolutionary experience alone might suffice for the more advanced western working class to make the revolution, despite the absence of a revolutionary party.

Lenin and Trotsky over-estimated the abilities of the western working class to make a revolution, even in the absence of a mass revolutionary party. At the same time, they seriously under-estimated the residual strength of the western bourgeoisie and its supporters within the social democratic parties and the trade union bureaucracy. Like many western revolutionaries, Lenin and Trotsky seemed to believe the western bourgeoisie and the social democratic parties had been so weakened by the war, that soviets might well suffice to make the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.(Lindemann,1974:56-58)

Unfortunately, while the war had indeed "disorganized, weakened, discredited and paralyzed the political organs of bourgeois rule," the spontaneous offensive by western workers proved completely insufficient to establish socialism.(CI,1:294) Similarly, the Bolsheviks had badly misjudged the continued support for social democracy in western Europe.

Given the subsequent preoccupation of the Bolsheviks with the role of the party in the revolutionary process, the only possible explanation for their failure to emphasize the importance of the party in 1918-1919, is that they were not yet convinced that particular aspect of their own experience of revolution was applicable to the west.(Lowenthal,1971:177-178; CI,2:8) After the defeat of the Hungarian revolution in August 1919, Lenin and Trotsky reconsidered their initial view that the western revolution might occur more easily in the west than in Russia -- because of the greater experience and strength of the western proletariat. In particular, they began to talk about the essential role the Bolshevik party had played in the revolutionary process of 1917. The previous reluctance the Bolsheviks had shown to generalize from their own experience on this point evaporated under the pressure of the defeats of 1918-1919.

Thus, until the initial failures of the revolutionary wave in western Europe in the fall of 1919, Lenin and Trotsky had a decidedly 'non-Bolshevik' view of the western revolution -- a view that stressed the spontaneism of the masses, the key importance of soviets and the possibility of revolution without the existence of a well disciplined and homogeneous revolutionary party. (Lindemann,1974:294-295; 1983:215; Hessel,1980:xvi) That early spontaneist perspective of the Bolsheviks placed a limited importance on the example of 1917. In 1921, Trotsky explained that the Bolsheviks and western revolutionaries had initially underestimated "the difficulties of the revolutionary struggle ...in Europe" because of the relative ease with which the Russian and Hungarian working classes had initially gained power. (CI,2:28) Indeed, the initial victories had been so easy, that revolutionary workers were discouraged from examining the revolutionary process "as a politico-strategic task." Thus, "a strategy of revolutionary struggle for the conquest of power... presented itself to them as something exceedingly simple, as something that could almost be taken for granted."(CI,2:28-29)

The failure of the western working class to spontaneously defeat their ruling class (in Germany, Hungary and Bavaria) forced the Bolsheviks to re-examine events in the west in light of their experience in 1917. By 1920, the early optimism of Lenin and Trotsky had been replaced by a view which insisted on the relevance of every aspect of the Russian example for the west. The most forceful statement of the Bolsheviks' re-appraisal of the prospect for revolution in western Europe was Lenin's book, Left Wing Communism. An Infantile Disorder (LWC-ID), written in early 1920. In it, he compares the revolutionary process in Russia during 1917 with that of 1918-1920 in the rest of Europe, and argues that

certain fundamental features of our revolution (in 1917-BM) have a

significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international. ...It would, of course, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate this truth and to extend it beyond certain fundamental features of our revolution. ...At the present moment in history, however, it is the Russian model that reveals to all countries...something highly significant...of their near and inevitable future.(SW,3:349)

So, what were the "fundamental features" of the Russian experience, the general lessons to be drawn by western revolutionaries? The Bolsheviks had already won the argument about the role of the soviets in the revolution, at least within the CI. What was new in was Lenin's insistence on the "international significance...of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics."(SW,3:350) That claim really meant two things: an insistence on the need for a revolutionary party, and a recognition the Bolsheviks needed to analyze more closely the similarities and differences between the revolutionary process in Russia and the west.

By 1920, the Bolsheviks had abandoned their early spontaneism, and begun to emphasize the role a Bolshevik-style party must play in the revolutionary process. (Hessel,1980: xix,xxi; Cliff,1979:23,34-35) Recognizing that both the western ruling classes and the social democrats were stronger than anticipated, the Bolsheviks concluded that western revolutionaries would require a stronger party than the one they had in 1917, not a weaker one.(CI,2:8-9) (Hence the emphasis upon splitting the western revolutionaries from social democratic parties.)¹ Thus, the Bolsheviks began to emphasize the importance of conscious leadership and solid organization in the revolutionary process. Lenin's book was the opening statement in his campaign to convince western revolutionaries to begin the task of building the cohesive, disciplined, experienced, mass revolutionary parties that were necessary for the revolution in the west to succeed.(Lindemann,1983:132)

The second conclusion Lenin and Trotsky drew in 1920 was that while the Russian

example had a universal relevance for the analysis of revolutionary crises elsewhere, the Bolsheviks still had to puzzle out -- concretely -- how the features and dynamics of the revolutionary process in the west would play themselves out. That meant the Bolsheviks had to further analyze the similarities and the differences between the revolutionary processes in Russia and the west.

Although Lenin emphasized the similarities between the revolutionary process in Russia and the processes observable in the west, he never denied there were specific features of the Russian revolution that made it different from any workers' revolution that would occur in the west. On one occasion, Lenin identified four unique factors that had made it far easier for the Bolsheviks to overturn the state in Russia than for revolutionaries in the west: first, the fact that the revolution coincided with the movement against the war; second, the revolution did not face immediate foreign intervention because the war was still on; third, the new soviet regime was assisted in its resistance to the counter-revolutionary war by its sheer size, and fourth, the workers' revolution gained additional force from the power of the peasant revolution in the countryside.(CW, 31:64) Those conditions made it easier for Russia to start a workers' revolution in 1917, but the overall backwardness of Russia made it "more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to continue the revolution and bring it to its consummation."(Lenin cited in Leibman,1975:406)

Lenin's comments about the differences between starting and finishing the revolutionary process in backward and advanced industrialized countries were echoed by Trotsky a few years later. Trotsky argued that one of the principle differences between the 1917 revolution and the revolution the Bolsheviks anticipated in the west was in the timing of the civil war that revolutions necessarily entail. He believed that while it had been

relatively easy for the Bolsheviks to seize power in October, they paid for it with a long civil war afterwards. In the west, he expected the situation to be exactly the opposite. The European working class would not catch the more sophisticated local bourgeoisie "by surprise," as the Russian working class had. The western ruling class would prepare its counter-revolutionary cadres, and make its best effort to prevent the working class from ever achieving state power.(CI,2:221-222)

Another important contrast centered on the role of soviets in the revolutionary process. Trotsky was eager to prevent communists in the west from over-generalizing from the experience of Russia on this point, treating the soviets "as a fetish, as some self-sufficing factor in a revolution." In 1924, he warned against the view that the existence of soviets prior to an insurrection was an absolute necessity. As Trotsky explained, it was perfectly possible for some other institution of dual power (e.g., factory committees) to play the role soviets had in 1917, leading to the formation of soviets after the insurrection. (LO:56) Trotsky argued that what was critical was the substantive question of whether dual political power existed, not a preoccupation with the particular form that power took.(SAFG:37) Thus, he advocated a working class insurrection in Germany in 1923 -- where the working class had centralized its dual power through inter-factory committees rather than soviets.(LO:57) Thus, Trotsky had come full circle from the position the Bolsheviks had taken in 1918-1919, when they argued the western working class might spontaneously generate soviets that would then suffice to make the revolution. Far from being dogmatic in their assessment of the revolutionary process in other countries, Lenin and Trotsky proved themselves always open to the possibility of new variations in the combination of features and dynamics that working class revolutionary movements exhibited

in the struggle for workers' power.

From their study of some of the differences between the revolutionary process in Russia and the west, Lenin and Trotsky both concluded that it would be far more difficult for the western working class to actually seize power.(CW,27:291,547; 28:348; C1,2:189) The failure of the western revolution in 1918-1919 made it abundantly clear that even though the western working class was larger and stronger than the Russian one, they also faced much greater obstacles than Russian workers had: western reformists were far more of an obstacle than the Mensheviks had been in 1917, the western bourgeoisie possessed more effective means of repression than their Russian counterparts, and the western ruling class had learned some lessons of its own from the Russian revolution.(Lindemann, 1974:131) Thus, despite the strength of the western working class, western revolutionaries would require more tactical skills, greater political clarity, and better organizational preparedness than the Bolsheviks possessed in 1917, in order to make the revolution.

That is not to suggest that the Bolsheviks only discussed the differences between the revolutionary processes in Russia and western Europe. On the contrary. Despite the differences between an advanced industrialized country like Germany, and backward Russia, Lenin saw both countries as having certain things in common: first, both had an industrial proletariat; second, both were defeated powers in 'World War I (with all that implied in terms of the weakened position of the national ruling class); third, both faced domestic crises in a period of generalized world wide crisis and social upheaval. But, that did not mean the revolutionary process would be identical in both countries. Despite those similarities, the real differences between the two countries dictated that the revolutionary process could not be identical.(CW,28:119)

The Bolsheviks used their analyses of the differences in the revolutionary process in Russia and the various countries of the west as a basis for arguing that revolutionaries in each country needed to employ different tactical measures. Lenin argued that an international revolutionary movement could

never be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equated, and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries...the unity of the international tactics of the communist working class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions...but the application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions.(SW,3:407)

Obviously, Lenin was not in favor of simply universalizing every aspect of Bolshevik experience in 1917.(Cliff,1979:54)²

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One obvious question that emerges from the above discussion is, how Lenin and Trotsky determined what was universal and what was specific in the revolutionary process of 1917 What method did the Bolsheviks employ to resolve such problems? In part, the answer is obvious, they used comparative analysis of different cases of the revolutionary process.(Lane,1981:15) At a deeper level, the question is about the methodology employed by Lenin and Trotsky.

Whatever the problems with their methodology, neither Lenin nor Trotsky was sympathetic to those versions of Marxism that attempted to push the rich diversity of the real world through the supra-historical categories of some abstract schema, like meat through a sausage maker. Topolski shows that Lenin's theoretical/ historical methodology sought to use theoretical models and empirical facts in a fashion which avoided the twin

pitfalls of superficial and impressionistic empiricism (and positivism) and the barrenness of abstract, supra-historical, and over-generalizing (eternalizing) theory. Lenin tried to build realistic models that employed both theory (abstraction) and historical evidence (concretization) to develop a simplified reproduction of reality, a model that recognized all the key features, structural properties, dynamic tendencies and contradictions inherent in the social phenomenon being studied. (Topolski,1975:83-84)

Lenin rejected the sterile Marxism of the Second International, which often substituted speculative discussion based on the operation of 'general laws of history' for concrete analysis. Thus, he did not consider the historical studies he undertook (e.g., in his analysis of the development of capitalism in Russia) to be mere illustrations of the general laws of history. Rather, for Lenin, the general tendencies of capitalism as a system, its essence, was realized and manifested in the particular phenomena that he studied. Much of volume 1 of Marx's Capital is a theoretical analysis of the laws of motion of capital, considered at a higher level of abstraction than would be appropriate in analyzing any specific capitalist society. By contrast, those sections of Capital that investigate the specific historical development of capitalism in Britain, and Lenin's The Development of Capitalism in Russia, are both more concrete attempts to use the theory discussed by Marx to explain the historically specific features of the development of capitalism in each country. (Feenberg,1975:58-62) The distinction is that between a discussion of capitalism as a general phenomenon -- which exists nowhere -- and the examination of two of the historically specific forms capitalist society has adopted.

Similarly, Trotsky also rejected the universalizing method characteristic of the Second International. From his earliest theoretical ventures, Trotsky shared Lenin's basic

rejection of the kind of supra-historical version of Marxism typical of the Second International. Hence the persistent refusal to generalize his theory of permanent revolution beyond the case of Russia to other semi-colonial and backward countries, until the Chinese Revolution of 1927. It took Trotsky 22 years to elevate the theory of permanent revolution from a strategic argument about the Russian revolution into a general theory of revolutionary strategy applicable to all backward countries.(Molyneux,1981:42)

Trotsky's comments on the relationship between world economy and the national economy, the whole and the parts, serve as a useful indication of his conception of the relationship between the world revolutionary process, and its specific national form. For Trotsky, the national peculiarities of each revolutionary process were simply an original combination of the basic features and dynamics of the class struggle in a period when world capitalism made world revolution a real possibility. The specific features of each 'national' road to workers' power were merely component parts of a higher reality called the world revolutionary process. Thus, the national peculiarities of the revolutionary process were nothing more than a product of the unevenness of capitalist development throughout the world.(PR: 147-148)

Even though the Bolsheviks expected the revolutionary process in the west to exhibit the same basic features (e.g., factory committees, a revolutionary party, workers' militias, etc.) and dynamics (class polarization, the politicization of all struggles, etc.) as the Russian revolution, they did not believe the revolutionary process in western Europe had to follow the same pattern of events (the same mixture and sequence of features and dynamics) as it had in Russia, or even generate the same forms of organization. (Gluckstein,1985:44) In analyzing the post World War I revolutionary wave, both Lenin

and Trotsky understood that each national case of revolutionary crisis (e.g., 1917 in Russia, 1918-1919 in Germany, etc.) had to be considered as a distinct and quite specific realizations of a set of more general features and dynamics typical of periods of revolutionary crisis.

Thus, the Bolsheviks believed that their analysis of the revolutionary process in 1917 could be generalized to other revolutionary crises. While there is no such things as a "revolutionary process in general," it is still possible to consider the features, dynamics and processes that are common to proletarian revolutions. In other words, even though there is no general or universal law or model, that each specific revolutionary process must conform to, there are typical features and dynamics, common to all examples of the proletarian revolutionary process. Lenin and Trotsky did not did not manufacture simplistic formulae that revolutionaries outside Russia should follow in analyzing the revolutionary process in their own countries. The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process does not provide us with an "ideal typical" revolution, that we can use as an abstract measuring stick in the evaluation of all other revolutions.

The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process tells us something about the constituent elements of a proletarian revolution, many of the typical features and dynamics to watch for in the analysis of a revolutionary crisis that features a mobilized working class. In that sense, Bolshevism can serve as a guide to the empirical investigation of other revolutionary crises. But, the Bolshevik theory of revolution is not a replacement for historical investigation. Precisely because Marxism is a guide to political action rather than a dogmatic and abstract theory that reality is supposed to conform to, we have to start from the concrete circumstances of any revolutionary crisis we want to investigate. The

Bolsheviks were not trying to pre-empt concrete historical analysis of each specific case of revolutionary crisis with an abstract theory. On the contrary, they were trying to guarantee theoretically informed analysis. That is why the Bolsheviks debated what was historically specific and what was general in the revolutionary process of 1917.

We have to reject the stereotyped view of Trotsky and Lenin as inflexible dogmatists, incapable of learning anything from the class struggles in the west. Exactly the opposite is the case. Given the severe limitations on their time, both Lenin and Trotsky studied the revolutionary process in the west, to try and discern from the failures of the revolutionary movement in various crises, what lessons could be learned. They instinctively understood that the struggles in the west "highlighted important features which were either absent or barely visible in the lightning quick transformations that took place in Russia between February and October 1917." (Gluckstein, 1985:240-241) That does not mean the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process is without any flaws. On the contrary, as we suggested in the previous chapter, there are two areas where the Bolsheviks were guilty of over-generalizing from the Russian case in analyzing the revolutionary processes in the west: the role of reformism in the revolutionary process in more advanced capitalist countries, and the role of factory committees and the class struggle at the point of production. But, as we shall see below, these problems can be rectified by supplementing the Bolshevik argument with certain auxiliary theories.

Nevertheless, it is our contention that the theory developed by the Bolsheviks on the basis of their experience in 1917-1923 can be used to explain other cases of revolutionary crisis. In other words, the Russian revolution had a general significance, which was captured in the Bolshevik analysis of 1917, and their assessment of the general world crisis

of capitalism that existed throughout the immediate post-World War I period.

(4.2) The Strategic/Conjunctural Analysis of the World Capitalist System and the Examination of the Revolutionary Process

The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process rests upon the specific strategic/conjunctural analysis made by the Bolsheviks in the era of World War I (i.e., the Bolsheviks' analysis of the features and contradictions of the world capitalist system).¹ That fact raises a few questions. What is the relationship between the portion of the Bolshevik theory of revolution that analyzes the long-term contradictions of the capitalist system in the era of World War I (e.g., the Bolshevik analysis of imperialism) and the portion which analyzes the revolutionary process? If there are problems inherent in the conjuncture¹ analysis of the Bolsheviks (e.g., in their specific analysis of the world economic crisis in that epoch), does that undermine the validity of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process? Finally, is the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process restricted in its applicability to the specific conjuncture out of which it arose?

We can begin by acknowledging that there were -- quite obviously -- some problems with the conjunctural analysis developed by the Bolsheviks. To put it bluntly, imperialism proved not to be the 'highest stage of capitalism.' (Kemp, 1972: 30; Brewer, 1980: 108-127; Kidron, 1974; Rosdolsky, 1977: 472-483; Harman, 1984: 36) Thus, the Bolsheviks have been accused -- with some justification -- of producing a defective strategic analysis of their own conjuncture. (For example, Claudin accuses the Bolsheviks of economic catastrophism -- the view that the world capitalist economy had entered a final

crash, from which it could not recover.(1975:608)⁴ Obviously, however, capitalism did survive the era of World War I.)

But, even though the Bolsheviks' conjunctural analysis of the world system was mistaken in some important respects, those defects in their strategic views did not undermine the validity of their analyses of specific revolutionary crises, or their overall theory of the revolutionary process. To understand why, we have to consider how the Bolsheviks viewed the relationship between the world capitalist system and the shifting balance of power in the class struggle within various countries. In short, we need to consider their view of the relationship between the economic whole and the political parts of the system.

Trotsky directly addressed this issue when he argued that the relationship between the economic character of the postwar period and the state of the class struggle was not a simple mechanical one of cause and effect. Debating the relationship between the state of the economy (booms and slumps) and the prospects for increased working class militancy, Trotsky wrote:

The political effects of a(n) (economic-BM) crisis (not only the extent of its influence but also its direction) are determined by the entire existing political situation and by those events which precede and accompany the crisis, especially the battles, success or failures of the working class itself prior to the crisis. Under one set of conditions the (economic-BM) crisis may give a mighty impulse to the revolutionary activity of the working masses; under a different set of circumstances it may completely paralyze the offensive of the proletariat.... There exists not a mechanical but a complex dialectical interdependence between the economic conjuncture and the character of the class struggle.(CI,2:76,83)

In other words, economic crises do not automatically produce greater working class militancy; they do not automatically trigger revolutionary crises. Conversely, revolutionary

crises do not absolutely require a period of world economic crisis.(CI,1: 207-208,233-234)

Thus, the economic conjuncture shapes the revolutionary process, but it does not determine it in any kind of simple, mechanical way. For the Bolsheviks, the class struggle was relatively autonomous from economic developments.⁵ Thus, for example, Trotsky rejected all efforts to analyze the revolutionary process on the basis of a vulgar economic interpretation of history.(HRR,I:xvii-xviii; II:vi)

All these comments suggest that the Bolsheviks did not reduce the revolutionary process to some kind of simple effect of the long-term economic developments which shaped the conjuncture within which a specific revolutionary crisis had developed. For the Bolsheviks, there was a connection between the economic conjuncture and the revolutionary process, but that connection was mediated by other factors, especially the recent history of the class struggle. Thus, for Lenin and Trotsky, the specific tactics the working class needed to employ in the revolutionary process, could not be derived from their overall strategic analysis of the state of the world capitalist system. Strategic/ conjunctural analysis and tactics were linked, but only by way of a mediating factor: the analysis of the balance of class forces in a particular country.

Although elements of catastrophism crept into the economic perspectives of the Bolsheviks after World War I, the integrity of their overall analysis of the revolutionary crisis in Europe was not necessarily compromised. The Bolsheviks did not simply derive their assessment of the opportunities for revolution from their economic analysis. The economic situation was just one of several factors that were included in the determination that the objective situation in much of Europe was revolutionary in 1918-1920. Even a

serious critic of Bolshevism, like Claudin, admits that the catastrophist aspects of Bolshevism "were balanced by the comprehensive character of... (Lenin's-BM) theory of revolution, in which political factors, the party and the class struggle retained a clear primacy."(1975:608) Thus, the element of catastrophism evident in some Bolshevik analyses of the conjuncture did not undermine the validity of their specific analyses of the various revolutionary crises that occurred during the period 1917-1923. Nor does it compromise the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process. In other words, the differences between conjunctural analysis and the analysis of a specific revolutionary crisis are such that an error in the former does not necessarily undermine the analysis of the latter.

Does all of this mean analysis of the conjuncture is totally unnecessary in the study of the revolutionary process? No. Strategic/conjunctural analysis of the long term contradictions of capitalism in a specific epoch (including study of the class structure, the specific forms and dynamics of capitalist competition and accumulation, and etc.) is necessary. Without it, it is impossible to determine the general state of the world capitalist system, and the overall context within which a specific revolutionary crisis takes place. In the case of the Bolsheviks, it was their conjunctural analysis that suggested the world capitalist system was entering a period of generalized crisis -- one which would make it possible -- at least in principle -- for a workers' revolution in backward Russia to link up with a socialist revolution in Western Europe.

But, this discussion suggests that it is possible to examine specific cases of revolutionary crisis, without conducting a detailed examination of the state of the entire world capitalist system. (Indeed, in later Chapters of this dissertation, we will do precisely that, because of limitations on space.) In that sense, the analysis of isolated cases of

revolutionary crisis has to be distinguished from the waves of revolutionary crisis that cross the borders of a number of countries.⁶ Of course, when faced with a generalized, world revolutionary crisis -- one which spans a number of countries simultaneously -- the accuracy of the overall conjunctural analysis becomes far more important.

For revolutionaries to speak of a period or an epoch of "world revolution" (as the Bolsheviks did in reference to the period after World War I), three conditions must exist: first, there must be a fundamental economic or political crisis of the entire world system (or a major chunk of it), which has an impact on many states more or less simultaneously; second, there must be an ongoing process of rebellion by the oppressed and exploited, which is expressed in the existence of substantial and successful revolutionary organizations; and third, the actual process of revolution must be internationalized (i.e., the revolutionary movements must be consciously interlinked in terms of ideology and/or organization). By that definition, there have been at least three periods of world revolution: one in the 1780s and 1790s (through France, the United States, Switzerland, Haiti, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland), a second in 1848 (in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Brazil, Columbia, etc.) and a third in 1917-1923 (when soviet governments existed in Russia, Bavaria, Hungary, etc.).⁷ (More recently, we have seen a similar process at work in Eastern Europe.)⁸

There is an important difference between a case of revolutionary crisis that occurs in the context of a world system that is itself in the throes of a generalized revolutionary crisis, and one that occurs when the world system is relatively stable. Obviously, the existence of a general or systemic crisis helps to explain the occurrence of a wave of closely related, contemporaneous revolutionary crises in a series of countries, as in 1848-

1849 and 1917-1923. Revolutionary crises that occur during periods when the world capitalist system is relatively stable (e.g., during the years of capitalist boom in the 1950s and 1960s), are no less important a phenomenon than those that occur during a period of world crisis. Because a successful workers' revolution can have a powerful 'demonstration effect' -- something very evident in the years after 1917, when millions of workers around the world sought to emulate the Russian working class -- a socialist revolution in some country can spark revolutionary movements elsewhere, even in the absence of a world economic crisis. Moreover, the world capitalist system continues to develop in a very uneven fashion. Therefore, a period of 'normal' capitalist development in the heart of the world system, can easily coincide with conditions that approximate a crisis in other sections of the world.

(4.3) Bolshevism on the Role of Factory Committees and the Transformation of the Labour Process in the Revolutionary Process

In 1917, and the years that followed, Lenin and Trotsky always treated factory committees as less vital to the immediate outcome of the revolutionary process than the organs of dual political power, the soviets. In that respect, they followed Marx in arguing that workers' revolution had to create the political form (i.e., the new workers' state) under which could be worked out "the economical emancipation of labour." (Marx, 1971:75) The Bolsheviks viewed the factory committees (and the struggle they waged for workers' control) primarily as bodies which sought to combat bourgeois sabotage of the economy during the revolutionary process. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that in certain

circumstances, inter-factory committees could substitute for soviets, acting as political bodies through which a seizure of power could be organized. Because factory committees have acted as substitute soviets so often since 1917, we need to consider what the Bolsheviks had to say about this phenomenon, before we deal with what is missing from the Bolsheviks' view of factory committees and the revolutionary process -- their contribution to the elimination of alienated labour.

Trotsky's analysis of the German revolution in 1923 convinced him that in the bourgeois democracies of western Europe, the economic form of dual power (i.e., factory committees) were more likely to emerge before the political form (i.e., soviets).(SAFG:40) But that did not pose an insurmountable obstacle to a successful revolution. After all, a working class would only be capable of imposing widespread workers' control of production on the bourgeoisie if it was well on the way to having the capacity to take state power from them.(SAFG:35-37) Trotsky argued that inter-factory committees which united factory committees on local and national levels could easily substitute for soviets in the revolutionary process, just as they almost did in Russia in July/August 1917.(SAFG:39) Thus, soviets as a specific form of workers' organization in the revolutionary process should not be fetishized. What was important was not the specific organizational form of workers' power, but the class content, the substance of the institutions of dual power created by the working class.(SAFG:37) Because factory committees have the potential to link up and become soviet-type institutions, we need to be clear about the distinction between factory committees (or factory councils) and soviets. When an organ of dual power, including a network of factory committees, is centralized locally or nationally, and begins to assume control over functions normally performed by the capitalist state (e.g.,

forming its own workers' militia) then that institution is a de facto soviet -- whether or not it has that specific label attached to it.

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Even after 1917, in the discussion about the revolutionary process in western Europe, the Bolsheviks did not discuss the contribution of the factory committees to the transformation of the labour process, the abolition of alienated labour, and to the construction of a socialist economy. In viewing the factory committees as bodies which sought to combat bourgeois sabotage of the economy during a revolutionary crisis, the Bolsheviks ignored another very important dimension of those institutions: their role as instruments by which the working class could begin the long process of transforming the labour process as they worked out the emancipation of labour.

Because the Bolsheviks did not view the revolution in backward Russia as one which was immediately socialist, they did not concern themselves with the long-term problem of how to create a specifically socialist economy. (With the collapse of the Soviet economy and the beginning of the civil war in 1918, talk about the labour process in a genuine socialist society was a matter of little practical relevance.) Thus, part of the reason why the Bolsheviks did not consider the contribution of factory committees to the abolition of alienated labour and to the transformation of the labour process, stems from a failure to think through the problem of planning in a genuinely socialist society. Without theorizing the role of both factory based committees and a centralized workers' state in a socialist society, the Bolsheviks could not see the connection between a centrally determined plan, and its active implementation by the working class in the workplace.⁹ They saw the importance of central direction from the workers' state much more clearly than the need

for the direct producers to mobilize themselves through factory committees (or equivalent bodies) to "determine the priorities of production and to provide a mass of informed comment on where the economic mechanism is operating well and where badly."(Harman,1989:42) Not surprisingly, that left the Bolsheviks with an overly 'statist' view.

In this respect, the Bolshevik experience in 1917 did not equip them very well to analyze a key aspect of the revolutionary experience of 1917-1923 in western Europe. Even a cursory examination of the revolutionary crises that erupted in western Europe shows the vital importance of the factory committees -- not just as substitute soviets or as vehicles to combat bourgeois sabotage of the economy -- but as vehicles through which the working class expressed their desire to transform the labour process, and re-orient the economy towards production for human need.(Gluckstein,1985; Sirianni,1980; Geary,1981) Certainly, the abolition of alienated labour was a central goal of the factory council movement in post-war Italy, as the writings of Gramsci show.(Gramsci,1977)

While the Bolsheviks were right to insist on the absolute priority of dual political power (rather than dual economic power) as the form of dual power which determines the immediate outcome of a revolutionary crisis, the experience with factory committees and factory councils suggests another conclusion. In highly developed capitalist countries, where a specifically socialist revolution is an immediate possibility, the process of abolishing the alienation of capitalist labour is likely to begin even before the working class secures political power.

To conclude, if Bolshevism is to be adequate to the task of explaining the revolutionary process, it must be supplemented by a recognition of the critical importance

of factory committees and the struggle for workers' control during any revolutionary crisis -- but particularly those that occur in more advanced capitalist countries. Otherwise, there is the risk that analysts working within the Bolshevik tradition will fail to appreciate the power of the demand for workers' control and workers' self-management.

(4.4) Working Class Consciousness in the Revolutionary Process

Much of the criticism of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process hinges on the claim that the Bolsheviks did not understand the phenomenon of working class reformism in western Europe. (Carr, 1966:185-187, 224; 1979:15; Claudin, 1975:18, 58-62). Therefore -- the argument goes -- they did not and could not have a realistic perspective on how to win western workers to revolution during the upsurge of 1918-1920. In earlier sections of this Chapter, we saw that the Bolsheviks initially underestimated the strength of reformism in western Europe. And, in Chapter 3, we saw that Lenin discussed the phenomena of 'backward workers', and of the conditional acceptance of the Provisional Government, without reference to his analysis of the forms of working class consciousness. Thus, there are clearly problems with the Bolshevik analysis of working class consciousness that need to be resolved if we hope to use Bolshevism to explain the failure of proletarian revolutions since 1917.

By 1917, Lenin had developed the beginnings of a materialist theory of working class consciousness, even though it remained incomplete and unsystematized. Because the question of working class consciousness is so central to any analysis of the revolutionary process -- whether in a backward country without a bourgeois democratic tradition (like

Russia), or an advanced capitalist country with large and legal trade unions and social democratic parties -- we need to take the best elements of Lenin's analysis, systematize them, and develop the basis for a more consistently materialist analysis of working class consciousness.

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If we extrapolate from Lenin's writings we can distinguish between at least four different forms of working class consciousness.¹⁰ First, is the revolutionary consciousness that all Lenin's activity was designed to promote. Second, is the trade union consciousness he identified when he criticized the inherent limitations of sectional, struggles for immediate economic reforms. Third, is the "reformist consciousness" (not his term) he attributed to the social democratic party leaders and the labour aristocracy, the section of the working class movement actively committed to class collaboration, in his analysis of the western European left. And fourth, is a residual form we will call "compliant consciousness" (what Lenin referred to as "backwardness"), typical of those layers of the working class that had not awakened to one of the other forms of consciousness.

The four alternative forms of working class consciousness are outlined in Figure 4.1 below. It shows how each embodies a particular view -- whether conscious or non-conscious -- of the strategies (means) and ultimate aims (ends) in changing the existing social relations workers find themselves enmeshed in. The forms range from a total acceptance of bourgeois ideology (reformism) through a partial acceptance (compliant and trade union consciousness) to a complete rejection of bourgeois ideology (revolutionary consciousness).

Rather than tracing Lenin's development of these concepts, we will outline some of their main features and then use them to make sense of the changes in working class consciousness during the revolutionary process. In doing so, we hope to develop a more consistently materialist argument than that which is found in the work of the Bolsheviks, a view which recognizes that workers draw on both their experience and the stock of ideas available to them in determining how they understand the world around them.

FIGURE 4.1: THE IMMEDIATE FORMS OF ACTIVITY AND THE ULTIMATE AIMS ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

	<u>IMMEDIATE ACTIVITY</u>		<u>ULTIMATE AIM</u>	
	<u>non-conscious</u>	<u>conscious</u>	<u>non-conscious</u>	<u>conscious</u>
REFORMIST CONSCIOUSNESS type 1		active class collaboration		reform <u>or</u> status quo
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type 2		conditional class collaboration		reform
COMPLIANT CONSCIOUSNESS	class collaboration		status quo or reform	
TRADE UNION CONSCIOUSNESS		class struggle		sectional reforms <u>or</u> society-wide reform
REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS		class struggle		revolution

Reformist consciousness, as institutionalized in the social democratic parties and bureaucratic trade unions is typical of those members of the working class movement (especially officials of social democratic parties and trade unions) who consciously --but often not explicitly -- renounce class struggle as a means of achieving change, in favour of class collaboration.(OR:204)¹¹ In Lenin's view reformists substituted the reform of capitalism for the original Marxist goal of a socialist revolution, denying there is a basic contradiction between the interests of capital and labour. Reformist consciousness involves acceptance of bourgeois ideology by trade unionists and social democrats, as modified by the reality that they have only the resources of the trade unions and social democratic parties to use as a lever to make changes to capitalist society. But, reformist consciousness comes into two distinct forms, which we will call "conscious reformism" (type 1 in the table above), and "conditional reformism" (type 2).

First, there is the form which expresses an active and conscious consent to the continued existence of capitalism, wishing only to have working class organizations and leadership recognized as the official mediators between labour and capital (type 1).

Conscious reformists see the fulfillment of their own immediate needs and aspirations (and those of the entire working class) as directly linked to the ability of labour to influence capital through trade unions and social democratic parties. And, they place a much higher value on preserving the social relations of class collaboration and the health of the social organizations required to engage in that process, than they do on achieving reform (e.g., the Mensheviks during 1917). Thus, workers with a reformist consciousness will, when faced with a choice between abandoning their goal of reform or their commitment to the process of class collaboration, resolve that problem by subordinating the former to the

latter. Workers with a reformist consciousness have a vested interest in maintaining the dialogue between capital and labour, even if it fails to actually deliver reforms.

Second, there is a form of reformist consciousness -- typical of many rank and file members of trade unions and social democratic parties -- which extends a conditional acceptance to those organizations and to the existing social order, provided they deliver real and tangible reforms (type 2). (During March and April 1917, many Russian workers expressed such a 'conditional acceptance' of the Provisional Government on the expectation it would deliver major reforms.) For workers with this type of consciousness, any contradiction between class collaboration as a means and reform as the end, may be resolved by the search for a new means to achieve the improvements in living standards they desire. For these workers, the reforms fought for are an end in themselves. Therein lies the objective possibility for a parting of the ways between the committed reformists who lead the trade unions and social democratic parties, and many of the rank and file workers within them. But, some workers with a reformist consciousness retain their loyalty to class collaborationist organizations, long after those organizations have ceased delivering reforms, out of hostility towards the methods of class struggle.

Many workers -- usually a majority of them in non-revolutionary periods -- are neither conscious reformists nor revolutionaries. In fact, these workers do not exhibit anything like a conscious evaluation of the 'political' character of their immediate activities, or their ultimate aims. This often large section of the working class typically extends only a 'passive' (or non-conscious) consent rather than an active consent to the existing social order, and refrains from participation in the class struggle. They 'consent' to the continued existence of capitalism only by default -- whether out of ignorance, fear of

repression, lack of an acceptable political alternative, cynicism, fatalism, individualism, apathy, or the conviction that their problems are 'personal' rather than 'political'. This pragmatic 'acceptance' of the existing social order as given and unalterable, is what we call "compliant consciousness".¹² (Often these workers are not unionized and oppose strikes. Usually, they are not members of a working class political party and frequently do not vote.)

The most backward sections of the working class (e.g., the uneducated, illiterate, or recently proletarianized) -- the ones Lenin identified as "passive and indifferent" during the early stages of the 1905 revolution, and as lacking "political experience" and being "newly awakened to political life" in 1917 -- exhibited this form of consciousness at the beginning of the revolutionary process.(CW,11:185;24:236) But, compliant consciousness is not only typical of the non-politicized section of the working class (e.g., new sections of the working class, like newly proletarianized peasants, women workers in 1917) and of backward societies. It also covers the 'apolitical' section of that class, those workers whose experience of the capitalist world has depoliticized them, convincing them that passivity is preferable to active involvement in class organizations like trade unions and social democratic parties. This version of compliant consciousness is common in the advanced capitalist countries, where the lack of a conscious understanding of the economic and political character of one's action, is the product of the profound alienation that large sections of the working class experience at work and in the institutions around them -- including the bureaucratic trade unions and social democratic parties that dominate the working class movement. Compliant consciousness is also rooted in the experience of defeat in the attempt to win economic or political reform. Defeated strikes (whether

because of the absence of class solidarity, the betrayal by union leaders, or the repression of the ruling class) and the betrayal by political leaders, both contribute enormously to the development of compliant consciousness, especially in non-revolutionary periods.

Those workers who reject class collaboration as a means to get reforms, in favor of class struggle, but do not consciously aim to transform the whole of society through socialist revolution, display a trade union consciousness. (Lenin's term is somewhat misleading, since it suggests the phenomenon is restricted to those willing to engage in economic struggles, without regard to the political goal of socialism. In fact, workers often engage in class struggle to win limited political reforms as well.) Thus, "trade union consciousness" refers to the consciousness that accompanies the struggle for reforms as an end in themselves, whether those reforms are of a sectional nature or aimed towards the reform of the social order on behalf of the entire working class.¹³ Lenin's concept describes the consciousness which spontaneously emerges when a section of the working class engages in a partial struggle against some aspect of the capitalist system (e.g., a strike against low wages, a spontaneous uprising against the brutality of a particular employer, an illegal protest to demand political reform, etc.) without consciously looking towards a class-wide movement against capitalism itself. (Harding, 1977:165)

But, there is a more militant version of trade union consciousness which goes beyond sectionalism, to concern itself with the needs of the entire working class, without being consistently revolutionary. Workers with a trade union consciousness can recognize "that society is divided into classes, that their interests are fundamentally antagonistic to those of the bourgeoisie, that the government always supports their enemies, and that they must engage in political activity as a result." However, even

if the spontaneous working-class movement is able to engage in a militant

struggle against the bourgeoisie and against its state, it by no means follows that the movement is a revolutionary one. To be conscious of its exploitation and lack of rights and even to be actively engaged in a struggle to improve its position in society does not mean that the proletariat is consciously antagonistic to the entire system of exploitation and oppression.
(Ehrenburg, 1983:290)

Without a conscious effort to bring about a socialist revolution as the ultimate goal, the working class inevitably limits itself to combatting the symptoms of capitalism rather than the underlying causes.

This more militant version of trade union consciousness is typical of those who adhere to the view capitalist society can be radically 'reformed' through the direct action of the working class -- as with many strains of syndicalism and centrism. (The leftist current the Bolsheviks called 'centrist' was composed of leaders and parties who sought to combine the reformist and revolutionary roads to socialism, parliament and workers' councils, in a 'reformist revolution.' For example, during the Russian revolution, the left wing of the Menshevik Party, the Left Internationalists, wanted to institutionalize dual power. The same phenomenon would appear throughout western Europe during 1918-1923.)¹⁴ In the circumstances of a revolutionary crisis, when the situation politicizes all struggles, the first brand of trade union consciousness has a tendency to become transformed into the second more militant kind.

Trade union consciousness prevails when workers are opposed to the existing state of class relations, and reject class collaboration as a method to settle their grievances, without being able to link their own immediate struggle with an understanding of both the class nature of society and the class character of the solution. They lack a scientific analysis of capitalism, the vision of an alternative form of society and a realistic strategy for moving the working class from collective action towards socialism. In short, they do

not understand and accept Marx's theory of proletarian revolution. Therefore, despite its anti-capitalist flavour, this form of working class consciousness does not transcend the boundaries of capitalism.

Unlike compliant and reformist consciousness (type 1), there is a critical contradiction inherent in trade union consciousness. Its immediate method -- class struggle - - contradicts its ultimate goal, the reform of capitalism. That contradiction, which is sometimes not apparent to very militant workers, means trade union consciousness is inherently unstable, reflecting as it does both the power of capital to impose limits on the development of consciousness and the power of the working class to transcend those limitations and change its consciousness through collective struggle. As a highly contradictory form of consciousness, trade union consciousness has a propensity to be transformed into other forms of consciousness. In a 'normal' period of class relations, workers with a trade union consciousness often sink into despair, (compliant consciousness), because of their inability to win reforms, or they get drawn into conscious acceptance of class collaboration. However, in periods of economic instability, when capitalism is unable to deliver reforms, trade union consciousness can deepen. And, in a revolutionary crisis, workers fighting for real reforms, without consciously challenging capitalism as a whole, can resolve the persistent conflict between their immediate methods (class struggle) and their unconscious goal (reformism) by deciding the existing social order must go -- provided a credible revolutionary alternative exists.

While trade union consciousness is premised upon the struggle against capitalism, its limited, uneven and often sectional character means its goal cannot be a socialist revolution. By contrast, the 'global' understanding of class relationships which is the core

of revolutionary consciousness, makes it inherently positive and offensive. Revolutionary consciousness combines a clear understanding of class-wide struggle as the best means to achieve the immediate demands of workers, and as the only way to turn the immediate struggle for reforms into a revolutionary movement -- one that aims to achieve state power as the first step in the transformation of society. (Ehrenberg, 1979:80) It transcends the sphere of relations between individual employers and sections of the working class, to examine the "sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations of all classes." (Lenin, cited in Geras, 1986:183; SW, I:174; Cliff, 1975:69-70) Revolutionary consciousness links the economic and political sides of the class struggle in a way that would be impossible for the consciousness that emerges merely from industrial action. (Harding, 1977:164) It combines an ability to penetrate bourgeois ideology with the capacity to project a positive, realizable, and non-utopian alternative form of society (i.e., the vision of a new socialist society), together with a realistic strategy for moving towards it. Emerging out of a combination of practical experience in the class struggle (analyzing concrete situations, building the level of organization and struggle within the working class) and scientific insight into the overall nature of capitalist society (including the class struggle, the revolutionary process and the nature of socialism), revolutionary consciousness is an all-encompassing world view that has to be created by and embodied in an organization.

There is an important difference between conscious reformism (type 1) and the other forms of non-revolutionary consciousness. Reformist consciousness is a clear manifestation of the direct ideological power of the ruling class, its ability to inculcate its own ideas among layers of the working class movement. On the other hand, the other forms of non-

revolutionary consciousness only indicate the indirect ideological power of the bourgeoisie, the fact that the very institutions of bourgeois society

truncate debate...and the flow of ideas in a manner which results not in the acceptance of a capitalist world view 'but rather the circumscription and repression of perspectives which are critical or revolutionary.... In this view...ideological hegemony is less...domination and manipulation of the minds of the working class than it is a structural condition which inheres in the capitalist organization of society.(Pelz,1983:291)

In other words, bourgeois rule is not primarily maintained by ruling class (or reformist) indoctrination of the working class, by workers' conscious acceptance of the full range of bourgeois ideas. Rather, the domination of bourgeois ideas depends heavily upon the mechanisms of capitalist exploitation and oppression (e.g., in the workplace) to reinforce workers' experience of alienation, powerlessness, sectionalism, and the futility of dissent. That experience encourages some workers to reject the notion of engaging in conscious action to change the world around them, while it encourages others to reject revolutionary ideas (if they encounter them) as 'utopian'. Pragmatic 'acceptance' of the existing social order as 'natural' and unalterable by workers with a compliant consciousness, and conditional 'acceptance' of it by workers with a trade union consciousness, so long as it concedes reforms under pressure of the class struggle, is the result. Of course, it is just those mechanisms of exploitation and oppression -- which in 'normal times' are so effective in preventing the widespread growth of a revolutionary world-view -- that are seriously undermined in a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation, and which can lead to conscious non-acceptance of the social order.

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So far our discussion has shown that the Bolshevik theory of workers' consciousness can be modified to provide a more subtle appreciation of the forms of non-

revolutionary consciousness. Now, we have to show that this modified version of Bolshevism can account for features of the revolutionary process in western Europe, that the original version of Bolshevism cannot explain.

For example, our discussion of these forms of working class consciousness suggests why the Bolsheviks had difficulties analyzing western reformism. In his wartime analysis of the coming revolution, Lenin mistakenly attributed something like a revolutionary consciousness to those large sections of the European working class that exhibited a compliant or trade union consciousness. During the 1918-1920 upsurge, Lenin correctly assumed that large portions of the working class would spontaneously move towards revolutionary consciousness because of the objective circumstances. But, he failed to analyze three types of changes in working class consciousness that must occur for a revolution to be possible: (1) workers with a trade union consciousness must become revolutionary (e.g., the Petrograd metalworkers in 1917); (2) workers who conditionally accept reformism must adopt a trade union consciousness, and (3) workers with a compliant consciousness must also adopt trade union consciousness (e.g., textile workers in Russia in 1917). We will deal with each in turn, discussing them against the background of the German revolution.

First, for a workers' revolution to occur those sections of the working class with a trade union consciousness (i.e., workers committed to class struggle as a means without a clear conception of workers' power as the end) must become fully revolutionary -- with that consciousness embodied in a mass revolutionary party. Somehow, the inconsistency between the means (class struggle) and ends (non-revolutionary change) of their activity must be resolved, in favor of a scientific understanding of the need for proletarian

revolution. In any revolutionary crisis, the objective social conditions and the experience of the class struggle push workers with a trade union consciousness spontaneously towards revolutionary consciousness. The level and intensity of class struggle breaks down the sectional barriers within the working class, clarifying the nature of class society and the real potential of the working class. The change from trade union consciousness to revolutionary consciousness is assisted by the politicized nature of the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis -- something which allows workers with a sectional consciousness to locate themselves in the larger struggle between the classes. Instead of each incident in the war between capital and labour being restricted to a small section of the working class, there is a tendency for it to become the general concern of the entire class.

But, there has to be a revolutionary party in existence if the spontaneous movement towards revolutionary consciousness is going to crystalize into widespread and conscious support for workers' revolution. Without the propaganda a mass revolutionary party engages in (to promote a scientific understanding of the connection between class struggle and socialism), and without the activity it organizes to demonstrate the practicality and possibility of a revolutionary transformation of society, the social weight of revolutionary consciousness cannot grow. A revolution is possible only if there is a credible organization that advances a working class solution to the problem posed by the crisis of capitalist society, and demonstrates it has the ability and will to lead an insurrection.

The second kind of dynamic change in workers' consciousness which has to be present for a workers' revolution to occur, is that the conditional reformism many workers adhere to must be undermined by a dramatic decline in the apparent viability of class collaboration. Reformism must face a situation where the severity of the class struggle and

the hostility of capital makes the whole notion of class collaboration inherently problematic --as is often the case in revolutionary crisis. Then, many workers who are committed reformists can begin to have doubts about whether their traditional organizations can actually deliver reforms.

The third sort of change in working class consciousness required for a workers' revolution to take place is the change from compliant consciousness to trade union consciousness. If a successful revolution is going to happen, compliant consciousness has to evaporate as non-political and depoliticized workers are pushed out of their private worlds, and into the public maelstrom that is a revolutionary crisis. This 'backward' section of the working class has to be forced, by the objective circumstances of the crisis situation, into collective and public activity to defend their immediate interests. Typically, the shift from compliant consciousness to trade union consciousness requires the traditionally passive sections of the working class to be drawn out of their inactivity by circumstances that compel them to fight for their immediate economic self-interest. These workers will not walk onto the stage of revolutionary history for the first time, fighting for abstract political principles. They are motivated by far more tangible concerns. Nevertheless, once on the stage of history, these workers do so in surroundings that ensure a new experience of the world, and which contain an abundance of new political ideas and organizations.

We can conclude this section by suggesting that while the Bolsheviks' analysis of working class consciousness was clearly inadequate, Lenin's work on the forms of class consciousness gives us a basis for modifying Bolshevism so as to better explain the strength of non-revolutionary forms of consciousness in 1918-1923. But, having criticized the shortcomings in the Bolsheviks' analysis of the non-revolutionary forms of working

class consciousness, it is important to add that on this issue -- as on some others -- their political practice often surpassed their theory.¹⁵

(4.5) Revolutionary Situations with Non-Revolutionary Outcomes: Bolshevism and the 'Missing Party Thesis'

From the perspective of the Bolshevik theory of revolution, there were pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations in abundance during the years 1917-1923. Any list of the major revolutionary situations alone would have to include: (i) Russia in 1917; (ii) Germany in 1918-1919; (iii) Germany in 1920; (iv) Italy in 1920, and (iv) Germany in 1923.¹⁶ And, since that period, there have been many more revolutionary crises, featuring a mobilized working class, an extensive development of dual power, and even revolutionary situations (e.g., Spain in 1936-1937, Hungary in 1956, etc.). And yet, despite the existence of all the requisite objective conditions for a successful socialist revolution, there has not been a single case of a Bolshevik type revolution since 1917. Why?

For the Bolsheviks, the answer to that question is the absence of the necessary subjective factor for a successful workers' revolution: a working class with a revolutionary consciousness, led by a revolutionary party with the size, credibility, political clarity, discipline and experience required to organize an insurrection. In each case where there was a revolutionary situation between 1918 and 1923 in Europe, the subjective factor was missing. For example, in 1918-1919 in Germany and in 1920 in Italy, mass revolutionary parties were absent. In Germany in 1923, there was a mass revolutionary party, but its leadership proved too weak politically and too inexperienced to seriously prepare for an

insurrection. The Russian revolution of 1917, remains the only case where both the objective and subjective conditions necessary for a working class seizure of power were present.

For Lenin and Trotsky, the failure of the western working class to successfully make a revolution during the era of 1917, was explained primarily by the absence of revolutionary parties, adequate to the task. Sure, both authors cite other factors that contributed to that failure (e.g., the treachery of the social democrats, the turn in the economy in 1920, and so on). But all the many other factors mentioned are considered to be strictly secondary by comparison to the absence of adequate revolutionary parties. In 1924, Trotsky summarized the main lesson to be learned from the period since 1917:

Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.... If the triumphant revolution did not come at the end of the war, it was because a party was lacking. This conclusion applies to Europe as a whole.(LO:59)

The 'missing-party thesis' of the Bolsheviks is the claim that the resolution of the 1918-1923 revolutionary crisis in western Europe, without a successful workers' revolution, is explainable by the absence of an adequate revolutionary parties, rather than the insufficiency of the objective pre-conditions for a revolution.

To illustrate the missing party thesis, we will consider what the Bolsheviks had to say about two quite different revolutionary situations, the one in Germany in 1918-1919, and another one in Germany in 1923. Each of these crises illustrates different versions of the missing-party argument.

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The first version of the missing party thesis was developed by the Bolsheviks in 1920-1921, as part of the re-evaluation of the revolutionary crisis of 1918-1920. For

example, in 1921, Lenin argued German revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg had been wrong not to break with the centrist United Social Democratic Party (USPD) during the war years. In his view, the failure to create an independent revolutionary party well before the beginning of the revolutionary crisis in Germany (in November 1918) guaranteed the party would not have the necessary size, experience, political clarity, and discipline to play the role required of a revolutionary party.(Riddell,1986:289-290: CI,1:221; 2:78)

As we saw above, by 1921, the Bolsheviks had abandoned all their illusions that a spontaneous uprising might suffice to establish socialism in western Europe. Once they realized the presence of mass revolutionary party was a necessary condition for a successful outcome to a revolutionary crisis, the Bolsheviks considered whether it was possible to build a revolutionary party in the midst of a revolutionary crisis. While the Bolsheviks did not rule out all possibility a revolutionary party could be built from scratch under such circumstances, they did not think it would be very easy. As Trotsky explained, it had become clear that building a revolutionary party required a certain amount of time to gain experience and test its leadership.(LTS:194)

To conclude, the Bolsheviks' missing-party thesis suggests that it was the presence of a substantial and credible revolutionary party in Russia prior to the onset of the revolutionary crisis in 1917, and the absence of comparable organizations in western Europe which explains the different outcomes. The social upheavals in Czarist Russia prior to 1917, together with the weaknesses of conventional reformism and the political orientation of the Bolsheviks, meant that on the eve of the October insurrection, the revolutionary party was substantial relative to the reformist organizations.

(Gluckstein,1985:214-216) Of course, the Bolsheviks were only able to lead the October

insurrection eight months into the crisis because of their very effective intervention in the revolutionary process throughout 1917.

If you compare the relative strength of the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917, with that of the groups that adhered to similar ideas on the eve of revolutionary crises in Italy and Germany during the period 1918-1920, the meaning of the missing party argument becomes clear. In his comparative study of the revolutionary movement in four key European cities -- Petrograd, Turin, Berlin and Glasgow -- Gluckstein summarizes the strength of the revolutionary current in each country:

Russia: Bolshevik party with 14 years' experience; 200,000 members (October 1917) (20,000 prior to February 1917-BM); 17 daily papers with a circulation of 320,000 in July 1917.

Germany: Communist Party established one week before (January 1919-BM) counter-revolution (although Spartakists had two to three years' experience); around 3,000 members; daily paper, circulation unknown.

Italy: Ordinovisti, a tiny group of socialists collected over several months; fortnightly journal, circulation of 5,000.(Gluckstein,1985:239)

Thus, on the eve of the revolutionary crises in western Europe, there were only the embryos of future revolutionary parties, not the fully formed and mature organization found in Russia in February 1917.

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A second version of the missing-party thesis was devised by Trotsky in 1924, to deal with the case of the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923. If all the missed revolutionary situations during 1918-1920 could be explained by the absence of a mass revolutionary party, the missed opportunity in Germany in 1923 could not be. Since a mass revolutionary party had existed in Germany in 1923, unlike 1918-1919, that raised an obvious question: What had gone wrong? Why had an avowedly revolutionary and insurrectionist party like the KPD missed "a perfectly exceptional revolutionary situation of

world-historic importance?"(LO:2).

In his commentary on the events in Germany, Trotsky made it clear he held the KPD leadership and their advisers in the CI politically responsible for allowing the revolutionary situation to evaporate without a serious insurrectionary effort. The revolutionary crisis failed to produce a victory because the poor tactics employed by the KPD leadership allowed "a revolutionary situation permitted to slip by."(CI,1:2) Thus, for Trotsky, 1923 was the classic confirmation of the Bolshevik argument that for a socialist revolution to succeed, there had to be not only a mass revolutionary party in place, but one with the political experience and courage to "steer a firm and resolute course toward the conquest of power." When the revolutionary crisis developed in Germany, and the time had come for the KPD leadership to make a "tactical turn" away from the tactics appropriate to a non-revolutionary period towards the more offensive tactics necessary for a revolutionary crisis, they failed to make the shift.(CI,1:2,4)

The KPD leadership had taken a fatalistic approach to the development of the revolutionary process, insisting the insurrection could not be made on a schedule. As Trotsky suggested, in doing so they confused "the revolution as a whole" which could not be scheduled, "with one of its specific stages," the insurrection, which most certainly had to be scheduled. Thus, when the decisive moment arrived, the German working class "did not see the necessary resolution and self-confidence on the side of the Communist Party," and the revolutionary situation evaporated.(CI,1:3)

Trotsky argued that the "fundamental cause of the defeat" of the German revolution was that the KPD "did not appreciate in good time the onset of a revolutionary crisis," and therefore failed to "make the transition from a period of agitation and propaganda...to the

direct struggle for power through the organization of armed insurrection."(CLO:170)

Trotsky complained that the German CP had continued to carry out its propaganda and agitational work as if it was still a non-revolutionary period, after the objective crisis had clearly deepened and rendered such an approach "radically insufficient." What was needed was a "sharp tactical turn...to show the masses and above all the party itself, that this time it was a matter of immediate preparation for the seizure of power."(CLO:170) But, the decisive tactical turn towards immediate and practical preparations for insurrection was never made by the German CP.

Trotsky argued that in 1923 the revolutionary party on the spot had lacked the proper leadership, even though it had the size and credibility to lead a successful insurrection.¹⁷ As he explained in LO, the very quick pace of events in a revolutionary situation, created the real danger that a party leadership without sufficient experience, might prove incapable of responding quickly enough to the opportunity to stage a mass insurrection.(TIAL:97)

Thus, the 'lost revolution' of 1923 was a negative example which, when analyzed in conjunction with the positive example of the revolutionary process in 1917, proved the necessity not only for a revolutionary party, but for one with an experienced and resolute leadership.

* * * * *

What conclusions can we draw about the Bolsheviks' use of the missing-party thesis to explain the absence of a revolutionary outcome to so many revolutionary situations?

Implicit in many criticisms of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, and of Lenin and Trotsky's perspective on the world revolution, is the argument that the failure

of the revolutionary movement must be attributed to something other than the absence of adequate revolutionary parties. Critics of Bolshevism believe the Bolsheviks were wrong to explain the failure of the western working class to take power during the crises of 1918-1923 by pointing to either the absence of revolutionary parties (e.g., Germany 1918-1919, 1920, Italy 1920, etc.) or the inadequacies of those that existed (Germany 1923). For example, Kautsky argued the missing party thesis did not explain the failure of revolution in western Europe because the absence of mass revolutionary parties in the west stemmed from the objective differences between that area and Russia. In conditions of illegality, Russian workers joined revolutionary parties. But, in the bourgeois democracies of the west, workers had no illusions that such parties were necessary. (Gluckstein, 1984a:4) Thus, for him, the absence of mass revolutionary parties in the west was a confirmation that Bolshevik style revolution was impossible in a bourgeois democracy.

By contrast, Gluckstein offers a Marxist explanation for the absence of revolutionary parties in the western Europe, focusing on the inability of revolutionary Marxists -- both inside Russia and outside -- to see the need for them prior to 1917. That failure stemmed from the objective conditions of the class struggle in which western revolutionaries worked. In the west, low levels of class struggle prevented the genuine revolutionaries (e.g., Rosa Luxemburg) from seeing the connection between the class struggle at the point of production (economic struggles) and the political movement required to establish workers' power (through the creation of soviets and a revolutionary party). Thus, western Marxists lacked something inherent in the Bolshevik experience, the orientation towards the class struggle in the workplace as the way to build a revolutionary party. "Without such a concrete orientation for day-to-day activity there was no means of relating general Marxist

theory about the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism with the practical means of achieving it."(Gluckstein,1984a:4,5)

The revolutionary current in western Europe was much weaker -- in terms of numbers, political clarity and the development of organizations independent of the reformists -- prior to the onset of the revolutionary crisis in 1918 than the revolutionary current in Russia had been prior to 1917. For one thing, the general level of class struggle had been much higher in Russia prior to 1914 than in the countries of western Europe. For another thing, the character of the class struggle in Russia was different than it was in western Europe, because of the absence of bourgeois democracy. In Russia, all strikes became politicized easily, since trade union organization and strikes were illegal. Thus, those 'socialists' who advocated the separation of economic and political struggles in Russia (e.g., the economists) had a much tougher time building support than their reformist counter-parts in western Europe. In countries like Germany, France and Britain, the economic and social conditions before the war -- conditions of economic growth, low strike levels, and political stability -- encouraged the growth of reformism and the belief that the economic and political struggles of the working class could be kept separate. In those cases where strikes did occur, they did not automatically lead to confrontations with the forces of the state, in the same way as they did in Russia.(Gluckstein, 1984a:9,20; 1984b:111)

Another point of contrast between Russia and western Europe stemmed from the weakness of the roots of parliamentarism in the East as compared with the west. In Russia, the parliament (the Duma, a body which only had consultative powers) was conceded by the Czar during the 1905 revolution. Not surprisingly, electoralism scarcely developed in Russia, depriving Russian reformism of both a parliamentary caucus and a trade union

bureaucracy to root itself in.(Gluckstein,1984a:26-27) By contrast, in western Europe, parliamentarism had strong roots. In conditions of relative social peace, electoral activity designed to capture parliament was advocated (along with trade unionism) by reformists as an alternative to class struggle. (Gluckstein, 1984a:25-26)

The inability of the Bolsheviks or revolutionaries in the west (e.g., Rosa Luxemburg) to generalize from the experience of Russia to the west, plus the presence of objective conditions that were very unfavorable for the growth of revolutionary organizations in western Europe, determined that no major revolutionary organization existed in that region prior to 1919. Only with the example of the Russian revolution, and with the explosions in western Europe starting in 1918, did the key link between economic and political struggles, workplace politics and the struggle for state power, get made in a way that allowed revolutionaries in the west to grapple with the need for revolutionary parties independent from those of the social democrats.(Gluckstein,1984a:23; 1984b:112)

The missing-party thesis is a vital part of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, and one that it is vital to any examination of revolutionary crises since the 1920s. After 1923, the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the rise of Stalinism insured that the absence of a Bolshevik style political party would become a major factor in the non-revolutionary outcomes of many revolutionary crises. With the tradition of Bolshevism replaced by Stalinism, revolutionary crises after the mid-1920s would occur with an overabundance of 'Marxist' parties -- the vast majority of them having political views that shared little in common with those of Lenin and Trotsky.

(4.6) Studying Revolutionary Situations in the Post-War Period: Selecting Some Relevant Cases and Posing Some Key Questions

This chapter has demonstrated several things. First, the Bolsheviks are not guilty of over-generalizing in the development of their theory of revolution. Second, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process can be used as a guide to analyze revolutionary processes beyond that which occurred in Russia in 1917, including revolutionary crises that occur in more advanced industrialized countries. Third, whatever the shortcomings of the Bolsheviks' analysis of the world capitalist economy in the period after World War I, their theory of the revolutionary process does not make the economic collapse of the capitalist system a prerequisite for revolution. Fourth, although the Bolshevik explanation for the strength of reformism in the midst of a revolutionary crisis was inadequate, it can be modified so as to explain the different forms of non-revolutionary consciousness that appear before and during the revolutionary process. Fifth, Bolshevism can easily incorporate a greater concern with the role of factory committees and the struggle against the alienation of labour within the revolutionary process. And sixth, the absence of a revolutionary party plays a deciding role in determining that a revolutionary crisis will have an outcome which is non-revolutionary.

Throughout this chapter, we have discussed the principle of using the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process to analyze revolutionary crises beyond that which occurred in Russia in 1917. In this concluding section, we need to turn to a few remaining questions. First, if we want to use the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process to analyze some cases of revolutionary crises within the last two decades, what is the universe

of such cases, and how can we best select them? Second, having analyzed the Russian case, one which ended with a positive outcome are there any special problems posed by the analysis of three negative cases?

* * * * *

To demonstrate that Bolshevism can produce a Marxist explanation for the failure of the workers' revolution of 1917 to be duplicated since then, we need to examine some of the recent revolutionary crises in which the working class was the major protagonist against the established regime. Furthermore, we have to analyze crises that assumed at least the proportions of a pre-revolutionary situation -- a situation in which a *prima facie* case could be made that a revolutionary socialist outcome was a possibility.

Why examine recent cases (i.e., from the period since World War II), rather than ones which date from the era when the Bolshevik theory of revolution was developed? Precisely because we want to establish the continued usefulness of the theory today, in a phase of world capitalism that antedates the phase in which imperialism and monopoly capital were its main features. Given that the universe of potential cases, considering that we want to evaluate Bolshevism in light of the historical experience from the most recent period, is quite small. The list of potential instances of social crises featuring highly mobilized working classes and at least a pre-revolutionary situation, arguably includes the following:

- 1) the working class upsurges in France, Italy and Greece following World War II
- 2) the Bolivian Revolution of 1952

- 3) the Hungarian Revolution of 1956
- 4) the events of May/June 1968 in France
- 5) the 1972-73 period in Chile
- 6) the 1974-75 revolution in Portugal
- 7) the 1978-79 revolution in Iran
- 8) the 1978-79 overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua
- 9) the rise of Solidarnosc in Poland, 1980-81

Definitely excluded are such developments as the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the final unification of Vietnam by the followers of Ho Chi Minh in 1973, Castro's victory over Batista in 1959, the 1980 triumph of Mugabe's ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and the intra-party struggle within the Czechoslovakian Communist Party that led to the Soviet invasion of 1968. With the exception of the last case, all these are examples of wars of national liberation in which an elite of urban intellectuals used a peasant military force to seize power and establish a form of bureaucratic state capitalism. None of these cases, Czechoslovakia included, can be included in the universe of post World War II revolutionary crises, since the absence of a highly mobilized working class ruled out the possibility of a specifically socialist outcome to any of these events.¹² (Underlying this list of potential cases is the assumption that the so called "socialist" countries like China, Cuba, Poland and Nicaragua are in fact bureaucratic state capitalist regimes that share nothing in common with the type of workers' state that characterizes Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat".)

From our universe of cases, we have selected the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish ones, since they allow us to examine revolutionary crises in each of the three major political forms that contemporary capitalism takes: bourgeois democracy (Chile), Fascism/authoritarian capitalism (Portugal), and state capitalism (Poland). If the Bolshevik theory of revolution can be shown to provide an explanation for the causes, processes and outcomes of the revolutionary crises in each of these cases -- despite their very different institutional features -- it will substantiate our argument that Bolshevism provides the cornerstone for a Marxist explanation of the failure of workers' revolution.

Of course, alternative cases could have been chosen from the same period (1944-90), without jeopardizing the comparison between bourgeois democratic, fascist and state capitalist societies. But the choice of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish cases has two advantages: first, they all occurred within the same ten year period (which helps to minimize any differences stemming from overall changes in the character of the world economy), and second, they have all been widely studied by area specialists.¹⁹

Comparative examination of the events in Chile, Portugal, and Poland, in light of our discussions of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process demonstrates the explanatory power of our slightly revamped version of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, by allowing us to analyze whether the same features and dynamics that characterized the Russian and German revolutionary crises are present.

* * * * *

Critics may argue that it is impossible to explain something that has not happened. But, any serious analysis of revolution --certainly one which is concerned not only with the

outcome of revolutionary crises, but also with the processes characteristic of such periods --

absolutely requires a presupposition of contingency in history. All the potential outcomes to a particular revolutionary crisis, including the one which actually occurred, must be carefully considered, in order to explain why the crisis was resolved in a particular way. To be content with merely investigating 'what really happened', is "to become mesmerized by the logic of events." We need to "examine the factors which were present in a given historical process, but were also not allowed to operate." (Sirianni,1982:2)

Despite the many criticisms that Marxists would make of Barrington Moore's work on revolution, he did elaborate a theoretical strategy appropriate to a non-determinist analysis of revolutionary crises. In his book Injustice (1978), Moore offers a theoretical strategy for analyzing revolutionary crises, based -- in part -- on the idea that throughout history there are "suppressed historical alternative" to the outcomes which have actually occurred in situations of such crisis. As he explains, since

any explanation of what actually took place connotes an explanation of why something else failed to occur...it ought to be possible to show in some concrete historical situation just what was possible and why."
(Moore,1978:376-377)

Moore argues that it is possible for social scientists, through investigation, to ascertain whether specific historical situations contained "suppressed possibilities and alternatives (i.e., alternative outcomes -BM) obscured or obliterated by the deceptive wisdom of hindsight." (INJ:376) In his view,

That means marshalling evidence, creating and testing an argument, in the same way one goes about explaining any form of human behaviour....The enterprise requires an effort to analyze a segment of history in order to explain why something did not happen, and to assess the significance of the cause or set of causes....One cannot provide irrefutable proof of the existence of a suppressed historical possibility. On the other hand, it is equally

impossible to prove that any given situation had to turn out in exactly the way it did. There is plenty of room in between for serious discussion whose outcome has very serious consequences for real life. (Moore,1978:376-377)

In a single phrase Moore summarizes a subtle strategy for dealing with the problem of trying to avoid determinism in the study of revolutionary crises. His defence of counter-factual analysis is critical to any comparative study which focuses on the process of revolutionary crises and their outcomes.(Moore, 1978:376-381) Counter-factual analysis explicitly legitimizes the study of "failed revolutions," since it is predicated upon the rejection of a determinism which negates all sense of historical contingency.

While the notion of a "suppressed historical alternative" is implicit in the Bolshevik concept of revolutionary situation, and is employed at various times, especially by Trotsky (as we saw in Section 4.6 above), it is nowhere drawn out and explicitly discussed by the Bolsheviks as it is by Moore. Because the revolutionary Marxist tradition has to analyze a much larger number of failed proletarian revolutions than victorious ones, Moore's explanation of how it is necessary and possible to "explain why something did not happen," is critical.(Moore, 1978:376) For the further development of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, it is vital to analyze the suppressed historical alternatives present during pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations that ended without a successful proletarian insurrection.

* * * * *

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are devoted to discussions of the revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland respectively. In each case, the secondary literature and some primary documentation is used to develop a specifically Bolshevik interpretation of the causes, processes and short term outcomes of the crises. All three of the cases selected have been

thoroughly studied by social scientists, journalists and other area specialists -- from a variety of theoretical and political standpoints. The existing literature permits us to conduct a selective investigation into the main features and dynamics of each of the crises.

Thus, in the case of Chile, we will concentrate on two key events that followed the September 1970 election of the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende: the October 1972 truck drivers strike sponsored by the right, and the working class response with the creation of industrial cordones (i.e., factory councils); and, the June 1973 resurgence of the industrial cordones in response to the tancazo (an attempted coup by right wing elements inside and outside the army). Those events will be viewed as opening a pre-revolutionary period which ended with the September 1973 military coup. The discussion will focus on analyzing working class activity, consciousness, and organization, as well as the divisions within the ruling class, and the governing Popular Unity coalition. An appraisal of the left during the Popular Unity period will make it possible to discuss "suppressed alternative outcomes" in the conclusion of the chapter.

Consideration of the revolutionary period in Portugal (in Chapter 6) will focus on the April 1974 military coup against the fascist regime of Caetano, and the working class upsurge after the defeat of the right wing coups in September 1974 and March 1975. The discussion will examine the period after April 1974, focusing on the growth of workplace committees and the rank and file soldiers organization SUV (Soldiers United Will Win) during the summer and fall of 1975. As in the Chilean case, the dissertation will examine working class activity, consciousness and organization and living standards, as well as the divisions within the ruling class and the political parties of the fifth and sixth Provisional Governments. Furthermore, consideration of the MFA (i.e., the Armed Forces Movement of

officers who organized the coup of April 1974) and the revolutionary left, will make it possible to analyze the aborted leftist insurrection of November 25th, 1975, and the subsequent evaporation of the existing revolutionary crisis. Once again consideration of the left, and its interpretation of the Portuguese Revolution will help to sustain a discussion of potential alternative outcomes to the situation.

Finally, Chapter 7 contains an analysis of the Polish crisis of 1980-81, covering the August 1980 strikes that began in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, the formation of the trade union movement Solidarnosc, and the events culminating in the December 1981 military takeover by General Jaruzelski. Particular attention will be paid to the nature of Solidarnosc, the various factions within it, and the role of other mass organizations like Rural Solidarnosc, the PZPR (i.e., the Polish Communist Party) and the church. Once again, the activity, organization, consciousness and living standards of the working class will be studied, as will the divisions within the PZPR and the military. Appraisal of the perspectives of the Polish left (i.e., the KOR group and certain militant factions within Solidarnosc) will set the stage for a concluding discussion of alternatives to the outcome that actually occurred.

By examining each of these cases, we should be able to draw some conclusions about the ability of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process to explain the failure of workers' revolution since 1917.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER (4.0)

1. Lenin and Trotsky began to stress the need for Western revolutionaries to build well disciplined and homogeneous revolutionary parties, as a precondition for revolutionary success, even if that required Western revolutionaries to politically and organizationally separate themselves from the social democrats, the centrists, and the ultra-leftists through organizational splits or expulsions. (Lindemann,1974:67,125,129) Experience had proven that the well entrenched organizations of the reformist and centrist left in Western Europe made the presence of a revolutionary party an even greater necessity in the West than it had been in Russia. And, the premature attempts to seize power in Germany, Hungary and Bavaria demonstrated the need to combat the ultra-leftism that was rampant among Western revolutionaries.(Lindemann,1974:67,132)

2. Lenin was very concerned about the way in which Russian experience was generalized to revolutionaries in the West. In 1921, when it was proposed that his 1902 book What is to be Done? be translated in other European languages, he opposed the move, warning that at the very least any translation must include "good commentaries which would have to be written by a Russian comrade very well acquainted with the history of the Communist Party in Russia in order to avoid false application."(cited in Cliff, 1980:41) Despite this recognition of the dangers of over-generalization, there can be little doubt that the Bolsheviks -- Lenin and Trotsky included -- periodically failed to follow their own advice. During the heady period in 1918-19 when the world revolution seemed to be imminent, even Lenin indulged in the tendency to see foreign events "through Russian eyes, in the light of Russian precedent, calling them by their Russian names, and setting them in their Russian calendar." (Harding,1981:242-243) Certainly, in the early stages of the German revolution, Lenin was particularly guilty of indulging in such over-generalizations.(Claudin,1975:57-58)

3. The major texts include Imperialism, Highest Stage of Capitalism (Lenin), Imperialism and World Economy (Bukharin), and Theses of the Third World Congress on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern (Trotsky).

4. Claudin is undoubtedly right to fault the Bolsheviks and the CI for being guilty of a certain degree of catastrophism, especially between 1917 and 1920. But, while many Bolsheviks viewed the post war crisis in catastrophic terms, portraying it as the terminal crash of the capitalist system (e.g., Bukharin), others were more cautious. For example, Lenin and Trotsky (who themselves indulged in catastrophism to some extent during 1918-1919) insisted the ruling class could -- theoretically -- achieve a new period of prolonged prosperity, if the working class proved incapable of making a successful revolution in Western Europe. (Day,1981:45-48; CI,1:211-212)

5. That is one of the reasons why the Bolsheviks included many non-economic factors on the list of forces which might trigger revolutionary crises (e.g., political crises, military defeats, mass resistance to wars, etc.).(Mandel,1979b:38-39)

6. Unfortunately, the difference between a world-wide crisis (like that of 1917-1923) and isolated national cases of revolutionary crisis, is not something the Bolsheviks really discussed. They were active during a period of generalized world crisis in which they expected the Russian revolution to be merely the first in a chain of successful revolutions - part of a world wide process of international revolution.
7. This point was suggested to me verbally by David McNally.
8. The events of 1989 have shown once again that there are periods in history when revolution -- broadly defined, since the events in Eastern Europe were political revolutions rather than social ones -- takes on an international dimension. 1989 was the year in which governments from China through Eastern Europe either fell or faced serious challenges from below.
9. The idea that the transformation of the labour process is incompatible with state directed planning by a workers' state is dead wrong. In that respect, it is necessary to contrast the bureaucratic 'planning' characteristic of the Stalinist economy, and the democratic planning characteristic of a genuine workers' state. (Cliff, 1974:83,91,188) In the former case, the workers are among the objects which are planned by a state they do not control. In the latter case, the working class are the subjects of the planning process through factory councils and a workers' state which they directly control.
10. Methodologically, it is important to recognize that working class consciousness is never pure and never static. On the contrary, because class consciousness is uneven, mixed, relational, and dynamic, it is never fully captured by static categories. Still, these abstractions, which are not arbitrary, do make analysis of the real phenomena easier -- which is why Lenin bothered to discuss the phenomenon of trade union consciousness. In any discussion of the variety of forms working class consciousness can take, it is critical to remember that consciousness changes through activity. Thus, the consciousness of the working class is heightened through the experience of collective struggle, particularly successful struggles. Furthermore, consciousness does not change incrementally, whether workers are becoming more or less confident and conscious. In the class struggle, consciousness can lag far behind practical developments, and then take tremendous and sudden leaps forward or backward. (Hence the important phenomenon of the gap between the reality of the balance of class power and the backwardness of working class consciousness during pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations.) Finally, the partial and fragmented (rather than general and universal) nature of working class experience during non-revolutionary periods, guarantees working class consciousness during a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation will be both uneven and mixed. Different sections of the working class will hold different ideas, while many workers will hold fundamentally incompatible ideas (e.g., revolutionary and non-revolutionary ideas) at the same time.
11. Which is not to suggest that conscious reformists never engage in class struggle. On the contrary, trade union leaders -- for example -- will occasionally see the necessity to employ a highly restricted form of class struggle as a way of preventing class antagonisms from assuming uncontrollable proportions.

12. This form of working class consciousness covers a broad range of phenomena. For example, some workers with a compliant consciousness are immersed in the reality of their immediate personal lives, and either ignore or reject the 'unreal' world of political and economic struggles as something beyond their power to actually influence. Others, live under the illusion that there is no connection between their individual situations and the overall character of the social order, seeking individual solutions to what are -- in reality -- social problems.

13. Because workers with a trade union consciousness are seeking reform, there is a sense in which they -- like many workers seeking reforms through class collaboration, also extend a conditional acceptance to the capitalist system.

14. For more on the important phenomenon of centrism, see Loew (1978), Morgan (1975) and Harman (1982).

15. Thus, we would be remiss not to mention that the united front tactic (introduced into the Comintern by Lenin and Trotsky in 1921) incorporated some quite profound and subtle insights into the problem of non-revolutionary consciousness in the West.

16. Some of the key sources on these revolutionary situations include the following: for Italy, see Williams (1975) Spriano (1975), Clark (1977), Gluckstein (1985), Cammett (1967), and Gramsci (1977); for Germany, see Gluckstein (1985), Harman (1982), Haffner (1973), Anderson (1945) and Carr (1966,1969).

17. For a similar interpretation of the German revolution, see Harman (1984).

18. This is not to suggest that Bolshevism is incapable of offering a meaningful explanation of peasant based, middle class led, anti-imperialist movements. In fact, the work of Trotsky (1969), Cliff (1983), and Harris (1974) on the theory of permanent revolution does provide the basis for such an analysis. However, this thesis will not dwell on that point, since our primary concern is with the phenomenon of social crises that feature a highly mobilized and class conscious working class.

19. As Skocpol suggests, it is almost inevitable that comparative historical studies of phenomena like revolutions are based almost entirely upon secondary sources. The task of a comparative analyst is not to engage in extensive 'original research' into each of the cases considered. Instead, the previous research of historians, journalists and area specialists should be used to establish "the interest and prima facie validity of an overall argument about causal regularities across various historical cases." (Skocpol,1979:xiv) Comparative analysis -- whether that of sociology or by Marxists -- seeks to mesh theory with historical analysis through the critical use of the existing literature. "The comparativist has neither the time nor (all of) the appropriate skills to do the primary research that necessarily constitutes, in large amounts, the foundation upon which comparative studies are built. Instead, the comparativist must concentrate upon searching out and systematically surveying specialists' publications that deal with the issues defined as important by theoretical considerations and by the logic of comparative analysis. (Skocpol,1979:xiv; 1984:382-383)

(5.0) Chile, 1970-1973: The Revolutionary Process in a Bourgeois Democracy

In September 1973 the Chilean military unleashed a counter-revolutionary coup that brought an end to the revolutionary process that had developed under the leftist Popular Unity (UP) government of Salvador Allende. In this Chapter we will analyze that process, concentrating on the critical pre-revolutionary situation from October 1972 to September 1973.

(5.1) The Contradictions of Chilean Capitalism Prior to the Revolutionary Crisis

In 1970, Chile was a highly urbanized country with an industrial economy, a large working class, a history of bourgeois democracy that dated back to 1833, and a heavy reliance upon its relationship to the United States for its capital, technology, imports and export markets. To understand the revolutionary crisis of 1972-73, we need to have a general picture of the contradictions of Chilean capitalism prior to Allende's election to the presidency in 1970.

* * * * *

In 1970, the Chilean economy was based on the manufacturing and mining industries, with a single commodity -- copper -- the key. Throughout the twentieth century, the entire economy was structured around revenues from the highly profitable, foreign owned mining industry (with nitrates the key export until the 1920s, and copper the main commodity thereafter). Although the government nationalized 51% of the American owned copper mining companies during the 1960s, they were still making enormous profits in

1970.(Roxborough,1977:53) Foreign investment and mineral exports that paid for foreign imports, determined Chile's pattern of economic development and its relation of extreme dependence upon the U.S. and the world economy.(Roxborough, 1977:2-4,11-12,51; DeVyllder,1976:13)¹

Domestically, Chilean capital was monopolistic in character, with a very high degree of concentration in the ownership and control of the economy.(DeVyllder,1976:17-19; Roxborough,1977:56) About 40% of the top 100 industrial firms were controlled by foreign (usually American) interests.(Roxborough,1977:52; DeVyllder,1976:14; Stallings,1978:44) Manufacturing was concentrated in consumer goods industries rather than capital goods, and remained heavily dependent upon imports of machinery, capital and technical skills from the United States.(Roxborough, 1977:4,11)

The Chilean state played a key role in the economy, redistributing revenues from the mining industry to encourage investment.(Roxborough,1977:55) By 1969 the state was responsible for about 75% of net investment, with total state expenditures amounting to 46% of the GDP. Moreover, state owned companies were responsible for 11.8% of industrial production.(Steenland,1973: 86; Roxborough,1977:12, 54-55; Stallings,1978:46-47)

The different sections of the Chilean ruling classes -- the landed oligarchy, the monopoly capitalists and the comprador bourgeoisie -- were highly integrated and quite cohesive, despite the diversity of their interests. Most of the largest landowners, manufacturers, and financiers were closely inter-related through common roots in the core families of the Chilean ruling class. (Zeitlin,1974a,1974b,1974c,1975,1976; Roxborough, 1977:7,14-15; 1979:76-77,107,111,156; Stallings,1978:35)

Politically, there were two major bourgeois political parties, the National Party (NP) and the Christian Democrats (CD).² The NP, representing the more conservative wing of the ruling classes, defended the interests of the old agrarian oligarchy and the monopoly sections of capital. The CD Party, led by intellectuals and members of the small and middle bourgeoisie, was a more liberal bourgeois party that advocated the need for mild structural reforms to undercut the electoral threat from the left.(Roxborough,1977:40-41)

In contrast to most countries in Latin America, Chile had a tradition of political stability and bourgeois democracy. Although the ruling class had certainly used repression against the underclasses long before 1973, systematic violence was not the basis for bourgeois rule.(Roxborough,1977:2,14; DeVyllder, 1976:23) The political power of the ruling classes was maintained by their ability to co-opt sections of other classes with periodic programs of reform, and by selective repression. (Roxborough,1977:15) Despite the miserably low living standards of Chilean workers -- infant mortality, malnutrition, housing shortages, poor education and health services, unemployment and poverty were all serious problems -- the ruling classes had not faced a serious revolutionary threat in the decades prior to 1970.(DeVyllder,1976:7-9)

The Chilean state had many of the standard features of a bourgeois democracy. But, the president and his appointed cabinet enjoyed broad powers and a measure of independence from Congress (including control over the army), making capture of the presidency the foremost goal of every political party. (Valenzuela,1978:11-19; Stallings,1978:48) A portion of the bourgeois state machine that was destined to play a major role in deciding the outcome of the crisis that developed in 1972-1973, was the military. Chile had a conscript army of 60,000 men with an additional 30,000

Carabineros -- a para-military national police force.(Birns,1974:33-34; Joxe,1976:244; North,1976:175-176)³

In 1970, over 70% of the 9.2 million people living in Chile resided in cities or towns (one third of the population lived in the metropolitan area of Santiago), guaranteeing the fate of any revolutionary crisis would be determined by the urban class struggle.(Loveman,1979:9-41; Roxborough,1977:1,135) Still, the class struggle in the Chilean countryside was quite important. Chilean agriculture was thoroughly capitalist in nature, with the work performed by the more than 300,000 workers who formed a rural proletariat and semi-proletariat.(Kay,1978: 119-121; Roxborough,1977:135-136; 1980:371) The large landlords were a minute proportion of the 500,000 people involved in the agrarian labour force, but they owned more than half the land.(Kay,1978: 121,124) By contrast about 82% of the rural labour force -- including the rural proletariat, semi-proletariat and the subsistence producers -- owned less than 2% of the land. Clearly the objective basis for a powerful agrarian revolution existed in the Chilean countryside.

Combined, the rural and urban proletariat were between 60% and 70% of the workforce. The conventional industrial proletariat was concentrated in large workplaces owned by monopoly capital, and was restricted to 220,000 manufacturing workers and 50,000 miners.(Fleet,1985:27)⁴ They were the vanguard of the working class, with the longest tradition of trade union organization, and support for the left wing political parties.(Roxborough,1977: 1,12-13; Angell,1972:85; Winn, 1986:84-87) A second critical section of urban the working class was the empleados, those white collar workers concentrated in the service industries and the government. "Empleado" was a legal category which guaranteed white collar workers (and those blue collar workers who managed to win

official designation as *empleados*) a higher minimum wage, and certain benefits (like better social security provisions). (Angell,1972:66-68,149-150) Despite their privileges and their diverse political affiliations, most of the *empleados* were white collar workers (e.g., clerical workers, teachers, nurses, draftsmen, etc.), rather than salaried members of the capitalist class (like the top management of various corporations) or members of the new middle class. Although a majority of the 700,000 *empleados* -- particularly state employees -- were unionized, they were in white collar unions separate from blue collar workers.(Roxborough,1977:16)⁵

Weaker sections of the working class -- those with fewer skills, lower wages, low levels of unionization and political involvement, and less ability to defend themselves from their employers than either the industrial proletariat or the white collar workers -- included the rural proletariat (discussed above), the large number of workers employed by medium and small businesses, and the urban sub-proletariat. (Roddick,1976:8-9; Espinosa,1978:64-66) Workers employed by small firms were often not unionized.(Roddick,1976:8-9; Espinosa,1978:64-66)⁶ The urban sub-proletariat, which had irregular employment (e.g., like construction workers), were a group on the margins of the working class shading over into the lumpenproletariat.(Winn,1976a:71)

For these three sections of the working class, collective organization and collective struggle was far more difficult than it was for the industrial proletariat or the white collar workers.

Long before the major class struggles of 1972-1973, sections of the working class had organized themselves in three critical types of institutions: trade unions, political parties and housing settlements. The rapid urbanization of Chile meant that often groups of homeless families banded together to occupy unused urban land and establish

shantytowns.(Smirnow,1979:9-10) Because of the absence of basic social services, the squatters organized their "own civic institutions to deal with a variety of daily problems -- maintenance of law and order, criminal justice, housing, local administration and the like." (Handelman,1975:40) The shantytowns, provided a home for poorly paid members of the working class, the unemployed and underemployed, the newly arrived migrants from the countryside, some industrial workers and the lumpenproletariat. By 1972, between 15 and 18% of the population of Santiago (i.e., up to 500,000 people) lived in these communities located in the suburban 'red belt'.(Threlfall, 1976:169-172; Winn,1986:84,90) Throughout the revolutionary process, the shantytowns were an important site of the class struggle, often uniting rather diverse sections of the underclasses (especially more backward sections of the working class) in the class struggle.(Petrus,1973:35-36)

During the early 1970s, about 30% of the 2.7 million Chilean work force was unionized, giving the Central Workers Union (CUT) about 740,000 members. But, the level of unionization in manufacturing plants with more than 25 workers (70%) and in mining pits (90%), gives us a better idea of the level of organization within the big battalions of the industrial working class.(Angell,1972:46-47) The trade union movement was undermined by a labour code that prevented unions from organizing workplaces with fewer than 25 workers, prohibited centralized bargaining or organization (e.g., the trade union central, the CUT, had no legal status), divided the blue collar workers from the white collar ones, and made solidarity strikes and strike funds illegal.(Stallings,1978:246; Landsberger,1976:508; Espinosa, 1978:36; Zapata,1976:87)⁷ Because of this institutionalized weakness, the trade unions were forced to seek political allies, with the Communist Party being the most influential party in the CUT.(Landsberger,1976:509; Winn,1986:59)

The creation of the Popular Unity (UP) coalition -- a grouping of six political parties, the most important being the the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Party (SP) -- allowed the Chilean left to run a candidate for president in the September 1970 elections. Allende's candidacy represented a victory for the reformist ideas of the CP over those of the more left-wing SP, which ostensibly rejected the parliamentary road to socialism. The CP -- which had about 60,000 members in 1969, two thirds of them workers -- was a pro-Moscow Stalinist party. (Furci,1984:106-107) Therefore, it was at odds with the more radical SP, a party of 95,000 members (1970) that was heavily influenced by the Cuban example and Gueverist ideas.(Westoby, 1981:149; Pollack,1986:147) The SP's existence was premised on a claim about the inherent limitations of the European experience of both the Second and Third Internationals for the class struggle in Latin America. The 'Marxist' SP believed in a Latin American road to socialism, a view reinforced by the Cuban revolution. For most of its history, the SP was dominated by reformist politics. However, during the 1960s, after the persistent failure of the parliamentary road to socialism in Chile, and Castro's 'success' in Cuba, most of the SP lurched to the left. By 1970, the SP's politics were a mixture of populism, nationalism, Gueverism and Marxism, together with a large dose of pragmatic accommodation to bourgeois democracy.(Nef,1983:230; Winn,1986:58; Raptis,1974:21-22) It was this pragmatism that helps explain the participation of the SP -- a party which declared its commitment to an armed struggle for socialism in 1967 -- in the UP electoral alliance three years later.(Furci, 1984:109)

The leaders of both wings of Chilean social democracy, the SP and the CP, were pragmatists who were able to separate their long term political goals from the day to day

class struggle. (Angell,1972:78,225,232) The leadership of both parties came from their parliamentary caucuses, where a premium was placed on the arts of political compromise, parliamentary maneuvering and electoral campaigning.(Angell,1972:83,121) Furthermore, both parties oriented towards the skilled sections of the industrial working class (and to a lesser extent the empleados), while ignoring the more backward and oppressed sections of the class. (Petras,1969:163-164)

No discussion of the class structure would be complete without a description of the middle classes in Chile, including the non-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie, the professionals, the state functionaries, the classic petty bourgeoisie, the small peasant proprietors, and the medium sized landowners. These classes and strata were a large but extremely heterogenous layer of society, ranging from groups which were the natural allies of the bourgeoisie to those that had more in common with the working class. Because of the diversity of the 'middle classes', their political sympathies were just as varied -- ranging from the fascist right to the far left.

The UP proposed to win all these middle strata to an alliance with the working class against the large landowners, the monopoly capitalists and the foreign multinational corporations. (Gonzalez,1987:45) But, the heterogeneous strata of the 'middle classes' could not all be won to an alliance with the UP, since some of the groups subsumed under the category 'middle classes' had class interests which made it impossible for them to support the UP program of reforming capitalism as a prelude to creating socialism.(Raptis,1974:78; Smirnow,1979:23; Roxborough, 1979:79) The small and medium sized 'national bourgeoisie' was so frightened by the stated aims of the UP and by the growing militancy of the underclasses, that they would support the bourgeois opposition to the UP -- no

matter what their short term conflicts with monopoly and foreign capital.(Smirnow,1979:23) Despite their differences, large and small capital shared a common "interest in the survival of a society led by the bourgeoisie."(Smirnow,1979:26; Evans,1974:13) In short, the so-called "progressive bourgeoisie" (small and domestic based capital) would never assist the UP in stage one (the anti-imperialist struggle) of a two stage process designed to eventually create socialism.

But, some strata of the middle classes could lend the UP great assistance. For example, the loyalties of the 500,000 self-employed individuals -- more than half of whom had an income no higher than that of an unskilled worker in 1970 (e.g., the tens of thousands of street vendors) -- was up for grabs by either capital or labour, whichever side organized it, showed the greatest determination in the class struggle, and offered a positive program to alleviate the problems of that class.(Petras, 1978:207; Smirnow,1979:21-23)

* * * * *

In 1964, Eduardo Frei, the CD president of Chile launched his "revolution in liberty," a series of mild structural reforms (e.g., land reform, partial nationalization of the copper mines, and housing construction) to modernize Chilean capitalism, increase the degree of national control over the economy, introduce agrarian reform, and undercut the growing electoral threat from the left.(Steenland,1973:72; Winn,1986:61; Roxborough,1977:42) This program of reform was designed to persuade the marginal elements of the underclasses (the shantytown dwellers, agrarian workers and the unemployed) to collaborate with the bourgeoisie rather than the industrial working class.(Roxborough,1977:40-41,59-60; Gonzalez,1987:44; Winn,1986:61) However, the CD plan was a dismal failure, inflaming the class struggle rather than extinguishing it.

In 1967, Frei's very weak set of agrarian reforms was held up by those sections of the bourgeoisie wedded to preserving the old system of agrarian class relations, boosting the level of class struggle in the countryside.(Roxborough,1977:42,58-59)⁸ Discontent among rural workers led to an explosion of unionization, strike action and land occupations during the late 1960s, as the rural proletariat radicalized and swung towards supporting the parties of the left.(Cavarozzi,1974:540-542; Kay,1978:125-128)⁹ Similarly, the slow pace of reforms prompted the urban poor to seize more land for their settlements. Furthermore, in 1967, the CD squared off against the working class with proposed changes to the labour code that would have greatly weakened the trade unions. (Stallings,1978:102-105) Later, Frei tried to impose a forced savings scheme that would have compelled workers to accept 25% of their wage increases in corporate shares, saleable only upon unemployment or death. These proposals were defeated by the working class in November 1968, with a general strike.(Roxborough,1977:44-47; Stallings,1978:110-111) The mobilization against Frei strengthened the CUT as working class militancy grew.(Angell:224,226; Roxborough,1977:46-47; Stallings,1978:104-105)

The upsurge in militancy by the underclasses was met with increasing repression.(Roxborough,1977:62,67) At the same time, the Chilean economy slipped back into a pattern of stagnation, high unemployment and inflation, and declining real wages. All these factors encouraged the underclasses (many of whom took Frei's "revolution in liberty" seriously) to initiate their own campaign for reforms -- through land and plant occupations, strikes, and the creation of new forms of organization (especially rural trade unions).(Roxborough,1977:62) The CD program of mild land reform and housing construction proved totally inadequate, while peasants, rural workers and shantytown

dwellers all evaded the political grasp of the CD.(Winn, 1986:62; Gonzalez,1987:43-44)

Frei's "revolution in liberty" raised the expectations of the underclasses without delivering substantial reforms.(Gonzalez,1984:47)¹⁰ During the late 1960s, the underclasses had begun a sustained offensive that would enable the UP to capture the presidency in 1970.

The bourgeoisie entered the 1970 presidential elections split into two camps. Supporters of the NP wanted to resist any further reform and use repression to curtail the disturbances of the late 1960s. Those who supported the CD, believed further reform was necessary.(Roxborough,1977:47,67-68; Stallings, 1978:122) The UP won the election because the CD's program of reforms had failed, because support for the UP had grown, and because the split in the bourgeoisie led both the NP and the CD to field candidates -- a split produced by the heightened struggle from below.(Gonzalez,1984:48; Roxborough,1979:116-117)

(5.2) The Strategies of the Chilean Left in the Transition to Socialism: Reformism and Centrism

The Chilean left was dominated by two political strategies during 1970-1973: the reformist strategy of the moderate socialist leadership of the UP (including the CP and the right wing of the SP, led by the president Salvador Allende), and the centrist* strategy of the radical socialists in the UP (including the left SP, the Movement for Unified Popular

* Throughout this Chapter, we use the word "centrist" as a Marxist term, to refer to working class political parties or political doctrines that posit some mixture of the reformist and revolutionary roads to socialism as a third alternative. In this Chapter, "centrist" refers specifically to the politics of organizations like the left wing of the SP and the MIR.

Action (MAPU) and their allies outside the UP, the MIR). To understand the revolutionary process in Chile, we need to review the politics of these two wings of the working class movement.

FIGURE 5.1 MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE CHILEAN LEFT DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS, 1972-1973

Popular Unity (UP)

LEADER: Salvador Allende

SUPPORTERS: a political coalition of 6 parties, including the CP and the SP and some smaller petite bourgeois parties

POLITICS: UP moderates, reformist; UP radicals, centrist

GOAL: two stage process to create 'socialism': first, electoral victory to achieve national independence; second, further electoral victories to create 'socialism'

Communist Party (CP)

LEADER: Luis Corvalan

SUPPORTERS: industrial and white collar workers

POLITICS: (pro-Moscow) Stalinist/reformist

GOAL: Soviet style 'socialism' achieved through popular front strategy to be achieved through UP coalition

Socialist Party (SP)

right wing (moderates):

LEADER: Salvador Allende

SUPPORTERS: industrial and white collar workers

POLITICS: reformist

GOAL: Soviet/Cuban style socialism, achieved through parliament

left wing (radicals):

LEADER: Carlos Altamirano

SUPPORTERS: industrial and white collar workers

POLITICS: centrist/Guevarist

GOAL: combine 'popular power' with control of existing state to create Cuban style 'socialism', but without guerilla warfare

Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR)

LEADERS: Miguel Enriquez

SUPPORTERS: students, shantytown dwellers

POLITICS: Guevarist/centrist

GOAL: guerilla struggle (later combined with struggle through communal commands) to create Cuban style socialism;

* * * * *

The UP's strategy for achieving socialism in Chile was a variation on Stalin's popular front strategy, first promoted in the 1930s.¹¹ It centered on the need to build a broad, multi-class coalition that embraced the working class, the middle classes and the 'progressive' sections of the domestic bourgeoisie, to win -- through electoral and constitutional processes rather than class confrontation and revolution -- the battle against "feudalism," monopoly capital and imperialism. The UP hoped to initiate a period of state supervised national economic development that would prepare the ground for a later transition to socialism -- as introduced from above by a future UP government.(Munck,1984:29-36; Zammit,1972:255-286; Allende, 1973:138-166; Evans,1974:12; Furci,1984:109) At the core of this stagist, gradualist and statist strategy was a thoroughly elitist vision of socialism as akin to Soviet or Cuban style state capitalism.(Petras,1978:223)

The UP's strategy assumed it was necessary to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution against the landlords (with land reform), eliminate the control of foreign imperialism over Chile's resources (with nationalization), and break the power of Chilean monopoly capital (with nationalization) before striving for socialism.(Zammit,1972:255-259; DeVylder,1976:34-35; Raptis,1974:14-15) Only when a UP controlled state had inserted itself as mediator between international capital and the Chilean population would the country experience the further development, required to make socialism possible.(Furci,1984:107; Raptis,1974: 18) The moderate socialists believed a UP government could build a national alliance between the "progressive bourgeoisie" (i.e., the

small and medium capitalists) and the working class -- an alliance that was necessary to undertake the task of further economic development. Only a UP government could mediate between capital and labour, controlling labour to get increased productivity from the working class, and regulating small and medium capital to get a coordinated national economic effort, win national liberation and avoid catastrophic social conflict.

(Sandford,1976:71)

The UP was in for a rude shock. All its basic assumptions would prove incorrect. There was no parliamentary road to socialism, even for a government prepared to take a prolonged detour through a stage of state sponsored capitalist development. The UP overestimated their ability to control the economy from the president's office, and "underestimated the power of the Chilean bourgeoisie and imperialism to sabotage the economy and prevent the UP from gaining the political support" they needed to make their strategy viable.(Steenland,1974a:10) The UP's efforts to transform the economy, given their stated goal of creating socialism, frightened all sections of the bourgeoisie.

(Roxborough,1977:73) Hemmed in by a commitment to legality on the one hand, and a refusal to use mass repression on the other hand (the UP did not want to lose the electoral support of the underclasses to their leftist critics), the UP would stick to its self-appointed position as mediator between capital and labour. In the end, the UP would please neither side, and lose its ability to mediate between the two. After October 1972, both the 'progressive bourgeoisie' and sections of the working class acted independently of the UP, as Chile headed towards the revolutionary crisis that would destroy the moderates' political project.

There was nothing revolutionary about the 'Chilean road to socialism'. It contained no challenge to the dominance of capital, no proposals to dismantle the state, and no ringing cries about spreading a proletarian revolution beyond the borders of Chile.(Gonzalez,1987:45; Evans,1974:80) In practice, the UP program meant "compromises with the right wing, deliberate sabotage of independent working class initiatives, and a refusal to prepare or to carry through a struggle for power."(Prieto, 1974:9) It was a program to develop a more advanced form of capitalism, under the direction of the state. It was premised on the idea the UP could perform a balancing act between capital and labour, convincing the former to cooperate because the UP could prevent social revolution, and develop the economy, while suggesting to workers the UP could deliver on major reforms in the short term, and socialism in the long term. (Evans,1974:10,33-34)

* * * * *

The presence of a large centrist current within the UP made it difficult for the Allende government to use repression against the underclasses. Therefore, it was impossible for the Chilean ruling classes, including small and medium capitalists, to find the UP acceptable as a government.(Ali,1978:59-60)

The centrists rejected the two stage theory for achieving socialism, seeing the struggle against imperialism, monopoly capital and the large landowners as part of a process which could only succeed through victorious workers' revolution over all Chilean capitalists.(DeVylder,1976:40; Smirnow,1979:49) Thus, the radical wing of the UP rejected the idea the working class should ally itself with any section of the Chilean bourgeoisie. For them, there was no "progressive" bourgeoisie that could be mobilized in support of an attack on monopoly capital and imperialism; the entire bourgeoisie was reactionary. The

centrists argued the working class should ally itself with the peasants and shantytown dwellers, and campaign to win the support of the petty bourgeoisie by demonstrating greater power and determination than the bourgeoisie in the class struggle.

(Smirnow,1979:25)

The centrists rejected the idea the working class should restrict itself to a legal struggle for power, warning of the inevitability of an "armed confrontation" with the bourgeoisie. (Smirnow,1979:60) Unfortunately, they did little to prepare for that armed confrontation, and nothing to prepare politically or organizationally for leading a mass insurrection against the bourgeois state (including the UP government). For example, the centrists never made a serious intervention in the army, never organized a workers' militia, and never undertook serious preparations to defend the working class in case of a military coup.(Steenland,1979:98; Smirnow,1979:14-15)

The centrists did not conceive of socialism as the self-emancipation of the working class. They shared with the moderates the same elitist vision of socialism as something created from the top down by a party using the state machine. Where they differed from Allende and the CP, was in the belief that use of the state machine had to be supplemented by the creation of extra-parliamentary organs of popular power -- such as the industrial cordones (inter-factory councils of workers' delegates) and communal commands that developed in 1972. For the radicals in the UP, the parliamentary road to socialism was doomed unless it was combined with a vigorous campaign to build extra-parliamentary bases of power for the government. The centrist leaders viewed the organs of 'popular power' as instruments that would give the UP government more leverage to push through radical reforms of the Chilean state machine. (Valenzuela,1975:159-161)

Although the centrists were highly critical of the reformist strategy followed by the moderates, they acted as a 'loyal opposition' to the UP, and to the capitalist state the UP defended. The centrists would demonstrate over and over again that they were unwilling to split from the UP and establish a rival political organization to compete for the direction of the working class movement. And, they were unwilling to call for the workers' movement to smash the capitalist state. By remaining in the UP, the centrists limited themselves to curbing the degree of class collaboration by the moderates, and creating the illusion that Allende's government could be pushed to the left. (Roxborough,1977:34)

In the continual battle between the reformists and the centrists in the UP, the former prevailed most of the time. The reformists established the positive direction for the government and the trade union bureaucracy, while the centrists could occasionally veto particular plans. The whole UP coalition was often paralyzed by internal disputes between these two wings of the movement. For example, the radicals and the moderates differed on how widespread the nationalization of industry should be (a small number of enterprises designated by the government, versus all major enterprises), the method by which nationalization should be accomplished (by governmental decree from above, or by working class initiative from below), and the role of workers' participation in the nationalized industries (as the bottom unit in a hierarchical chain of command that originates with the UP's ministry of the economy, or as the basis of workers' control in the plants, the first stage of workers' power socially).(Winn,1986:165-172) And yet, such disagreements never led to an open split. Even when the right made it clear the parliamentary road to socialism was blocked, and masses of workers moved spontaneously

towards a revolutionary road to socialism, the centrists did not abandon the UP.

The discrepancy between the stated goals of the UP leadership and the reality of the class struggle in 1972-1973, meant Allende was forced to choose between his aspirations to stay on the parliamentary road to socialism (which necessitated periodic clamp downs on the militancy of the underclasses so the UP could pursue its hope of building an alliance with the "middle classes"), and adoption of the centrist one (which would have meant using his position in the state to undermine the ruling classes and to promote the self-organization of the working class).(Roxborough,1977:72) The choice he and other moderate UP leaders made was tragic for the Chilean working class.

There is one other political party on the left worth mentioning here, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). It was a small Guevarist organization formed in 1965 from dissidents in the CP, SP and other parties.(Munck,1984:103-104) Composed primarily of students and intellectuals, it advocated armed struggle by a small band of professional revolutionaries to achieve -- through a prolonged guerilla war -- state power on behalf of the people.(Furci,1984:99) Because the MIR's strategy for achieving socialism was premised on the substitution of its own military action for the mass action of the working class, and because it aimed to install itself in power rather than the working class, it had more in common with the Blanquist tradition than the Marxist one.(Ali, 1978:67; Gonzalez,1984:71; Furci,1984: 84)

(5.2) The Dynamics of the Revolutionary Process in Chile

In this section, we examine the dynamics of the revolutionary process in Chile, commenting on the shifts in the balance of power between capital and labour in the period 1970-1973. Although we focus on the period of revolutionary crisis (October 1972 to September 1973), it is also necessary to consider the class struggle between the September 1970 election of Allende and the beginning of the revolutionary crisis with the October 1972 truckers' strike.

FIGURE 5.1: KEY EVENTS AND MAIN PERIODS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN CHILE

<u>Key Events</u>	<u>Main Periods</u>	<u>Balance of Power</u>
	prior to Sept. 1970	<u>NON-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION</u>
UP election victory (Sept. 4, 1970)	<u>(Sept.4 - Nov. 4 '70)</u>	ruling class on the defensive; various attempts to prevent Allende from assuming office defeated
Allende assumes office (Nov.4, 1970)	<u>(Nov.'70 - Dec.'71)</u>	legislative offensive by the UP government; bourgeoisie divided and on the defensive
March of the Empty Pots (Dec. 1971)	<u>(Dec. '71 - May '72)</u>	parliamentary road to reform blocked; UP debates strategy (consolidate or advance); masses on uncoordinated offensive
Lo Curro Conference of UP (May 1972)	<u>(May '72 - Oct.'72)</u>	UP on the defensive trying to consolidate; fragmented offensive by masses; ruling class on uncoordinated economic offensive

Truckers' strike and
working class response
(October.'72)

(Oct.'72 - Nov.'72)

an extra-parliamentary
offensive by capital;
counter-acted by a working
class offensive creating a
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION

Allende forms Generals'
cabinet, declares State
of Emergency (Nov.'72)

(Nov.72 - June '73)

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION FADES;
working class offensive
fragments; stalemate
between capital and labour
presided over by
UP/military cabinet until
March election

Tancozo (June 1973)

(June-July 1973)

premature counter-
revolutionary uprising by
isolated section of
military, and massive
working class offensive
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION CONTINUES

Allende permits military
to search for arms; UP
demands occupied factories
be returned (July 1973)

(July -Sept. 73)

working class offensive
fades;
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION
EVAPORATING; counter-
revolutionary situation
developing

September 11, 1973
military coup begins

(Sept.11, 1973 -)

REVOLUTIONARY
CRISIS TERMINATED;
COUNTER-REVOLUTION
BEGINS

* * * * *

The divisions in the ranks of the Chilean ruling classes enabled Salvador Allende and the UP to win the September 1970 presidential election with 36.2% of the vote (the NP and CD candidates split the rest). Because a full two-thirds of the electorate voted for serious reform (even the CD's candidate ran on a platform of accelerated reforms) during a period of unprecedented mobilization by the underclasses, and because Allende won, the election was a serious political defeat for the ruling class.(Evans,1974:31-32; Spence,1978:139; Roxborough, 1976:196; DeVylder,1976:32) Allende's victory gave the UP control of the executive wing of the state machine. After the election, the CDs struck a deal with Allende which allowed his election to be ratified in the Congress. The new president signed a "Statute of Guarantees" -- a document which committed Allende to act within the limitations imposed by the constitution and the bourgeois dominated Congress.(Roxborough,1976:197-198; 1977:104; Gonzalez,1987:45-46) It obliged him to leave the bourgeois state intact and not to attempt a fundamental transformation of Chilean society.¹²

The election of the UP did not immediately create a revolutionary crisis in Chile. The ruling class split did not extend into the heart of the state machine (i.e., the army), nor had the working class created institutions of dual power. But, the election had shifted the balance of class power towards the underclasses and 'their government'.(Evans,1974:81) For one thing, the capture of the presidency meant Allende could prevent the army and the police from being used against workers, peasants and squatters.(Smirnow,1979:6-7,130) Thus, although the UP's nationalist and reformist program did not directly threaten the existence of Chilean capitalism, the government's reluctance to see state repression against

the underclasses did.

Secondly, the UP had come to power on a wave of rising militancy and organization among the underclasses.(Gonzalez, 1987:41-42; Smirnow,1979:6-7) There were millions of workers, squatters and peasants who were inspired by the election of Allende to take direct action to win substantive reforms, without waiting for the UP to act.(Smirnow,1979:12,54; Roxborough,1979: 102; Valenzuela,1978:68-69) The resulting initiatives taken from below did not coincide with the UP's plans for a "legalistic revolution from above."(Winn,1976a:75) The UP's strategy did not include mobilizing the masses to fight for reforms.(Beecham,1983: 9; Santa Lucia,1976:128-129; Petras,1974b:22-26) The masses were only to be mobilized for elections and to win the battle for increased productivity in the nationalized corporations. But, the UP's expectation the masses would surrender their initiative to the new government proved extremely naive.(Smirnow,1979:63) Throughout the government's life it would be constantly pushed from below by the masses, as the electoral victory unleashed forces which pushed Chile towards a revolutionary crisis.(Evans, 1974:33; Winn,1986:142)

The possibility that a revolutionary crisis might erupt was inherent in the long term economic problems that were eating away at the social fabric of Chilean capitalism, and which Allende inherited in 1970: the problems of inflation (which averaged 26% between 1966-1970), economic stagnation (growth in the GNP averaged 1.4% between 1966-1970), agrarian inefficiency, poverty, inadequate social services, growing unemployment (officially only 6% in Santiago, but actually closer to 18%) and underemployment, a growing foreign debt, and dependence on copper for over 80% of export earnings.(Roxborough,1977:17,28-29;42,56-57; DeVyllder, 1976:21-22; Gonzalez,1984:47; Espinosa,1978:45; Stallings,1978:

49-50)

* * * * *

By April 1971, the UP had already taken enough initiatives to convince the underclasses that it was serious about reforming Chilean capitalism (e.g., redistributing income towards the underclasses by boosting real wage levels, imposing price controls, speeding up agrarian reform, nationalizing the banks, expropriating the copper mines, increasing social spending, etc.).(Petras,1974b:21; Roxborough,1977:96; Winn,1976a:74; 1986:74) As a result, the April 1971 municipal elections gave Allende's coalition 51% of the total vote.(Evans,1974:73; Roxborough,1977:84)

During the first six months of UP rule, the UP's political victory had a minor impact on life in the factories, although workers showed greater confidence in the struggle for economic demands.(Winn,1976a:75-76; 1986:5-6) But, the second UP electoral victory, plus the government's highly publicized plan to nationalize some of the large industries inspired some factory occupations in April and May.(Winn,1986:135,145,148; Ali,1978:63) Even though that action contravened the UP's plans, Allende was forced to ratify the nationalizations from below to retain control over the underclasses.(Winn,1986:145,148; Ali,1978:64)

By November 1971, the copper mines and at least 90 key enterprises had been nationalized, with the UP creating structures to encourage workers' participation in the management of state industries.(Roxborough,1977:89; DeVyllder,1976:145) But,

less than a quarter of the enterprises that had come under state control were on the government's list for incorporation into the social property area (APS) revealing that it was the workers who were leading the way, shaping the social property area according to their own...priorities.(Winn,1986:228)

The first year of the UP government was quite successful. Their economic reforms temporarily improved the economy: unemployment dropped, unused industrial capacity was tapped, and industrial production increased by 10.9% in 1971.(Steenland, 1973:80; Gonzalez,1984:50) Meanwhile, the UP boosted their electoral support and kept the right on the defensive. However, that success was deceptive. As long as the capitalist nature of Chilean society did not appear to be threatened, the bourgeoisie was unable to unite behind a single plan to deal with the UP. (Prieto,1974:23; Gonzalez,1984:50) But, the refusal of Chilean workers to follow the UP plan for a gradual, limited, and tightly controlled process of reform, controlled from above, pushed the bourgeoisie towards support for extra-parliamentary political action in 1972.

Furthermore, by the end of 1971, "the reserves of productive capacity, stocks and foreign exchange" which the UP used to dramatically expand the economy that year "were depleted."(Kay, 1975:4) When serious economic problems developed in 1972, the UP would try to halt the reform process. But, one year of reforms proved insufficient for the workers, squatters and peasants. Thus, year two of the UP's mandate confronted it with three almost insoluble problems: the growing opposition of the bourgeoisie (foreign and domestic, large and small), the worsening economic crisis, and the militancy from below.

TABLE 5.2: THE GROWTH OF OCCUPATIONS AS A FORM OF CLASS STRUGGLE, 1968-1971

	1968	1969	1970	1971
Urban lands	8	73	220	175
factories	5	24	133	339
farms	16	121	368	658

SOURCE: Roxborough 1977:61

* * * * *

The December 1971 "march of the empty pots" -- a protest against consumer shortages staged by middle class women -- was the first successful bourgeois mobilization against the UP government.(Prieto,1974:23-24; Roxborough,1977:194) It marked the bourgeoisie's turn from the tactics of constitutional obstruction (e.g., refusal to increase taxes on the wealthy) to economic sabotage and extra-parliamentary action. (Smirnow,1979:56; Valenzuela,1978:58-59) By the second quarter of 1972, there was a discernible escalation and hardening of the class struggle, as Chilean society became increasingly polarized between advocates of more change and supporters of a return to the old regime.

The UP attempt to win the support of the middle classes with policies of easy credit and tax concessions was a total failure. Other UP measures undermined the support of small property holders for the government. Inflation, large wage increases for the working class, and price freezes hurt the small and medium bourgeoisie, while the government's refusal to use repression against the land and factory seizures created uncertainty among small property owners. Meanwhile, the creation of community based Supply and Price Committees (JAPs) by the UP, threatened the monopoly of thousands of small shopkeepers over the distribution of consumer goods.(Kay,1975b:10; Faundez,1988:231)

During late 1971 and early 1972, the ruling classes regrouped, as monopoly capital built an alliance with small capital and strata of the middle classes.(Roxborough, 1977:86-

88,114-115; Winn,1986:230; Spence,1978:145-146) Throughout 1971, the 'middle classes' had remained "quiescent." But, once the bourgeoisie began to mount a united extra-parliamentary campaign against the UP, they created a pole of attraction for the discontented elements of the middle strata. "Without the bourgeoisie's initiatives...the petty bourgeoisie would not have become the mobilized counter-revolutionary force it became." (Petras,1978:209; Evans,1974:107-108) The political support of the petty bourgeoisie was "available to whatever political power was capable of organizing and directing its grievances," and that contest was won by the bourgeoisie. (Petras,1978:207)

In 1972, the ruling class turned increasingly to economic sabotage, hoping a weakened economy would discredit the UP government. The American bourgeoisie imposed an "invisible" economic blockade, cutting off most aid and credits to the Chilean government (from the U.S., the IMF, the World Bank and other such institutions), and preventing Chile from obtaining much needed spare parts and machinery.¹³ For their part, the Chilean bourgeoisie engaged in disinvestment, hoarding, speculation and promotion of the growing black market to exacerbate the economic crisis. The Chilean Congress refused to make the appropriations required for the Government's budget, forcing the UP to rely on deficit financing rather than tax increases.(Kay 1979b:9) As a result, by mid-1972, inflation exceeded 100 percent for many key items and shortages had become common.(Roxborough,1977:99) Furthermore, the increase in industrial production fell from 10.9% in 1971 to 3% in 1972. (Prieto,1974:24; Steenland,1973:91; Winn,1986:229-230; Valenzuela,1978:63; Roxborough,1977:112-114,151-158)

Despite all this, the primary cause of the economic crisis was not bourgeois sabotage. The inflation and shortages (of consumer goods, raw materials and machinery)

followed from the very premises of the UP's economic program and from the actions of the underclasses (e.g., real wages grew by about 30% in 1971). (Winn,1986:229-230; Leiva,1986:13) In boosting wages they way they did, the UP were gambling that production could be similarly increased to meet the new demand. The UP had rather naively ignored the possibility the bourgeoisie might block the expansion of production to sabotage the government.(Steenland, 1973:83)¹⁴ By early 1972, the UP's economic plan, and therefore its entire strategy, had collapsed.(Roxborough,1976:200) The UP's orderly "revolution from above" was off track. Economic problems -- like rising inflation and consumer shortages -- threatened the recent wage gains of labour, and promoted further class confrontation. By early 1972, the UP government was losing its grip on important sections of the working class, at the same time as it was losing its ability to appeal for cooperation from the ruling classes.

Between February and May 1972 the UP conducted an internal debate over strategy, because Allende's policy of gradual and controlled change had broken down. Control of the presidency proved insufficient to solve the social crisis in the absence of full state power and complete control over the economy, or support from a section of the bourgeoisie and an ability to repress the underclasses. At two conferences of the UP coalition the moderates and radicals clashed over the future economic and political direction of the government. The moderates wanted to halt the process of reform, refrain from further nationalizations, prove their commitment to legality by clamping down on the movement from below, and seek negotiations with the CDs to win bourgeois cooperation. The radicals favored accelerating the reform process, nationalizing more industries to get greater economic control, transferring the burden of the economic crisis onto the rich with taxes, creating a

popular assembly to replace the bourgeois parliament, and encouraging further radicalization of the underclasses to "advance without compromise." (Gonzalez, 1987:48-49; Birchall, 1973:10; Evans, 1974: 98-101; Roxborough, 1977:165) Because they believed armed confrontation with the bourgeoisie was inevitable, the radicals (or centrists) wanted to use the workers' militancy to create more favorable circumstances for the conflict. But, the radicals did not question Allende's claim the UP had created dual power by taking over the presidency. Thus, the radicals' disagreements with the moderates "were quantitative rather than qualitative" in character. (Gonzalez, 1987:48-49)

At the Lo Curro conference in May, the moderates finally prevailed over the radicals, as the UP called an end to the reform process and sought to halt the class struggle. (Raptis, 1974:55) Allende cut back the UP program of nationalizations, stepped up his appeals to workers for discipline and moderation, and increased his attacks on those engaged in illegal factory and land seizures -- hoping those measures would placate the bourgeoisie and make an alliance with the CDs possible. (Birchall, 1973:10; Gonzalez, 1987:52-54; Faundez, 1988:231-232) But, those actions proved insufficient to impress the ruling classes. Because he could not endanger his electoral support by permitting large scale repression against the mass movement, Allende could not win the trust of the CDs whom he courted so assiduously. (Birchall, 1973:11; Smirnow, 1979:47,66; Winn, 1976a:79)

In August, the UP began to implement economic changes in accordance with the Lo Curro decisions. A major devaluation of the currency led to consumer shortages and an explosion in prices, pushing the inflation rate from 28% in June to over 100% in September. (Faundez, 1988: 234) Despite the UP's swing to the right, Chilean workers

responded to the economic crisis by occupying plants, striking for higher wages to offset inflation, and organizing to combat the consumer shortages.(Roxborough,1977: 147; Valenzuela,1978:55) Allende's advice to be disciplined, produce more and vote for the UP offered little to workers faced with immediate economic problems.(Evans,1974:111-112) But, the government's swing to the right did create the possibility of an open split between the UP leaders and the radicalizing elements in the working class.(Smirnow,1979:57-58)

After Lo Curro, there were numerous signs the working class was radicalizing.(Winn,1976a:79) First, in May, workers in the textile industry (80% of which had been expropriated by the state) held an industry wide conference which criticized the government for being "bourgeois and bureaucratic" in the way it ran their industry. Textile workers demanded that workers' participation at the level of the factory be supplemented by workers' participation in planning for the entire industry, in a development which showed vanguard workers were seeking greater power in the society at large.(Winn,1976b:596-598)

Second, in June, workers in the Santiago area created the first cordon in the Cerillos district, when workers at three occupied factories joined forces with those in neighbouring plants to form an inter-factory committee.(Spence,1978:148; Roxborough,1976:203-204; Gonzalez,1987:51) In July, the cordon called for workers' control of production, further expropriation of industry, and the creation of a workers' assembly to replace the bourgeois parliament -- making more radical proposals for the future direction of the class struggle than anything that had emerged from the debate inside the UP.(Gonzalez,1987:51; Roxborough,1977:170-171; Raptis,1974:34-35) Thus, while the UP leadership was shifting

to the right, with the UP radicals tailing behind them, key sections of the working class were shifting left.

Third, in late July, three thousand delegates from various working class parties, trade unions and other organizations met at a Popular Assembly in Concepcion -- an extended public meeting organized by the local SP and MIR to debate alternatives to the UP's strategy of halting the reform process. Denounced by the government, the Assembly debated how to force the UP leadership to abandon the search for an alliance with the CDs, and seek an alliance with the peasants and urban poor instead. The event showed the growing influence of radical/centrist politics and the overall shift to the left by some workers.(Gonzalez,1984:60; 1987:53; Smirnow,1979:62; Faundez,1988:233)

Mid-1972 negotiations between the UP and CDs were sabotaged by the opposition of the right wing CDs and the radicals in the UP left. While Allende would not adopt the strategy of the UP radicals, neither could he use mass repression against the factory and land seizures (as demanded by the CDs) with elections less than nine months away.(Petras,1978:214) Once the UP's talks with the CDs had collapsed, Allende's "Chilean Road to Socialism" had clearly become an anachronism.(Roxborough,1976:199) From then on, the UP was on the defensive, marking time until March 1973 when Allende hoped to win a majority in the Congressional elections. Only then could he break the legislative stalemate and regain the initiative lost to rank and file workers on the left and the bourgeois opposition on the right.(Roxborough,1977:108-110; Valenzuela,1978:75-77)

Under pressure of the threat from below, the PN and the CD were pushed into an alliance to force the UP from office. By July 1972, even the most liberal sections of the ruling classes recognized the Statute of Guarantees, disinvestment and parliamentary

obstruction were not sufficient to halt the movement. By mid-year, the entire ruling class believed extra-parliamentary activity was necessary to provoke a crisis which could force Allende from office. The liberal section of the ruling class did not yet support a military coup. They wanted a campaign that combined constitutional and media harassment, economic sabotage, and the use of grass roots organizations of the middle strata capable of taking extra-parliamentary action against the government. Hence the promotion of the gremios: the associations of employers, professionals, and small entrepreneurs that would play such a key role in October 1972. (Roxborough, 1976:202,205-207)

After the summer of 1972, the UP never regained sufficient control over the working class to present itself to the bourgeoisie as a partner worth negotiating with. Nor was Allende able to win support from any section of the ruling class -- a prerequisite for convincing workers they need not take independent action to protect their immediate interests. By mid-1972, the UP's position as arbiter between capital and labour was no longer viable. Nevertheless, Allende and the moderates persisted in their belief they could halt the slide towards civil war -- despite their growing inability to influence either side. As the second anniversary of the UP's electoral victory approached, the UP options were diminishing. Allende could either submit to the bourgeoisie's demands and effectively surrender governmental power, or he could abandon the commitment to legality and move towards a bid for complete state power. There was no longer any middle ground.

As Chilean society polarized the position of the moderates on both sides -- the UP moderates and the 'left' wing of the CDs -- "became increasingly less viable." (Roxborough, 1976:212) Furthermore, the middle classes and sections of the working class that were traditionally inactive, were being forced by circumstances to take sides. By

the third quarter of 1972, the economic crisis, the militancy of the underclasses, and the growing organization of the ruling classes guaranteed the disparate elements of the class struggle would centralize around some national issue. The class struggle was about to qualitatively change, ceasing to be the sort of battle that could be resolved with elections or constitutional squabbles. In October, the class struggle was transformed by the development of a revolutionary crisis that meant the impasse could only be resolved by either an insurrection or a counter-revolutionary coup.(Smirnow,1979:66-67)

* * * * *

On October 9th 1972, the Chilean bourgeoisie launched its offensive with a capital strike by the owners of the trucking industry -- something that attacked the working class at one of its weakest points: "the distribution network...an area in which the workers were few in number and badly organized." (Prieto, 1974:26)¹⁵ The next day 100,000 opponents of the UP demonstrated in Santiago with the support of the NP and the CD. On October 13th, a variety of small and large business associations, or gremios (including those of the manufacturers, retailers, taxi drivers, and small industrialists) declared their support for the truckers and announced they were joining the strike. On October 18th, the reactionary strike was joined by professional associations, including bank employees, doctors, lawyers, dentists, university professors and others. (Smirnow,1979:68-71; Steenland,1973:92) The bosses' strike, which lasted 26 days, was designed to disrupt the economy, discredit the UP, and -- NP supporters hoped -- perhaps provoke a military coup.(Steenland, 1972:93) More liberal sections of the ruling classes, hoped the strike would force Allende to resign or, at the very least, cripple the government in the period leading to the March 1973 Congressional elections.(Gonzalez,1987:54-56; Evans,1974:127) By shifting their offensive

from the halls of congress into the streets, the bourgeoisie escalated the class struggle with the aid of an army of supporters from the middle strata. The strike ended in early November when the UP made some major concessions to the bourgeoisie (even though the bosses' strike had been neutralized by the actions of the working class) and accepted three generals into the cabinet to restore order and to guarantee the March 1973 congressional elections would be run fairly.(Gonzalez,1973:36)

The bosses' strike revealed the bankruptcy of the government. The UP proved absolutely incapable of a serious response to the crisis, placing the country under martial law, calling for the masses to refrain from taking action, and asking them to trust the government to negotiate an end to the strike while the military kept order.(Gonzalez,1987:54-56; Evans,1974: 123,128,131) Predictably, the UP's efforts to contain the working class response proved wholly unsuccessful. While the UP counselled passivity and sought negotiations with the bourgeoisie, the centrists in the UP offered no alternative.

(Gonzalez,1987:56,59; Raptis,1974:55; Santa Lucia,1976:143; Petras,1978:224-225) Thus, it was left for the working class to mobilize independently from its UP 'leaders', to restore transportation, establish an alternative means of distributing goods and services, maintain production and create alternative services for those that had been removed (e.g., alternative medical services).(Santa Lucia,1976:142)

Rank and file Chilean workers responded by forming mass organizations to control and maintain production, militias or guards to defend their factories and their communities from attack, and organizations to distribute raw materials and consumer goods. Industrial cordones were inter-factory committees based in the industrial districts (in Santiago, 11

such organizations were created), while communal commands were community based committees that linked workers, peasants, urban slum dwellers, local party activists and others. Workers seized control of about 100 private sector factories (in addition to the 230 already nationalized), establishing factory committees that could maintain production and defend their workplace from employer sabotage.(Raptis,1974:54; Faundez,1988:236) In working class districts people either forced stores and supermarkets to open, or opened them under the control of the local population, as the government sponsored Supply and Price Committees (JAPs) became mass organizations controlled from below. In the process, they were transformed from organs of class collaboration into instruments of class struggle.(Santa Lucia,1976:142; Roxborough, 1977:173) Trucks were commandeered by workers and community activists to establish new networks for the distribution of food and raw materials.(Spence,1978:156) Hospital workers took over control of their workplace and sought to maintain services without the doctors.(Gonzalez,1987:54-57)

The October events politicized and centralized the fragmented class struggle for reforms and gave it a national focus: defence of the working class and the government from the bourgeois offensive, and the demand the UP take energetic action against those involved in the strike and in support of the new working class institutions of dual power.(Raptis,1974:50) By taking direct action in place of the paralyzed UP, the working class had indeed created a form of decentralized dual power.

In organizing the self-defence of the underclasses, the cordones and communal commands acted as "organizing center(s) for a number of struggles, coordinating them and providing them with a working class leadership."(Gonzalez,1987:58) Through these new organs of class struggle, the underclasses evaded the control of the UP and, for the first

time, passed over onto a synchronized, class-wide offensive.(Valenzuela,1978:79; Petras,1974:564) (The scale of this upsurge by the Chilean working class is evident from the size of the two largest cordones -- Cerillos and Vicuna Mackenna, both in Santiago -- which included 600 factories and tens of thousands of workers.(Gonzalez,1984:60))

The October counter-offensive by Chilean workers smashed some of the restrictions imposed on the workers' movement by the UP's reformism, deepening the consciousness of the working class. The workers' response to the capital strike also created a barrier to right wing aspirations which was far more powerful than the legality the UP had relied upon.(Smirnow,1979:72) The mobilization of the masses warned the bourgeoisie that further economic sabotage might mean social revolution, and a military coup might lead to civil war.

Without this spontaneous action from below, the bourgeoisie would have paralyzed the economy and forced Allende to accede to their demands. By maintaining production, Chilean workers handed the bourgeoisie a major defeat, and saved Allende's government. (Gonzalez,1987:58) When the working class counter-offensive hit full stride, the bourgeoisie became frightened as they lost control over more of the Chilean economy.(Smirnow,1979:75) By the end of October, the bourgeoisie was ready to suspend their strike. Allende gave them the opportunity by conceding to some of their demands and accepting generals into his cabinet.(Raptis, 1974:53; Evans,1974:130-133) When the strike ended on November 4th, it left a new balance of power between the working class, the UP government, the bourgeoisie and the army.

The bosses' strike polarized Chilean society, forcing "every organization, and almost every individual...to take a position for or against the government."(Steenland,1973:93;

Smirnow,1979: 70) "The open confrontation reinforced a process of internal unity and external radicalization in each of the two blocs. In both alliances, the hardline prevailed over the soft line." (Israel Z,1989:220) The October 1972 events clarified the strengths and weaknesses, and the disposition of all the various class forces in Chile.(Steenland,1973:93-94) It showed the bourgeoisie still controlled the economy, even if they did not control the entire state apparatus. Furthermore, the October strike made it clear the bourgeoisie had won a large following among the middle classes -- including most of the petty bourgeoisie, the small capitalists, white collar workers, landowners, etc. -- for its position of militant confrontation with the government and the working class. The paralysis and indecision of the UP government had driven many of the wavering "sectors of the population into the camp of the counter-revolution," the more dynamic and aggressive of the two sides during 1972.(Steenland,1973:93-94) Since the UP did not offer a positive solution to the crisis of Chilean society, they failed to win those strata of the middle classes that might have rallied to the cause of the working class: the artisans, small shopkeepers, merchants and professionals.(Petras,1978:217) But the strike also showed the ruling classes had badly underestimated their opponent, being completely unprepared for the working class counteroffensive. Furthermore, the polarization of Chilean society in October, stripped the bourgeois parties of many of their working class supporters, as more backward sections of the working class were forced into joint action with the more class conscious sections of the working class in defence of their ability to work and to eat.(Raptis,1974:69; Roxborough,1977:167)

The strike revealed the weakness of the UP, since Allende was forced to rely on the temporary support of the generals to prop up his government. On the other hand, it

demonstrated the enormous power and creativity of the Chilean working class. With the creation of the cordones and the communal commands, with the occupation and seizure of factories, and with the establishment of independent, working class run distribution networks, the basis for a variety of forms of dual power had finally emerged --even if dual power at the level of the state was very weakly developed. The bosses' strike and the working class offensive had created a pre-revolutionary situation.

Up until October 1972, the situation had been one of mounting class struggle that had not yet assumed revolutionary proportions. That changed with the truckers' strike. The immediate, short-term cause of the revolutionary crisis, the event which triggered the dramatic confrontation of October 1972, was the bourgeoisie's extra-parliamentary campaign to topple the Allende government. The bourgeoisie had overplayed its hand, and deepened the crisis in a way it never intended. By raising the stakes, the bourgeoisie had pushed the Chilean working class onto the stage of history.

The rise of the cordones posed a major problem for Allende, since the UP's whole strategy presupposed an ability to control the working class.(Gonzalez,1987:59) Having lost that control in October, the UP leaders devoted the next few months to re-establishing it. Moderate leaders of the UP, like Allende, failed to recognize the October 1972 events had unleashed a revolutionary crisis which made the position of the UP moderates not longer tenable.(Gonzalez,1987:59)

Finally, the strike also demonstrated that the armed forces were not yet united behind the idea a coup was necessary.¹⁶ The military leaders were split between those who favored a coup and those who followed the CDs in wanting a 'constitutional' resolution of the dispute, with the latter group in control. But, even those officers who favored a coup

recognized there had been insufficient preparation.(Smirnow,1979:76-77; Steenland, 1973:93-94,99) Thus, when it became clear the confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the working class had been fought to a temporary standstill, senior military leaders agreed to join the UP cabinet as a 'neutral' force to referee the stalemate until the March 1973 elections.

In October, it was the workers' initiative together with the 'neutrality' of the still internally divided armed forces that blocked the employers' offensive against the government. Instead of paralyzing the economy and toppling the government, the bourgeois action created a more unified, active and aggressive working class movement.(Smirnow,1979:74) But, if the bourgeoisie was not yet able to bring down the government, and the working class not yet capable of mounting an armed insurrection, the government was not yet willing to break with either its working class base or the "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie it was pursuing as an ally. The revolutionary crisis would continue.

* * * * *

In November, Allende relied on the only institution not directly implicated on either side of the confrontation -- the military -- to shore up the power of his government and to act as the official "arbiters in government-opposition relationships." (Smirnow,1979:70-71; Valenzuela,1978:80) He declared a national state of emergency and took three generals into his cabinet, effectively handing temporary control of the country to the army. Allende promised his opponents the working class would return the factories they had seized to their owners, guaranteed the petty bourgeoisie the mechanisms of direct distribution established by the working class would be dismantled, and stated there would be no

sanctions against those involved in the bosses' strike. (Gonzalez,1987:60-61; Santa Lucia,1976:143; Roxborough,1977:117; Spence,1978:156) That enabled the right to call off their faltering strike, and stopped the working class offensive dead in its tracks. Both sides hoped to resolve the stalemate in their favor with the March elections.(Smirnow,1979:70-71,75) Between November 1972 and March 1973, the military would co-govern with the UP, acting as guarantors there would be 'fair' elections in March 1973.(Steenland,1973:105) With the generals in the UP cabinet, Allende pursued "a clear policy of rapprochement with business circles...(while-BM) applying the brakes to popular organs like the cordones." (Smirnow,1979:103) Allende celebrated his alliance with the generals as a substitute for the one he had been unable arrange with the 'progressive bourgeoisie' (i.e., the CD politicians). (Joxe,1976:262-263; Gonzalez,1987:62)

The new UP government imposed a curfew, arrested some workers, denounced the cordones as "parallel" and "anarchist" organizations that should submit to union leadership, and tried to return property seized by workers during the strike to its owners. But it encountered a lot of resistance from the working class.(Gonzalez,1987:62-63) Nevertheless, a mass demobilization of the working class took place. "Within a month almost all the organizations that the... (working class-BM) had created were dismantled, although the seeds of organization and the high level of mass consciousness... remained" among more advanced sections of the working class.(Santa Lucia,1976:144) Allende's conciliatory attitude towards the bourgeoisie surprised many workers. After the ruling classes had adopted an extra-parliamentary struggle against the UP, many workers expected Allende to abandon his commitment to legality and adopt a new strategy. Many workers (especially those influenced by the UP left) saw little point in abiding by the law if the bourgeois

itself was not prepared to do so.(Smirnow,1979:72) The militants believed a direct battle for power was necessary.(Raptis,1974:48-49) At the very least, most workers believed gains made during the working class counter-offensive in October (e.g., like the seizure of factories) should be defended. But, the UP's hegemony within the Chilean working class enabled the moderates to demobilize the workers' movement, as their loyal critics, the UP radicals, passively watched. (In November, when the UP took the generals into the cabinet, the centrists gave conflicting signals about what that meant for Chilean workers. While the heterogeneous SP turned inward to undertake a prolonged debate, the MIR sided with the moderates in claiming the cordones were 'parallel organizations' that should subordinate themselves to the CUT.)

By attacking the cordones and the communal commands, the reformist leadership of the UP disoriented and demoralized the hundreds of thousands of workers who had saved Allende's government.(Beecham,1983:11) The UP's betrayal knocked most of the momentum out of the workers' offensive and undermined the developing pre-revolutionary situation. In the absence of a clear revolutionary alternative, or even some leadership from the UP radicals, many of the cordones and communal commands fell apart. (Roxborough,1977:177) Thus, the UP was able to halt the revolutionary momentum of the working class and avert a deepening of the revolutionary crisis.

In October, the Chilean working class lost a golden opportunity to launch a major offensive against the ruling classes. "Three never-to-be-repeated conditions existed," which would have enabled the working class to shift the balance of class forces even further in its direction: first, there was the enormous upsurge of the working class movement; second, the weakness and confusion of the bourgeoisie after its defeat by the working class

counter-offensive, and third, the military was still indecisive about the situation, and unprepared to stage a coup. (Smirnow,1979:77; Ali,1978:72) Chilean workers were in no position to mount a mass insurrection in November 1972, nor would such an action have succeeded then. But the objective circumstances meant the workers' movement could have further undermined the power of capital through the consolidation of the cordones and communal commands, the establishment of a workers' militia, and through working class intervention among the rank and file of the military. But, deepening the situation of dual power required the initiatives of a revolutionary party where none existed.

* * * * *

In the months that followed the bosses' strike, the UP/military cabinet attacked the gains made by the working class in October. In January, the budget minister (Orlando Millas) announced the government's plans to return 123 enterprises occupied in October to their owners, to reduce the size of the state sector of the economy by returning previously nationalized factories, and to reopen talks with the CDs. His announcement pushed the remnants of the cordones into action.(Gonzalez,1987: 66-67; Evans,1974:166; Santa Lucia,1976:146-147; Raptis,1974:72-73) The level of working class opposition to the Millas plan, especially within the UP, forced the government to abandon it plan before the March elections. (The moderates chose not to endanger their electoral base.(Roxborough,1977:174))

The January revival of the cordones during the fight against the Millas plan was sidetracked by the congressional elections planned for March. Both the moderate and radical wings of the UP channelled the attention of the working class towards the election.(Gonzalez,1987:67; Prieto,1974:29-30) Since November, the "uneasy truce" between

the bourgeoisie and the UP had held while both sides waited to see if the political deadlock could be broken electorally -- something that would occur if the UP won more than 50% of the vote (allowing it to pass legislation through the Congress) or less than 33% (which would permit the opposition to impeach Allende).(Steenland, 1973:97) Since the UP got 44%, the stalemate could not be resolved electorally.

The electoral results showed the UP government was still being supported by many peasants, shantytown dwellers, white collar workers, blue collar workers and artisans.(Smirnow,1979: 115-116) But, because the election resolved nothing, the deadlock in the extremely polarized country could only be broken by workers' revolution or a military backed coup. One of the two sides would have to impose its will on the other through force.(Smirnow,1979:121-122) Thus, the elections were a key turning point in the struggle. The ruling classes drew the appropriate strategic conclusion, unifying themselves behind the plan for a military coup. The UP government and the entire workers' movement would have to be smashed militarily.(Ali, 1978:72)

The period from March through June was one of rising class struggle, in the streets, the factories and the countryside. Street battles between the right and left became common. (Gonzalez,1987:71-73) The rising tensions meant greater class polarization, and calls from militants on both sides for decisive action. On the right the call for a coup became common, while on the left, UP supporters, called upon the government to get tough with the right, and demanded arms to prepare for the next coup.(Valenzuela,1978:91; Smirnow,1979:142,144)

After the elections, the generals left the UP cabinet, and the UP swung to the left, proposing sweeping educational reforms, nationalizing 45 additional enterprises, and hinting

at more expropriations to come -- all in an effort to push the CDs into negotiating a possible alliance.(Roxborough,1977:178,206; Gonzalez,1987:67) Meanwhile, the leadership of the CDs was captured by the most right wing faction of the party, ruling out any possibility of compromise with the UP.(Valenzuela,1978:92-93) Thus, after March 1973, only the UP's total capitulation or mass action by the working class would prevent a coup.

In April, 13,000 copper miners at the state owned El Teniente mine in Northern Chile began a ten week strike for higher wages. The strike attracted national attention because the mine produced a third of Chile's copper, earning the country at least \$1 million a day in foreign exchange.(Evans,1974:185) Furthermore, the miners had a long reputation as the highest paid, most militant and politically conscious section of the Chilean working class. (Beecham,1983:11-13; Prieto,1974:34)¹⁷

Five days into the strike, 60% of the workforce (mainly the unskilled workers) accepted government offers for a productivity bonus and returned to work under pressures from the UP and the CUT. Meanwhile, the most skilled workers ignored UP arguments about the need to support the 'socialist' government and remained on the picket lines.(Prieto,1974:75) Fearing a victory by the miners might unleash a strike wave that would sink all hopes of negotiating an alliance with the CDs, the UP campaigned to get the miners to sacrifice their traditionally high wage levels for the sake of the "peoples' government." When the miners refused, the UP (and much of the left) denounced them as fascists, pushing them to seek support elsewhere.(Evans,1974:188; Gonzalez,1984:62) Seeing a serious split in the ranks of the left, the CDs mobilized support for the beleaguered miners.(Beecham,1983:11-13; Gonzalez,1984:62)¹⁸ Confrontations occurred between the miners and both the police and UP supporters, before the strike ended in

defeat. (Roxborough,1977:209; Gonzalez,1984:62) With its actions, the UP government had achieved what the right wing offensive in October had not, serious divisions in the ranks of the working class. (Beecham,1983:13)

In the spring, the fascist organization Fatherland and Freedom became quite active, with 77 bombings in one week of June alone.(Roxborough,1977:210) As open talk of a military coup became common, the CUT held a demonstration and rally of a million people in Santiago on June 21, to protest rightist violence.(Evans,1974:189-190) It was in this context of falling real wages, right wing violence, and escalating struggle, that a premature coup took place.(Beecham,1983:13; Petras,1974:565)

Insufficient organization and discipline within the ranks of the counter-revolutionary movement, meant that a section of the military launched a coup on June 29th. The event, which became known as the "tancazo," involved a tank regiment and fascist elements attacking the presidential palace. After three hours of fighting, the coup was ended by the army -- which intervened on the side of the government, because the plans for the coup that would come in September had not yet been completed.

During the fighting, Allende and the CUT called on the working class to occupy their factories and remain calm.(Evans, 1974:193) That call for action from the UP led to a massive re-emergence of the cordones in Santiago and other cities. Several hundred private sector factories were seized in Santiago alone, as workers also organized militias in their workplace. (Roxborough,1977:178; Winn,1976a:82; Smirnow,1979:87; Beecham, 1983:13; Kay,1975b:6; Stallings,1978:147; Gonzalez,1984:63; Evans,1974:200) After the coup had been defeated, a million people marched through the streets of Santiago demanding Allende disband the Congress and punish the plotters. (Ali,1978:75; Gonzalez,1984:62) In Santiago,

the major cordones began the process of linking up in a central city wide co-ordinating committee -- in part, to prepare for further action from the right.(Santa Lucia,1976:152; Evans,1974:197) Once again, the counter-revolutionary machinations of the bourgeoisie and the right wing had provoked a mass response from the working class, breathing new life into the pre-revolutionary situation. (The level of unity in the ranks of the ruling classes, and the weakness of the forms of dual power prevented the situation from becoming fully revolutionary.)

This upsurge by the working class was different from the one that occurred in October 1972: the working class now had some previous "experience of self-organization on which to base their response."(Gonzalez,1987:76) Many of the cordones -- which had started to grow again after the election -- were still intact, making it possible for the working class to pass rapidly from the defensive to an offensive.(Santa Lucia,1976:151) Not surprisingly, the initial wave of activity swung many CP and CD workers behind the cordones, while some activists in the leadership of the cordones issued calls for the creation of a "dictatorship of the proletariat."(Santa Lucia,1976:151-152; Roxborough,1977:175-176) Moreover, the question of arms became paramount, as factory committees formed militias, and began to search for and even manufacture arms to prepare for the next coup.(Gonzalez,1987:76; Santa Lucia,1976:151-152) By mid-July, a coordinating committee of Cordones in Santiago province had developed a program of action to ensure seized factories were retained under workers' control, distribution was organized under popular control, and that all institutions of popular power were strengthened.(Santa Lucia,1976:152; Raptis,1974:144-149)

Once again, an upsurge from below forced the ruling classes onto the defensive, creating the possibility for the working class to bypass the strategy of the UP and initiate a sustained offensive. "The tancazo...consolidated the political and military role of the cordones...as the new hope of the left, the alternative to an exhausted and paralyzed government."(Winn, 1976a:82) For a second time, both the reformist and centrist wings of the UP did nothing to encourage, sustain or build the extra-parliamentary movement. Again, the radicals, whose political influence was at its height after the tancazo, refused to break with the moderates and assume the leadership of the movement. While the MIR and the left SP called on workers to obtain arms and build peoples' power, they also made it clear such activities were necessary to defend the UP government. (Gonzalez,1987:75) The opportunity provided by the bungled coup -- after which the left could have gone on an offensive -- was squandered.(Beecham,1983:13)

After the defeat of the June 1973 tancazo, the UP government again declared a state of emergency (this time without the military in the cabinet) and initiated talks with the CDs. In addition, the UP moderates resumed their attack on those workers who had taken the initiative to revive the cordones. Corvalan, the leader of the CP denounced the leadership of the cordones and the radical left as fascists, for pushing the country towards civil war, while praising the military for its constitutionalism. (Gonzalez,1987:78-79) The CUT demanded workers hand back occupied factories to their owners, and the UP sent riot police against workers from the Cerillos and Vicuna Mackenna cordones who resisted.(Roxborough,1977:178-179; Beecham,1983:14; Santa Lucia,1976:155-156)

The failure of the UP government to take decisive action against the right, and its renewed attack on the cordones, demoralized the working class. By the end of July, the

workers' movement and the cordones had lost much of their momentum. By August, the entire movement was demobilized as large portions of the working class sank into despair.(Henfrey,1977:55) Many workers responded to the actions of UP and the CUT with a "fatalistic" withdrawal from political activity.(Winn,1976a:83) To continue fighting, the Chilean working class needed an organization that advocated cordone power as the basis of socialism -- even if that meant overthrowing the UP government in addition to the bourgeoisie and the military. But no such organization existed. The working class needed more time, a new strategy, and above all, much better leadership to transform its impressive action into centralized dual political power and revolutionary consciousness.

* * * * *

During the two months before the coup, the leadership of the cordones campaigned to prepare the institutions of "popular power" for the next coup. But, the centrism of the MIR and the left SP, and the conciliatory attitude of the moderates towards the ruling class, undermined the confidence and activity of the masses.(Smirnow,1979:153) By mid-August, the Chilean working class was in the weakest position since the UP government had been elected: divided, demoralized and lacking the leadership to carry the movement forward. The depth of the demoralization was evident on September 4th, the third anniversary of the election of the UP government. The mood of the 1 million demonstrators in Santiago was very bleak in anticipation of the coming confrontation (which was one week away).(Gonzalez,1984:65; Prieto,1974:48-49)

Among the ranks of the ruling classes, a clear majority supported a military coup, even before the tancazo. After the second great offensive by the working class, the ruling classes knew the coup could not just depose the government, it had to carry out the

"physical destruction of the working class movement."(Gonzalez,1984:74-75) In July, the military started its final preparations for the coup, without any interference from Allende. First came military raids on factories, communities, and the offices of trade unions and working class political parties in the search for arms. Carried on without interference by the government, the army used this campaign of beatings and arrests to intimidate workers, get information on how well armed and organized they were, and test the reliability of their troops. (Roxborough,1977:216; Steenland,1974a:13; Joxe,1976:270; Smirnow,1979:134)

As the army moved throughout the country conducting its raids, they left "a trail of dead, wounded and imprisoned" activists.(Smirnow,1979:137; Gonzalez,1987:78) The generals learned the working class was poorly armed and quite unprepared for the upcoming coup.(Smirnow,1979:137; O'Brien,1976b:273)¹⁹ Inside the military, the generals prepared the troops by keeping them isolated from the public and by feeding them with propaganda about the dangers of the left.(Evans,1974:209) In early August, about 100 sailors and workers at the naval base in Valparaíso were arrested, beaten and tortured for publicizing the coup preparations then underway. The persecuted sailors were denounced by the UP government, undermining any hope of splitting the military in advance of the coup.(Prieto,1974: 44-45; Roxborough,1977:190-191,203; Boorstein,1977:226-227) Tragically, the cordones did not mobilize in defence of the sailors either -- something which might have altered the balance of power, even at that late date.(Gonzalez,1984:64; Evans,1974: 209-212)

By the end of July, several generals (including Pinochet) had joined the UP cabinet, pushing some of the most class conscious elements in the cordones to call for a workers'

revolution. But, such calls, in the absence of any real ability to follow through on them, were too little and too late for the demoralized and increasingly fatalistic working class. (Roxborough,1977:180-181)

During the months of July and August, a counter-revolutionary situation had developed. The disastrous policies of the UP moderates split the working class and put it back on the defensive. While the working class proved itself unable to shake itself free of the paralyzing grip of the UP, the ruling classes unified behind a single idea: the need for a military coup. Meanwhile, other classes (e.g., the middle classes, the peasantry and sections of the rural proletariat, etc.) had either been neutralized, or won to the banner of the ruling classes.

* * * * *

The counter-revolutionary coup in Chile was carried out in two stages. First came the "creeping coup" of July and August, which coincided with the truckers' strike, the campaign of terrorism by the fascists, and the arms searches conducted by the military.(Winn,1974:92)²⁰ Even before the military launched their coup, they had virtually assumed state power in several of the southern provinces.(Steenland,1974a:11; Roxborough,1976:213) In addition, the truckers' strike had paralyzed much of the economy in circumstances where the demoralized working class had trouble responding.

The second stage of the coup began during the evening of Monday September 10, the military purged its own ranks of dissidents, killing 3000 men suspected of sympathies with the UP.(MacEoin,1974:168) Units that rebelled against orders issued during the coup were slaughtered.(Steenland,1974:16-17) On the morning of September 11th, the military attacked the presidential palace and moved to crush working class organization in the

factories. Those sections of the working class that sought to resist did so without the benefit of arms or centralized organization. (Each of the leftist parties issued its own instructions.) (Gonzalez,1984:75-76))²¹ Only the CUT issued instructions to the entire class, urging workers to turn their factories into fortresses, and defend the government from there. By dispersing the working class, the CUT only hastened its defeat.(Roxborough,1977:234) Workers resisted factory by factory, but divided, they were quickly crushed. There could be little contest between a tightly controlled, newly purged army, with a leadership that was knowledgeable about the weaknesses of its opponents and confident of victory, and a demoralized, fragmented, leaderless and largely unarmed working class.

The 50,000 troops of the Chilean military were able to defeat the millions of supporters of the UP after only a few days of scattered resistance.(Evans,1974:229) Even the most sophisticated radicals were unprepared to face a unified army, having assumed that, in the event of a coup, the army would split, leaving troops loyal to the UP government to join forces with the working class movement. However, the failure of the left to intervene in the army, and the pre-coup purge carried out by the generals prevented any such revolt. (Roxborough, 1977:231; Winn,1986:243; Roxborough,1977:231,233)

At least 30,000 people -- mainly the vanguard of the working class -- died in the fighting and the repression afterwards. (Gonzalez,1987:81; O'Brien,1976b:274; Furci,1984:165) Another 100,000 lost their jobs and were blacklisted.(Winn,1986:248) In the wake of the coup, every semblance of bourgeois democracy was eliminated, all legal forms of working class organization were liquidated, real wage levels were cut by 50%, the right to strike was abolished, and the state sector of the economy was dismantled, as workers were made to pay the price for restoring the viability of Chilean

capitalism.(O'Brien,1983; Roxborough, 1977:241-246)

(5.4) Forms of Self-Organization and Struggle Among the Chilean Underclasses

The growing crisis of Chilean capitalism under Allende allowed a variety of mass organizations of the exploited classes to affect events: some which predated the election of the UP (e.g., trade unions, political parties), others that were established from above by the UP government (e.g., JAPs and peasant councils), and others that were created from below by the underclasses as the class struggle intensified (e.g., industrial cordones, communal commands). The organizations in the latter category, those spontaneously created by the masses to prosecute the class struggle, were undoubtedly the most important. However, some of those established from above were -- in the heat of the struggle -- transformed into vehicles for mobilizing the underclasses (e.g., the JAPs). Our main concern in this section is to determine the extent to which dual power developed during the crucial period between October 1972 and September 1973.

To undertake a comprehensive investigation of dual power during the revolutionary process in Chile would require us to examine a variety of organizations and forms of struggle that we cannot consider here, including: peasant councils and unions, and the struggle on the land; the struggles of the pobladores (squatters) in the urban areas; and, the struggle for control over distribution and the JAPs.²² Limitations on space permit us only to examine the forms of organization and struggle generated by the industrial working class, and the failure for organs of dual power to emerge in the military.

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The electoral victory of the UP added fuel to the fire that was driving the class struggle before September 1970. Under Allende, the working class would launch economic and political strikes, occupy factories and engage in other forms of action, to improve their wages and working conditions, and defend themselves from sabotage by their employers. They did so secure in the knowledge the employers' use of state repression against them had been undercut by the election of the UP.(Winn,1986:40,132,267-268) But, the working class did not join the trade union movement in any greater numbers, because the UP government was unwilling (and probably unable) to change the labour laws which prohibited unions in workplaces with fewer than 25 employees.(Stallings, 1978:246) That helped to perpetuate the serious division between unionized and non-union workers.

In 1971, workers in small enterprises (e.g., construction workers) and rural workers -- sections of the working class not as subject to the discipline and control of the UP and the CUT as the urban and industrial working class -- took advantage of the new balance of class forces to strike. Those traditionally backward sections of the working class, where the UP was weak, were responsible for much of the industrial action during 1970 and 1971.(Threlfall,1976: 187; Smirnow,1979:83; Landsberger, 1976:522; Faundez,1988:256)²³ Another group of workers who increasingly resorted to strike action were non-unionized public employees who felt safe from government repression with the UP in office. (Israel Z,1989:137)

Strikes in 1971 were primarily economic in character, with workers seeking to translate the UP's electoral victory into wage gains beyond the 22-32% rate of inflation. In December, the UP government decreed a 35% increase in wage levels, seeking to undercut

the strikes.(DeVylder,1976:54) However, since that wage increase represented little gain in real wages for most workers it failed to stop the strikes.(Stallings,1978:247) Taking advantage of the changed political situation, workers won a real wage increase of almost 30% in 1971.(Leiva,1986:13) The militancy caused the UP considerable dismay since it frightened the 'progressive bourgeoisie'. Although Allende publicly criticized the strikes, the UP moderates refrained from using state repression against workers, for fear of endangering their electoral base.(Landsberger,1976:523) Allende hoped the CUT and the party discipline of the CP and SP could control the working class.

The UP leadership relied on the CUT, not only to restrain the strike movement, but also to convince workers to participate in the drive for greater productivity and profitability in the newly nationalized industries. The UP/CUT alliance was cemented in a wide ranging agreement between the government and the union leaders in December 1970. Besides giving workers a wage increase, the deal gave CUT officials influence in the overall planning of the economy, strengthened the financial basis of the union movement, and established a committee to create a scheme for workers' participation in nationalized industries.(Zapata,1976: 87; Raptis,1974:22,27) In recognition of the critical role the trade union leaders would play in mobilizing workers for production and containing militancy, the UP sought to greatly strengthen the trade union movement and to integrate it into the UP government.(Santa Lucia,1976:142; Angell,1972:144-145)

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Although strike action was an important feature of the revolutionary process, more important were the factory seizures carried out by the industrial working class. Before October 1972, workers often occupied their workplace demanding government expropriation

of a plant not designated to be nationalized by the UP.(Henfrey,1977:44; Faundez,1988:256) In that way, many non-monopoly firms the UP did not want expropriated for the "social property area" (ASP) were taken over.(DeVylder,1976:141) After October 1972, the occupations occurred in a context that was more highly politicized, as workers took over factories to prevent the employers from disrupting the economy, and to hasten the arrival of socialism. In October 1972 and June/July 1973, many factories that were taken over simply remained under workers' control, as workers refused to hand back what they had seized.(Prieto,1974: 65) The number of firms in the ASP by September 1973 was around 420, with about 80% of them there as a result of initiatives taken from below. (The majority of the factories nationalized from below were medium sized firms with fewer than 300 workers). (Zimbalist,1975:22; Espinosa,1978:47-50)²⁴

Naturally, the factory seizures led to serious friction between UP leaders who advocated a peaceful and parliamentary revolution carried out from above, and those workers who tried to push the UP to move faster. Allende's victory clearly "had a different meaning to his mass base than it had to the politicians and planners of the UP" government. (Winn,1986:140) For many workers, it "was a signal for them to take the revolution into their own hands and fulfill their historic aspirations through direct action from below." They believed that in "acting for themselves, they were fulfilling the UP program and advancing the revolutionary process."(Winn,1986:140)

However, the spontaneous takeover of factories did not fit with the UP's plan, which called for a gradual process of nationalization, carried out from above, to avoid any danger of alienating the non-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie. In October 1971 the UP program called for the eventual expropriation of 253 enterprises, but Allende was not eager

to undertake that task. Nevertheless, the UP was forced "to accelerate its nationalization timetable" by bourgeois sabotage of production and by the pressures from below.(Winn,1976:582; 1986:6-7; Roxborough,1977:90-93) In retreat by February 1972, the UP had reduced the number of firms to be expropriated to 90 enterprises employing only 10% of the industrial workforce.(Stallings,1978: 131; Santa Lucia,1976:132-133) But, Chilean workers had their own views about nationalization -- views which reflected a desire to improve their economic situation, offset the bourgeoisie's efforts to sabotage the economy, and hasten the arrival of socialism.(Petras,1974c:47)

By planning to exclude at least 80% of industrial workers from the state sector of the economy, the UP was also excluding them from its scheme of workers' participation in management. (Gonzalez,1984:59; DeVyllder,1976:147) Thus, the UP was perpetuating the inequalities that already divided the workers in the large enterprises from the more backward ones in the small and medium enterprises.(DeVyllder,1976:155) But, the UP's plan backfired, since it gave workers in plants not scheduled to be expropriated an incentive to occupy their plant and appeal to the UP for expropriation.

Most workers in small and medium sized establishments could see no reason why they should not be allowed to participate directly in the struggle against capitalism. Objectively, this...sector of the working class had...much more to win from a radical change of the economic system than had the large scale industrial workers who enjoyed much better economic and social conditions.(DeVyllder,1976:143)

In seizing control of their plants, workers in the small and medium enterprises often acted at the instigation of those in the large plants already in the ASP.(Santa Lucia,1976: 139; Henfrey,1977:45,61; Roddick,1976:13) Quite apart from the desire to further the revolution, workers in the expropriated plants had a vested interest in expanding the number of factories in the ASP, to guarantee their source of supplies and their markets from plants

that might suffer from sabotage if they remained in the private sector.(Budiman,1981:148; Henfrey,1977:59-60)

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The UP scheme for workers' participation in the management of factories in the ASP -- finalized in mid-1971 -- was designed to boost productivity and profits, and to curb strikes through co-optation of the workforce.(Raptis,1974:22-28,119-128) The entire arrangement was to be controlled and administered by the state and the union bureaucracy.(Landsberger,1976:515,527) It certainly did not involve the UP surrendering real control of either the economy or the workplace to the working class.

The complicated structure established by the UP for workers' participation ensured the workers -- who were outnumbered by the representatives of management and the UP government -- had only an advisory role in management, rather than actual control of production (whether at the factory or national level).(Winn, 1976a:76,1976b:582-583; DeVlyder,1976: 151-152; Landsberger, 1976:528; Raptis,1974:28; Smirnow,1979:41; Henfrey,1977:47,57-58)²⁵ Because the government's aim was to raise productivity without altering the hierarchy in the workplace, it left the government appointed administrators and the factory manager in firm control.(Santa Lucia,1976:136)

By mid-1972, this scheme of workers' participation in management affected about 75% of the 150 firms in the ASP. (Zapata,1976: 88-89; Winn,1976a:76) The actual experience of workers under this scheme depended heavily upon factors like their role in the original expropriation, the degree of conflict with management proceeding it, the politics of the government appointed manager, and the strength of various political currents within the plant.(Winn,1976a:76) In firms where the expropriation was carried out from

below, there was a much greater change in social relations inside the workplace.

(DeVylder,1976:150-151; Petras,1974c) In those plants workers' participation often grew into full workers' self-management. In some firms, radical workers (often from the SP or MAPU) took over the structures established for consultation with management and radicalized them, dismissing the government appointed portion of the firms' administrative council to get effective control. (Henfrey,1977:50,58)

In plants where the level of workers' participation or control was the greatest, product lines shifted from luxury to mass consumption goods, wage levels were equalized, piece rates were abandoned, and working conditions were improved (by providing amenities like child care, clothing provisions, improved sanitary conditions, cafeteria services, installation of medical and dental clinics, cultural activities, educational courses, etc.). In addition, workers' control of factories often meant extensive innovation in the production process, relaxed discipline (because the repressive arm of management was dismantled), and the breakdown of some divisions between blue collar and white collar workers.

(Winn,1986:213; Espinosa,1978: 131; Zimbalist,1975:23,27) The dramatic changes in firms inside the ASP, and the new experience of freedom in the workplace contributed to a "general climate of outright insubordination, hostility and aggressiveness against... persons ...in authority" among workers in the state sector.(Landsberger,1976:529)

Some firms in the ASP experienced economic difficulties due to the shortage of managers, production bottlenecks, the difficulties of planning in a period of increasing inflation, the decline in work discipline, and the economic crisis.(DeVylder, 1976:152,154; Henfrey,1977:47-48) Still, "production in Chile's socialized firms increased by over 20 per cent in the two years, 1971 and 1972."(Zimbalist,1975:23)

Within the labour movement, criticisms of workers' participation came from three sources: the CDs, the centrists, and rank and file workers. The vulnerability of UP style workers' participation to criticism from the right was evident in the May 1972 CUT elections, when CD denunciations of the UP's preoccupation with productivity helped it win 26.3% of the vote. (By contrast, the CP got 30.9% and the SP 26.4%.) (Zapata, 1976: 93)) Similarly, the centrists criticized the UP's scheme of workers' participation for being prematurely concerned with productivity, when the real problems were those of establishing full workers' control over industry, building popular power and continuing the revolution. For the centrists, full workers' control was a way of building the popular power needed to complete the transition to socialism. (Henfrey 1977:43-50,57-58; Zimbalist, 1975:26)

The third source of criticisms about workers' participation came directly from workers themselves. For example, the July 1972 congress of textile workers from the nationalized mills, who criticized the state managers of the industry for being bureaucratic, undemocratic and "bourgeois" in character. Textile workers demanded a restructuring of the industry, so that workers' participation was extended into the top levels of the state's decision making structure, and shop floor workers had direct input into planning for the entire industry. (Winn, 1976: 595-596) Further, they demanded workers' control of the industry and accountability of all officials, as an alternative to the UP's scheme of workers' participation -- an idea that attracted attention from other workers. (Santa Lucia: 139-140; Raptis, 1974:30-32) Thus, for a layer of advanced industrial workers, the experience of expropriating their plant, working under the UP scheme for participation with management, and then seizing control over the production process from the state's managers, contributed to the idea workers should exercise greater control over the state and

economy as a whole.

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The highest organizational and political achievement of the Chilean working class during the 1972-1973 period was the creation of the industrial cordones and the communal commands. The cordones were inter-factory committees of workers' delegates, spontaneously established in the various industrial districts of Chilean cities. They were formed to maintain production and coordinate the defence of the working class against the employers' offensive of October 1972 -- tasks neither the UP government nor the CUT could perform.(Smirnow,1979:92) (By contrast, the communal commands were broader based community committees that linked the cordones with organizations of peasants, shantytown dwellers, students, mothers, activists from the JAPs, local party committee activists and others to coordinate defence and maintain distribution in various communities during the bosses' strike.)

The first cordon developed in Cerillos, the largest industrial zone in Santiago in May/June 1972.(Raptis,1974:34; Roxborough,1977:169) It emerged from a campaign by workers in the Perlak canning plant to have their factory expropriated by the UP government.²⁶ When the UP refused, workers of the Cerillos area responded by occupying additional plants and putting up barricades. The UP backed down. Thus, the first cordon -- which was led by centrist workers from nationalized plants -- developed because rank and file workers in the vanguard of the industrial working class needed a vehicle, independent of the UP and CUT officials, to oppose the rightward drift of the government and to defend other sections of the working class. (Faundez,1988:271; Raptis,1974:35; Smirnow,1979:83-84)

The Cerillos cordon provided a model for workers in October 1972, when the UP and the CUT failed to respond to the bosses' strike. (The two largest cordones, Cerillos-Maipu and Vicuna Mackenna, both in Santiago, acted as a vanguard for the entire movement.) Faced with massive economic sabotage, and the possibility of armed action against the government, rank and file activists spontaneously mobilized and unified the working class in each industrial area under the direction of inter-factory committees (composed of trade union and political activists). (Gonzalez, 1973:34-35; Henfrey, 1977:51) All together, at least 58 cordones were created during the revolutionary crisis -- 12 of them in Santiago. (Santa Lucia, 1976:161-165)

In addition to defending the UP government, the activists who founded the cordones, set out to extend the economic basis of the 'revolution.' Thus, the cordones proved invaluable in solving the problem of distributing consumer goods and the raw materials needed to maintain production during October. (Henfrey, 1977:51-52) They coordinated the mobilization of workers, the transportation of raw materials and finished goods, linked up with the JAPs, established liaison with neighbouring peasants and shantytown dwellers (in the communal commands), and organized security and defence preparations. (Smirnow, 1979:85) In addition, both in October and June/July 1973, the cordones encouraged and carried out the occupation of private sector workplaces (particularly those crippled by economic sabotage). (Aguilar, 1978:39; Santa Lucia, 1976:150)

The cordones were "organizations of enormous potential power," providing a centralized leadership for workers across a number of factories -- something necessary to take "on the function(s) of controlling production, distribution, (and-BM) workers' defence." (Beecham, 1983:10; Evans, 1974:258) However, the cordones had some serious

weaknesses. In October, when they were first formed, the cordones were not assemblies of recallable delegates chosen by rank and file workers in each workplace. Instead, they were committees of trade union and political activists from various factories. However, that changed between March and June 1973, when the cordones were revived by vanguard workers, and transformed into properly delegated assemblies -- with each delegate elected and subject to recall.(Henfrey,1977: 63-64; Santa Lucia,1976:149; Evans,1974:180,185)²⁷

For example, in May 1973, the Vicuna Mackenna cordon in Santiago was revived by an influx of vanguard workers concerned to prepare for the defence of the UP government and the working class in the event of an attempted coup -- something that seemed to be looming in the near future.(Evans,1974:183) They agreed to set up a worker run transportation system, using vehicles owned by the factories, to ensure workers could get to work. Plans were also made for a store to be run by the cordon, for reactivation of the vigilance committee (flying pickets to defend any factory threatened by the right) and a campaign to draw other factories back into the cordon.(Evans,1974:180-181) Those preparations proved valuable. On June 29, Vicuna Mackenna and the other key cordon, Cerillos, were both ready to swing into action, issuing very detailed instructions to local workers about how to organize defence of their plants.(Gonzalez,1987:74; Smirnow,1979:85)

After the tancazo was defeated, the leading cordones prepared for further action. For example, Vicuna Mackenna called on Chilean workers to prepare for the next coup. In their view, that required the transfer of all the means of production and distribution to the 'social' sector of the economy, control of the factories by assemblies of workers, the reorganization of production to give priority to 'popular consumption', the creation of

defence committees, the prohibition of right wing newspapers, and the creation of a unified leadership of all the cordones.(Evans,1974:198-199)

Within each cordon, it was invariably industrial workers from the plants nationalized from above, and those expropriated from below who provided the leadership -- usually workers from the centrist left wing of the SP.(Kay,1975b:6; Henfrey,1977:48-49; Santa Lucia,1976:144; Gonzalez,1984:60)²⁸ Like the soviets in Russia, the cordones also provided a forum for political competition between the various political parties. Once they were fully democratized, they became a more accurate indicator of the mood of the masses, since delegates could be recalled. (Roxborough,1977:183) But, the cordones never achieved the level of centralization of the soviets and factory committees in Russia. Only in July 1973 were the cordones finally centralized with the establishment of a coordinating committee in Santiago. (More on this below.)

Throughout 1972-73, the cordones were the only organizations to unite large sections of the working class in action, regardless of sectional divisions (e.g. by industry, union and political affiliation), mobilizing workers in defence of their independent interests as a class. For example, in both October 1972 and June/July 1973, the SP radicals who led the cordones gave direction to the mass of the working class, including many workers in the CP and the CD party.(Spence,1978:153; Winn,1986: 239; Santa Lucia,1976:151-152) But, the unity of the Chilean working class through the cordones proved to be shortlived. After October and June/July, it broke down because of the lack of a clear political direction emanating from the leadership of the cordones.

The moderates and the radicals within the UP had quite different attitudes towards the new institutions of popular power. The moderate socialists were unremittingly hostile to

the cordones, since they challenged the hegemony of the UP government and the CUT over the working class.(Santa Lucia,1976:146; Smirnow,1979:85) Therefore, the UP moderates did everything in their power to demobilize the cordones, viewing them as dangerous, unless the cordones agreed to subordinate themselves to the CUT leadership.(Gonzalez,1987:60;Smirnow,1979:86) But, the radical leaders of the cordones successfully fought the CUT's efforts to get control over the new organizations. (Evans,1974: 183)

By contrast, the radicals treated the government and the new institutions of popular power as equal in importance, viewing the former as the basis of political power and the later as the basis for economic power. Similarly, the SP militants who led the cordones believed these institutions complemented the UP government, since they were geared towards establishing "popular power" in conjunction with the UP's governmental power.(Santa Lucia, 1976:149-150) Because of this centrist view, the leaders of the cordones repeatedly denied they were trying to replace the CUT or lead the working class.(Raptis,1974:145-146,148; Santa Lucia,1976:153) Thus, when representatives of the Santiago area cordones met in late July to form a central coordinating committee, their statement of objectives stressed the role of the cordones in defending the UP government. They did not advocate replacing the government by cordone power.(Smirnow,1979:88; Santa Lucia,1976:154-155) The new coordinating committee, which was dominated by workers from the radical wing of the SP, did not split with the UP government, and did not see the cordones as a potential replacement for the bourgeois state (of which the UP was a part).(Gonzalez,1987:68; Smirnow,1979:86)

From October 1972 until the coup, the cordones consistently acted as a loyal opposition to the moderate socialists who led the government. Their limited political perspective was sufficient to revive the cordones in opposition to the Millas plan in January, but not to sustain that momentum through the weeks leading up to the March Congressional elections.(Gonzalez, 1984:61; Prieto,1974:29) When the cordones again revived after the election, it was around local issues and the growing fear of a coup, until the tancazo once again provided a national focus of attention.(Winn,1976a:82) Throughout this entire period, from November to June, the cordones remained on the defensive, reacting to events, rather than initiating anything. Even after the tancazo, when the cordones had experienced a second period of dynamic activity, followed by a second betrayal by the Allende government, the cordones and the centrists still did not break from their defence of the UP.(Smirnoff,1979:87; Roxborough,1977: 179)

The most radical section of the working class, the leadership of the cordones, never completely broke from the politics of the UP. When almost a million Chilean workers demonstrated after the defeat of the tancazo, they were still looking for a way to compel Allende to behave like something other than a class collaborationist. The working class was not yet prepared to break with the UP and its strategy, in the absence of a clear alternative. And the cordones never provided an alternative independent of the UP. By August, when the leadership of the cordones finally realized it made little sense to continue trying to push the moderates leftwards, it was already too late. (Roxborough,1977:180)

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In addition to the cordones, Chilean workers also organized communal commands (CCs), community based organizations that united militant workers organized in the

cordones with activists from the other mass organizations in the area -- the JAPs, committees of shantytown dwellers, the peasant unions or peasant councils, the trade unions and the local committees of various parties, etc. -- under the leadership of the working class. These organizations grappled with such problems as "defence and security against sabotage, maintenance of production levels, methods of community mobilization, public order in the poblaciones (shantytowns-BM), distribution channels for basic foodstuffs, (and-BM) relations with nearby campesino councils to assure (a) supply of farm products." Perhaps as many as 100 developed in October 1972 -- 20 of them in the Santiago area. (Raptis,1974:101; Santa Lucia,1976:142, 144,161-164; Threlfall,1976:179,184; Smirnow,1979:73,89,92-93)

Because 70% of the working class was not unionized, mass based community organizations like the CCs played an important role at the height of the class struggle in Chile.(Threlfall, 1976:168-169; Smirnow,1979:89) In the absence of workplace based organization (e.g., trade unions or factory committees), and in circumstances where the bourgeoisie directed its attack against the supply of consumer goods, residential based mobilization was critical to defending the living standards of the underclasses. Through the CCs, "the traditional separation between the class struggle in the factory and the class struggle on the residential front" was removed as a potential "obstacle to the rise of a political movement that could bring together different factions of the oppressed classes."(Threlfall,1976:183-184) The CCs united the vanguard of the working class (the cordones) with the more backward sections of the working class in a potentially explosive mixture. Critically, the CCs mobilized sections of the underclasses "who had previously never engaged in political activity: certain layers of the non-industrial, unorganized urban

poor, housewives, and unemployed workers." (Threlfall,1976:187)²⁹ Like the cordones, the CCs quickly became embryonic organs of "popular power" in October.(Santa Lucia,1976:142-143) However, in November, the CCs were the first organizations to wilt after Allende took the generals into his cabinet. Although not all the CCs disappeared, they suffered far more than the cordones from the demobilization of the movement in late 1972.(Threlfall,1976: 179-180) However, there was a rise in the level of common activity between industrial workers and shantytown dwellers prior to the tancazo, as both groups mobilized to demand "increased government takeovers and people's control of the factories that produced foodstuffs and of the distribution agencies."(Threlfall, 1976:180) By late July 1973, when the second truckers' strike began, daily life in Cerillos-Maipu was being "run by the (assembly of the-BM) communal command," which met "almost daily with over a hundred people present."(Henfrey,1977:68)

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Before we conclude this discussion about the forms of organization and struggle that emerged during the revolutionary process in Chile, it is important to discuss the absence of any hint of dual power in the most crucial part of the state machine: the military. There is little direct information available about the attitudes of rank and file members of the Chilean military to the UP government, the growing revolutionary movement and the coup. What information we have suggests there was a certain amount of ferment in the ranks -- a sentiment which was not tapped by either the cordones or the centrists, let alone the UP government.

In the first place, there is evidence of rank and file efforts to rebel against the coup preparations. The best known example is that of the sailors in Valparaiso already

mentioned above. Secondly, there is further evidence of disenchantment with the coup in the scale of the pre-coup purge the generals were compelled to carry out.(MacEoin,1974:168) Thirdly, there is some evidence of rank and file rebellion against the coup on September 11th and after. Finally, in addition to all its other preparations for the coup, the officer corps also found it necessary to conduct a propaganda campaign among the ranks, designed to "convince the common soldier that if he did not act against the workers, the workers would murder him in his bed."(Roxborough,1977:203)

Despite these indications of disaffection among the ranks of the military, when opportunities to drive wedges into the army appeared, they were squandered by the left. The UP moderates never questioned the neutrality of the military.(Beecham,1983: 11; Ali,1978:86) And, the UP radicals never intervened in the army to promote the kind of organization soldiers and sailors needed to fight for basic rights (e.g., the right to form trades unions, to join political parties, to form committees and join the cordones and communal commands, etc.).(Ali,1978:86) It was critical for the success of a workers' revolution in Chile, that revolutionaries intervene "around issues which related to the felt needs of the soldiers and linked them to the ongoing process of working class mobilization." That was the only way to politicize soldiers and sailors sufficiently to make it impossible "for the officers to use their troops against workers and peasants."(Roxborough,1977:269)

Thus, when the sailors in Valparaiso publicized the coming coup, the cordones and the centrists failed to organize mass demonstrations or strikes in defence of the sailors and the rights of the common soldier.(Gonzalez,1984:83) And, the radicals missed opportunities to have the working class fraternize with the soldiers -- for example, in the immediate

aftermath of the military suppression of the *tancazo* in June 1973.(Beecham,1983: 13) Such opportunities were easily missed by the SP left and the MIR -- groups that displayed some astounding inconsistencies in their attitude towards the military. For example, in November 1972, the leader of the left SP, Altamirano, praised the military for their patriotism in joining the UP cabinet, even while the SP's paper denounced the move.

(Roxborough,1977:199) In July 1973, the left SP made a slight effort to intervene in the military, calling for rank and file members of the military to resist their anti-government officers.(Valenzuela,1978:102-103; Boorstein,1977:226) However, such efforts were ineffective, given the absence of even the rudimentary form of soldiers' organization necessary to protect activists from their officers. (Roxborough,1977:190; Boorstein, 1977:226)

The left also did little to prepare by way of establishing an independent workers' militia, although the *cordones* were engaged in organizing committees of self-defence (which never developed into a militia on the scale of the Red Guard in Russia).(Roxborough,1977:189) The presence of a serious and centralized workers' militia would have been very useful in persuading soldiers and sailors they could risk defecting to the cause of the revolution.(Ali,1978:86) The leftist parties (with the exception of the MIR) did not have armed groups. Whatever arms the left had tended to be centrally located, rather than in the hands of party members.(MacEoin,1974:193; North,1976:186; Israel Z,1989:275)

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The rise of the *cordones* and communal commands in October 1972 and again in June/July 1973 was the major accomplishment of the Chilean working class. It allowed

them to act in a unified fashion in defence of their independent class interests, despite the class collaborationism of their unions and the political parties. In the process, the struggle elevated a new layer of working class militants to a position of leadership, a group which was more independent of the UP moderates and the CUT leaders than the leaders of the left SP. Under the direction of this vanguard, the cordones played a critical role in breaking down some of the long established divisions within the Chilean working class, uniting unionized and non-party workers with some of the most class conscious militants in key factories. Together, they created a force that had the potential to carry out a proletarian revolution.

Several things prevented the cordones from being widely recognized as the basis of a future workers' state. First, there was no organized political force, arguing the cordones could be much more than the 'economic' half of popular power, coequal with the UP government as the 'political' half. There was no revolutionary party to argue the cordones should fight to assume state power. The cordones may have objectively raised the issue of state power, but in the absence of an organized revolutionary current of vanguard workers, the workers who formed the backbone of the cordones proved unable "to create a single, united program of action for the whole Chilean working class." (Aguilar,1978:39) Thus, the cordones were "too divided, disorganized and unsure of their objectives, especially in relationship to state power" to play the same role as the Russian soviets.(O'Brien,1973:81; Henfrey,1977:64)

Second, the cordones were not centralized in a single national organization (like they were in Russia). In fact, until July 1973, the cordones in Santiago were not even centralized in a single council. This lack of centralization -- which could not have existed

if the cordones had viewed themselves as the base of a future workers' state -- helps to explain why the cordones never established a city wide workers' militia in Santiago, one that extended beyond the boundaries of a single factory or community. Furthermore, although the cordones exercised some measure of dual political power (locally) in October/November 1972 and again in July 1973, the experience was more fleeting than in Russia during 1917.

Finally, as we saw above, the cordones did not become fully democratic bodies of workers' delegates, elected from the factories and subject to recall, until the weeks just before the tancazo. Until then, the cordones were just committees of trade union militants and political activists in certain regions. Thus, when the working class was demobilized in November 1972, the cordones shrank until they were dominated by activists from the centrist political parties.(Evans,1974:185) Demobilization of the cordones in November-January and again around March, led to a departure of workplace representatives, even from cordones like Vicuna Mackenna.(Evans,1974:180-181) Only when the cordones had been transformed into genuinely representative bodies of the entire working class -- including both the most backward sections as well as the vanguard of the working class -- was there even a possibility they could they be identified by Chilean workers as the potential basis of a workers' state.

Despite their shortcomings, the cordones stand as evidence the Chilean working class had spontaneously begun to create dual power.(Smirnow,1979:88-89) Thus, the Chilean working class demonstrated its capacity to transcend the confines of the reformist strategy in action, if not in theory.

(5.5) Leftist Political Parties and Revolutionary Consciousness within the Chilean Working Class

The mass of Chilean workers did not develop a fully revolutionary consciousness during 1972-1973. Indeed, even the vanguard of the working class -- the leadership of the cordones -- failed to develop a revolutionary program of action, being heavily influenced by the centrism of the left UP. In this section, we will examine why the intense class confrontations between October 1972 and September 1973 failed to produce the revolutionary consciousness and organization needed to resolve the crisis of Chilean capitalism in a revolutionary manner.

Fundamental to any understanding of the revolutionary process in Chile is the need to explain two things: first, the spontaneous movement of the working class beyond the limitations of the reformist and compliant forms of consciousness that prevailed prior to October 1972, and second, the limitations of the militant but non-revolutionary form of consciousness that spontaneously developed as the working class radicalized and politicized after October 1972 -- a form of trade union consciousness (embodied in the centrist political parties) that proved insufficient to stave off the disaster of September 1973 or bring about a workers' revolution. (Petras, 1978:218-219)

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What were some of the unmistakable signs that workers' consciousness was shifting leftwards in Chile? In the first place, there was the growth of support for the centrist parties throughout the entire period of Allende's government. The electoral weight of the centrists within the UP coalition grew pretty consistently during the Allende years, reaching

about 50% of the total UP vote. Moreover, support for the SP grew rapidly, more than doubling its congressional vote from 294,000 (in 1969) to 679,000 (in 1973). (Valenzuela, 1978:85; Gonzalez, 1984:67; Stallings, 1978:243) (While not all the votes for the SP reflect support for its predominant left wing, the trend is nevertheless quite clear. Conscious reformists, tended to vote for the CP, which was the right wing of the UP coalition.) The 'revolutionary' slogans popularized by the left SP and the other centrist organizations attracted workers looking for a 'revolutionary' party that would take the offensive against the right, and establish 'socialism'. (Gonzalez, 1984:67)

A second sign workers' consciousness was shifting leftward was the growing unrest among the CP rank and file (e.g., in the youth section and the trade unions) during mid-1973, as they sought to push their leadership leftwards. (Raptis, 1974:85; Roxborough, 1977:162,232) When the main bastion of moderate socialism experienced pressures from within, it was a sure sign reformist consciousness was being abandoned in favour of a more militant attitude.

A third sign the Chilean working class was moving left is evident from Winn's research among the thousands of workers in the Yarur textile plant. His work shows that in the April 1973 local union elections, about 25% of the workforce opposed Allende's road to socialism from the right by supporting the CDs, 50% supported it, and the final 25% supported the more militant strategy of the centrists. (Winn, 1986:242) The 25% support for the centrists shows the very substantial base of those parties that advocated pushing the revolution forward.

The fourth sign a majority of workers no longer had a reformist or compliant consciousness was the scale of activity evident in October 1972. The rise of the cordones

and communal commands coincided with the mass involvement of sections of the working class that traditionally supported the CDs, in common struggle with their more class conscious workmates, against the bosses' strike. Thus, for the first time there was a class-wide mobilization of workers which "transcended party lines." The movement was so strong that even blue collar CDs "felt the pull of class solidarity to be greater than that of political partisanship." (Winn, 1986:238-239) This temporary unification of the working class across political boundaries did not mean the entire class suddenly became revolutionary. The political divisions inside the working class had not disappeared. But they did break down under the pressures of common activity against the right. (Winn, 1976a:78) However, the UP's efforts to channel the struggle away from the workplace and the new organs of class unity (the cordones), towards electoralism (in February and March 1973), soon "restored the primacy of political identification" over class identification among CD workers. The working class would never regain the level of unity in struggle achieved in October 1972. (Winn, 1976a:81)

And, a fifth sign of the shift towards centrism and a militant form of trade union consciousness was the behaviour of the working class in the wake of the tancazo. Not only did the Tancazo revive the cordones and mass working class action, but the slogans coming from the rank and file of the working class movement changed from defensive demands to support the government to offensive ones to smash the right wing and close the National Congress. The mass demonstration held in Santiago after the tancazo was defeated, was dominated by demands for "A hard line", "Fascists to the wall" and "Close the National Congress". Many of the million workers participating in the demonstration came "dressed for battle, a few with guns, but most with pitchforks, machetes, wrenches and clubs," to

show their support for an extra-legal offensive against the right.(Roxborough,1977:213,178; MacEoin,1974:161; Gonzalez,1984:62) A declaration from the coordinating committee of the cordones in Santiago province, issued slogans like: "All power to the working people now!" "Stop the conciliatory manoeuvres!" "Prepare for the last great offensive of the proletariat!" and "Destroy the power of the bourgeoisie!".(Raptis,1974:149)

How can we best characterize this militant form of consciousness the Chilean working class displayed in early July 1973? Certainly it was neither compliant nor reformist consciousness. Was it revolutionary? In our opinion, such a description of the desire workers expressed for an extra-legal and armed offensive against the right would be mistaken.³⁰ Despite the unmistakable willingness of Chilean workers to use any means necessary to eliminate the threat of a further coup and perhaps destroy the power of the bourgeoisie, there was no clear and conscious understanding that to accomplish those goals required an uprising against the UP government as well as the bourgeoisie and the military leaders. Most workers still wanted to defend the UP. This disjunction between means and ends is characteristic of a very militant form of trade union consciousness and centrism rather than revolutionary consciousness. Chilean workers were quite prepared to use revolutionary methods, but they did not yet have a revolutionary goal clearly formulated. The status of the cordones as both the means to create socialism and the end itself (i.e., workers' power through organs of direct democracy rooted in the factories) was not evident to even the vanguard of the Chilean working class.

Once the UP had responded to the tancazo and the second truckers' strike by taking the generals back into the cabinet, there was widespread demoralization within the working class. Many workers were so disappointed and confused they retreated from politics

altogether.(Henfrey,1977:55; Winn,1976a:83) The social weight of the militant trade union consciousness characteristic of October 1972 and July 1973 faded as compliance came to the fore once again.

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There were several factors which governed the changes in working class consciousness during the revolutionary process in Chile. The first one was the economic struggle that dominated the political landscape before October 1972. The experience of workers' expropriating their workplace from below, and participating in management, helped alter their perceptions of themselves, their class and the growing social crisis. Those mainly vanguard workers who were involved in the expropriation of their factories found the process to be a "profoundly liberating experience, causing changes of consciousness which their successful management of the factory confirmed and consolidated."
(Winn,1976a:77; Petras,1974b:31-33; 1974c:43-54)

Many of the industrial workers who had previously been skeptical or cynical about the possibility workers' could change society, "were persuaded" by their experience of the expropriation of their workplace, to support the UP moderates (adopting a reformist consciousness) or the centrists (adopting a militant trade union consciousness). Winn's study of workers in the nationalized Yarur textile mill in Santiago documents the transformation of working class consciousness in that large workplace.(Winn,1976a,1976b,1979,1986) He shows that most workers were not consciously revolutionary during the first two years of Allende's government.(Winn,1976a:77) Some workers believed the UP "had fulfilled its promises," justifying "an unquestioning loyalty to the Allende government, the UP, and the CUT." However, "a sizeable group" also moved

left, believing socialism could only be achieved by taking further direct action from below. Finally, the experience of October 1972, coming on the heels of the prolonged and intensified struggles in the workplace, transformed the working class "from a passive political base (of UP politicians-BM) into an active agency of change." (Winn, 1976a: 75)

If the experience of factory seizures pushed workers to the left, even greater changes occurred in workers' consciousness as a result of their participation in management. "The practical discovery that industry could function without the capitalist class was a major element in radicalizing the working class." (Petras, 1978:222) As the "exercise of managerial powers and prerogatives became part of the workers' outlook," it encouraged them to expand their concerns "from the production section to the factory, from the factory to the industry, and from the industry to the nation." (Winn, 1976a:77; Petras, 1978:222) The evidence suggests that workers' participation contributed to serious changes in the consciousness of the mainly vanguard section of the working class involved. (Winn, 1976b:595)

The long period of mounting struggle, prior to October 1972, allowed a layer of skilled workers in the largest nationalized factories -- the vanguard of the Chilean working class -- to move spontaneously towards more militant and revolutionary forms of consciousness. However, other sections of the working class did not radicalize in the battle for control over production. As we saw above, more backward sections of the working class radicalized in the struggle over services for the shantytowns, the distribution of consumer goods, and so on. Both those struggles were transformed when Chilean society was plunged into the crisis of October 1972.

The second factor which affected the changes in working class consciousness was the experience of the two major class-wide confrontations with the counter-revolutionary movements: the October 1972 episode that pushed Chile into a revolutionary crisis, and the June/July 1973 events that fueled the pre-revolutionary situation. The working class response to those events -- both industrial workers and more backward sections of the class -- insured the entire class got a powerful lesson in the reactionary intentions of the bourgeoisie, the impotence of the UP moderates and the power and capacities of the mass movement.

Before October 1972 many sections of the heterogeneous working class still displayed reformist and compliant forms of consciousness -- identifying with their employer, the UP the CDs, or being cynical about the possibilities of change, and reacting "negatively to anything they perceived as 'Marxist revolution'." (Winn,1976a:77) But, the whip of counter-revolution had a massive effect upon the working class. The confrontations in October 1972 and July 1973 meant most workers "experienced a significant shift in mindset and many a veritable transformation of consciousness." Workers who previously supported management or the CDs, and workers who believed their class was incapable of changing things, shifted left. Furthermore, many workers previously committed to UP style reformism, adopted a form of militant trade union consciousness.(Winn,1986:217-218) The massive class confrontations of 1972-1973, which included a tidal wave of new factory seizures, forced workers from passivity towards self-activity, and from compliant and reformist forms of consciousness towards trade union consciousness.

Until October 1972, most industrial workers accepted the UP strategy, even if critically and conditionally. But the experience of collective self-organization in opposition

to the bosses strike (and later the *tancazo*), meant many workers moved beyond acceptance of the boundaries of bourgeois legality. Under the pressures of the major class confrontations, many workers abandoned their acceptance of the UP's legalism in favor of extra-parliamentary action and support for the centrist project of institutionalizing "popular power" (i.e., dual power). Certainly, by the time of the *tancazo*, a very large proportion of

the working class favored confronting the...extra-parliamentary enemy with an extra-parliamentary approach (occupying factories, preparing for direct action, criticizing the weakness of the elected government toward the right) in order to socialize the economy...and institutionalize new forms of workers' power.(Petras,1978:220)

As they shifted leftward, the vanguard of the Chilean working class only continued their support for the UP left because of the absence of a revolutionary alternative.(Petras, 1974a:573) The divergence between workers' consciousness and the politics of the UP government was evident in their very different assessments of the October/November events. While the UP leadership saw the cordones as a potential threat or as a means to get a parliamentary deal (e.g., trading a promise to disband the cordones for a guarantee the CDs would restrict their activity to the parliamentary arena), the working class saw those organizations, and the "popular power" and "socialism" they embodied, as an end in themselves.(Petras,1978:222) Chilean workers did not view the UP's legalistic strategy as an end in itself, and were prepared to abandon that strategy once the bourgeoisie subverted their own constitutional process with reactionary, extra-parliamentary activity.(Roxborough,1977:162)

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The third factor which influenced the development of working class consciousness during 1972-73, was the centrist character of the extreme left in Chile. The two most

significant parties to the left of the UP moderates who dominated the government were the left wing of the SP and the MIR.³¹ We need to examine how their politics limited and shaped working class consciousness. As we saw above, the Chilean SP was a loose coalition of centrist and social democratic elements, united by their common criticisms of the CP and the idea that a made-in-Moscow political strategy would not suffice for Chile. Not surprisingly, the SP did not have the sort of political homogeneity and common discipline one associates with a revolutionary party.(Evans,1974: 66,90; Furci,1984:142,149; Pollack,1986)³² Certainly a revolutionary party in the tradition of Bolshevism would not have remained part of a coalition with the UP moderates throughout the revolutionary crisis of 1972-1973.

The strategy of the left SP combined elements of both reform and revolution in a mixture that was incapable of creating workers' power. The radical wing of the SP supported both revolution-from-below through the cordones (and the other forms of "popular power") and the constitutional struggle from-above by the UP government. In theory, the class struggle and the parliamentary struggle, were viewed as complementary, with neither taking precedence over the other. In reality, however, the eternal acquiescence of the centrist leaders to the moderates in the UP led inevitably to the practical subordination of rank and file members of the left SP to the government.(Gonzalez, 1984:70) The centrists did not see the cordones as a replacement for the UP government, or as the basis for a workers' state. Instead, the institutions of popular power were supposed to exercise power in the factories and neighbourhoods, while the UP government would exercise it nationally.(Santa Lucia,1976:145-146)

This view of the cordones coincided with the view adopted "by the cordones themselves, whose leadership in many cases belonged to the SP." (Gonzalez, 1984:66) That is why the leadership of the cordones consistently denied the new organizations were an alternative to either the CUT or the UP government. (Raptis, 1974: 108) Thus, the centrist political perspective could hardly serve as a rallying point for those workers groping their way towards the idea the cordones were embryonic soviets. And, there is little doubt that among the ranks of the SP there were militants who were moving towards a revolutionary perspective. (O'Brien, 1976b:291-292) For example, in Santiago, there was a group of radicals in the Cordillera regional committee of the SP, who published a paper called Tarea Urgente (Urgent Task). They bypassed the calls of most radicals to "create" popular power, arguing "the alternative popular power exists, the cordones and communal commands are the expression of it." Coming in late August 1973, this argument was too optimistic, since working class morale had been in a precipitous decline for more than a month. Nevertheless, the Cordillera group argued the cordones must be viewed as the "fundamental weapon of the proletariat and its allies in the conquest of state power." Those arguments were carried in the context of an analysis of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on dual power. (Beecham, 1983:14; Smirnow, 1979:93) Thus, unlike the left SP, the Cordillera group understood that the working class did not control the state. There were other signs that some workers were moving beyond a centrist position. For example, throughout the summer of 1973, the pages of a non-party leftist newspaper like Chile Hoy were "filled with debates about the role of the cordones, the commands, the role of the CUT, dual power..." and other similar questions. (Beecham, 1983:11)

The combination of revolutionary rhetoric and reformist practice in the left SP is evident in the gulf between the political platform of the centrists and their political activity as a party. For example, the left SP argued that revolutionary violence was necessary to create socialism, that it was necessary for socialists to intervene in the army, and that the bureaucratic and military apparatus of the state had to be destroyed.(Smirnow,1979:14-15,49,103) Yet, despite holding those views, and having a long record of criticizing the moderates for conducting themselves as reformists, the centrists remained in the UP coalition, acquiescing to its decisions, accepting responsibility for its policies, and refraining from acting on the very policies it denounced the moderates for rejecting.

This gap between theory and practice explains how Senator Carlos Altamirano, the leader of the left SP, could repeatedly call for the destruction of the bourgeois state, without feeling any compulsion to translate such statements "into corresponding practice."(Smirnow,1979:104) Verbal revolutionism was the stock in trade of the left SP. Political proclamations were debating points directed at the UP leadership, rather than statements designed to guide the practical work of party activists. The SP leaders thought they could challenge the dominance of the moderates and capture control of the UP with phrases. Therefore, participation in the class struggle to win the adherence of the working class was a secondary concern. SP protests against the government's reformist policies were invariably followed by acquiescence to them, as the centrists prepared for the next round of factional maneuvering.(Smirnow,1979:105,147-148) Despite the frequent condemnations of the reformists, the centrists never found an issue of principle over which to quit the government and the UP coalition.(Roxborough,1977:29-30; Petras,1969:161-164; Prieto,1974:72-73)

The centrists had many opportunities to split from the UP. A split was justified each time the reformists demonstrated their absolute commitment to preserving capitalism (e.g., when Allende signed the Statute of Guarantees, when the UP made the decision to halt the reform process at Lo Curro, when Allende took the generals into the cabinet in October 1972, when the UP proposed the Millas Plan, when the government refused to take vigorous action against the right after the *tancazo*, etc.). Instead of a split, and decisive action from the SP, each of these incidents provoked a party crisis and an internal debate that made it impossible for the centrists to give any practical direction to the working class.(Gonzalez,1984:61,69)³³ Thus, at the two most critical moments in the revolutionary process -- October 1972 and July 1973 -- the SP was too paralyzed to offer any real leadership to its members.(Gonzalez,1984:61,69) The abdication of political leadership by the SP on the national level created an enormous political vacuum -- one which the local activists (especially in the leadership of the *cordones*) tried to fill. But, the "scattered efforts" of radicalizing workers had "no overall plan nor any center to coordinate and concentrate them." (Smirnow,1979:149; Petras,1978:225)

Despite their verbal revolutionism, the SP leaders sacrificed the needs of the mass movement to preserve their status as the loyal opposition to the UP moderates. Like the moderates, Altamirano and the other centrist leaders were driven by a vision of socialism that owed more to Castro than to Marx, Lenin or Trotsky. They substituted the capture of the state machine for its destruction, and conceived of the party leaders as the agent of socialism, rather than the working class. (Gonzalez,1984:70-71)

Because the centrists insisted on tailing the reformists rather than splitting from them, the left SP gave the entire UP coalition a credibility it did not deserve. With that

'revolutionary' tinge, leftward moving workers were encouraged to join the UP, rather than leave it. In fact, the "rhetoric...of Altamirano and the Socialist left ...served to incorporate a whole layer of revolutionary workers, via the SP, into the UP government, and therefore also into the existing bourgeois state apparatus."(Gonzalez,1984:81-82) Working class militants who joined the SP because of its revolutionary rhetoric discovered too late that "far from providing a political instrument to carry the struggle forward...the SP imprisoned them and tied them to the existing state apparatus." (Gonzalez,1984:69; Evans,1974:248) Thus, the SP left "provided a left cover for the real power in the (UP-BM)...Allende and the right"(Gonzalez,1984:81-82)

The left SP stayed in the government coalition, aiming to prevent the moderates from further collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and to get them to accept the cordones as a legitimate part of the struggle. Even though it was impossible for the centrists to offer an alternative strategy while remaining inside the UP, they refused to split from the UP coalition for fear of dividing the working class, bringing down the UP government, and losing some supporters. They remained hopeful they could win a majority within the UP, or convince the reformists to behave differently. (Petras,1978:225; Roxborough, 1977:186) The left SP was tied to the moderate UP, the latter was tied to the CD left, and the CD left was tied to the right wing of the CD.(Petras,1978:225-226) Since the latter was involved in preparations for a coup by mid-1973, the centrist leaders were committed to political passivity in the face of the coup. The centrists remained on the defensive until the end, unable to move against the UP government, even when the military coup was looming during mid-1973.(Roxborough,1977:163)

The second potential candidate for the role of revolutionary party was the MIR. However, as a small organization with very little following inside the industrial working class, it deserves far less attention than the SP.³⁴ The MIR was a Castroist party, "enamored of the elitist scheme of guerilla warfare carried out by a vanguard group without direct involvement of the masses." (Evans,1974:14; Prieto,1974:73) Its vision of socialism was Cuban style state capitalism, and its revolutionary strategy owed far more to Blanqui than to Marx. (In classic ultra-leftist style, it followed Guevera's suggestion that there was no need to wait for the proper objective conditions before launching an insurrection, since those conditions could be created by the revolutionary party itself.(Furci,1984:84))³⁵

After Allende's electoral victory, the MIR vacillated between ultra-leftism and reformism, as it tailed the moderate UP government.³⁶ The common theme throughout was a strong belief that the revolution must be made by a small, highly disciplined organization of professional revolutionaries, on behalf of the working class. That elitism resulted in some disastrous political decisions, like the decision to follow the UP moderates in denouncing the cordones as parallel organizations. Because the MIR was so weak within the industrial working class, and because it oriented towards peasants, shantytown dwellers and students (all of whom were excluded from the cordones), it emphasized the importance of the communal commands while attacking the cordones. (Beecham,1983:10-11) The MIR was even unwilling to accept the revolutionary leadership of working class delegates within the communal commands.(O'Brien, 1973:81; Lucia,1976:149-151; Smirnow,1979:93) Not surprisingly, the MIR had real difficulties attracting support from the vanguard layer of the working class.(Gonzalez,1984:61; Prieto, 1974:33; Roxborough,1977:184-185) Thus, on the

central political issue for any revolutionary organization in Chile -- the role of the cordones in the revolutionary process -- the MIR took a position that was much worse than that of the SP left.(Gonzalez, 1984:72)

To conclude, both the left SP and the MIR were centrist organizations that combined verbal revolutionism with a practical policy of tailing the UP. Both groups oriented towards the UP government hoping to push it left, rather than building the capacity of the working class to replace the existing state with one of their own.(Gonzalez,1984:60; 1987:73) Neither organization called for cordone power. The Chilean centrists differed fundamentally from the Bolsheviks over the methods for achieving socialism -- mass insurrection from below to establish a workers' state for the Bolsheviks, versus mobilization of the cordones (or the communal commands) as a vehicle to push the leadership of the UP government left. That difference in method reflects a substantive difference in the vision of socialism. For the Chilean centrists, the goal was not a workers' state, but something much closer to Cuban style state capitalism.³⁷

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The fourth and final factor which influenced the development of working class consciousness, was the absence of a revolutionary party. If the mass of the working class was moving left, if large numbers of workers were developing a militant form of trade union consciousness, and if centrism prevailed as the main political affiliation within the vanguard of the working class (e.g., in the leadership of the cordones), then the failure for mass revolutionary consciousness to develop was caused by the absence of a revolutionary party. As we saw in earlier chapters, the mass of the working class cannot develop a revolutionary consciousness -- even during a revolutionary crisis -- unless the goal of

workers' revolution is clearly advocated by a substantial and credible organization with the means to make such a revolution seem like a realistic possibility. For revolutionary consciousness to take hold among the vanguard of the working class, centrism had to be challenged from the left by a substantial revolutionary party.

The many radicalizing workers within the centrist wing of the UP never had the opportunity to embrace a revolutionary option, because there was no revolutionary organization available in Chile.(Petras,1978:225) At the level of the factories and neighbourhoods, the left SP functioned as an umbrella group for the most class conscious workers, a group which allowed militants to initiate all sorts of direct action (e.g., building cordones). But the left SP could not provide "any national leadership or direction" to carry the mass movement forward -- especially at moments of intense class conflict (e.g., October 1972 and July 1973) when the centrist organizations were paralyzed.(Petras, 1978:225) The experience of working class self-organization and collective struggle during 1972-73 created a real (if not articulated) demand for a revolutionary party in the ranks of the Chilean working class.

(The-BM) practice of workers engaged in occupying factories, controlling the streets, arming themselves, albeit in a piecemeal and disorganized way, and insisting that there be no capitulation to the military or the bourgeoisie, represented just such a demand. But it went unanswered.(Gonzalez,1984:69)

To win the major changes that most Chilean workers wanted by 1973, required a cordone revolution. But, even the most class conscious sections of the working class movement, the leaders of the cordones, proved unable to conceive of the need to replace the UP government and the bourgeois state with cordone power. The absence of a genuine revolutionary party -- a party absolutely independent from the moderate socialists and the

centrists, and willing to argue for revolution against the UP government -- undercut the very idea of a 'cordone revolution'. By default, workers remained dependent upon one or another wing of the UP for leadership.(Roxborough,1977:162) Although many Chilean workers wanted a radical transformation of society, they could not envisage workers' power, since they were unable to detach themselves from the UP government.(Roxborough,1977:162)

Thus, in Chile, experience alone -- even when it was the experience of self-organization by the masses (in the cordones, communal commands, JAPs, etc.) in a pre-revolutionary situation -- was not sufficient to generate revolutionary consciousness. Mere experience of the intense class struggle of 1972-73 could not make up for the absence of a revolutionary party that publicly argued for and organized to build a workers' revolution. The experience of vanguard workers in the cordones would only have produced revolutionary consciousness if it was consistently subject to commentary from a revolutionary organization that pointed out the pitfalls of centrist strategy and the practical implications of an alternative, revolutionary strategy. For example, in order for the militants who led the cordones to properly analyze the situation they were in, they needed to be members of a revolutionary organization which analyzed and debated the lessons of past revolutionary crises in which centrism was a prominent feature (e.g., Germany in 1918-1920). Only then would they be aware of the historical precedents for parties which appear revolutionary in their propaganda, but conduct themselves practically as reformists. In the absence of a party that could provide Chilean workers with a store of revolutionary ideas to draw upon, even the experience of building cordones would not suffice to produce a revolutionary consciousness.(Gonzalez,1987:59)

In all revolutionary crises, the consciousness of the mass of the working class is affected by both practical experience of the class struggle and the propaganda of the various political parties who claim to be able to explain that experience. And, the crisis in Chile was no different. Workers' consciousness was altered by their experiences expropriating their factories, creating workers' control, and their efforts to counteract the bosses' strike by building cordones. But, all the questions posed by that new experience -- questions about why the UP government was behaving as it was, about what precedents there were for the development of cordone-type institutions, about why the left SP did not sever its ties to the UP coalition, and about how to prevent a coup -- went unanswered. Only a revolutionary organization could have addressed those very real questions that the vanguard of the working class was asking by the summer of 1973.

A revolutionary party in Chile had to do a number of things to make a workers' revolution a realistic possibility: the unity of the different sections of the working class (the vanguard and the more backward workers) had to be deepened in the cordones and communal commands; the cordones had to be centralized into a single delegated body that could be viewed as the embryo of a future workers' state; the argument that cordone power could replace the bourgeois state and the UP government had to be promoted; and, the vanguard of the working class had to have a way to intervene in the military, defend the cordones from the right and prepare for mass insurrection. A revolutionary party that undertook those tasks, could have taken advantage of the many lost opportunities to lead the working class onto a sustained offensive (e.g., October 1972, June/July 1973) to broaden and deepen the dual power that was emerging. It was just such an offensive, together with a sustained intervention among the rank and file of the military, that was

required to split the heart of the bourgeois state machine. The absence of a Bolshevik type revolutionary party in Chile, was the reason why the pre-revolutionary situation did not deepen in October 1972 and July 1973. On both those occasions, the objective and subjective conditions were conducive to a major offensive by the working class. But, there was no party with the organizational independence, the political clarity, the size, and the support within the vanguard of the Chilean working class to launch that kind of action.(Petras,1978:226-227; Gonzalez,1987:74)

So, there is an obvious question: why was there no revolutionary party in Chile? There were 'revolutionary' organizations galore, but no Bolshevik-type revolutionary party. Why? The answer can be found in the circumstances of the left prior to the revolutionary crisis of 1972-73. In the first place, Chile was a bourgeois democracy which tolerated the growth of large reformist political parties within the working class movement. Chilean social democracy (i.e., the CP and the right wing of the SP), unlike European social democracy in the 1970s, still claimed to be 'Marxist,' and 'revolutionary,' despite being fully integrated into the bourgeois political system. And, the radical wing of the Chilean left (i.e., the left SP), was led by leftist intellectuals who were professional politicians on the public payroll. Not surprisingly, the party leadership proved incapable of generating a serious strategic argument about how to smash Chilean capitalism.(Prieto,1974:72-73)

Second, as a bourgeois democracy in Latin America in the early 1970s, and one with a large 'Marxist' milieu, Chile was a country in which opposition to the mechanical Stalinism of the CP encouraged socialists to seek a 'Latin American' solution to the problems of Chilean capitalism. Thus, leftist workers were predisposed to accept the ideas of Castro and Guevara during the 1960s -- ideas which encouraged some leftists to form

centrist organizations (e.g., the MIR) or to push their organization away from social democracy (e.g., the left SP), without undertaking a serious critique of the tradition of third world nationalism.³⁸ The third reason why there was no revolutionary party with Bolshevik-style politics is the weak presence of Trotskyism in Chile prior to 1972. Of all the international political currents, only the Trotskyist movement (broadly defined) has a set of politics that resemble those of the Bolsheviks. And, the Trotskyist movement in Chile was very small and not too influential prior to the revolutionary crisis of 1972-73.

(Alexander,1973:107-110; Munck,1984:103-108; Evans,1974)³⁹

To conclude, the absence of a revolutionary party in Chile guaranteed the crisis of Chilean capitalism would have a non-revolutionary outcome rather than a revolutionary one. The inability of the Chilean working class to spontaneously develop a revolutionary consciousness in 1972-73 is a confirmation of the Bolsheviks' missing party thesis. Thus, even in an advanced industrialized country that is a bourgeois democracy, and even in the midst of a revolutionary crisis where there is a mass centrist party, the working class will not spontaneously create the kind of vanguard party required to organize a workers' revolution. In that sense, the Chilean case stands in sharp contrast to Germany 1918-1920, where the mass centrist party, the USPD was successfully challenged by an initially small revolutionary party, the Spartacus League/KPD, in a way which resulted in the creation of a mass revolutionary party within two years.(Hannan,1982)

(5.6) The Immediate Outcome of the Revolutionary Crisis: the Counter-revolutionary Termination of the Revolutionary Process

The crisis of Chilean capitalism was resolved through a bloody counter-revolution. The military coup of September 11, 1973 was a massive defeat for the Chilean working

class. More than 30,000 workers, peasants, shantytown dwellers and political activists died, while many more lost their jobs. With the elimination of the trade unions, political parties and organs of dual power created in 1972-1973, the underclasses lost most of their ability to defend themselves and their standard of living.(Roxborough, 1977:256-257) The Chilean working class paid dearly for the inability of its leadership to develop a realistic strategy for overthrowing capitalism.

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In 1973, the Chilean bourgeoisie was far more concerned about the independent action of the masses than the mild reformism of the UP government.(Raptis,1974:42; Kay,1978:137) By July 1973, a military coup had become the only realistic strategy for a ruling class intent on suppressing the new forms of working class organization and consciousness manifest after the October 1972 bosses' strike and the tancazo. All the other options -- constitutional opposition, economic sabotage, direct economic action, and electoral campaigns -- had proven insufficient to demobilize and destroy the working class movement.(Gonzalez, 1984:74-75; Smirnow,1979:112)

Because Allende refused to capitulate to the bourgeoisie on their terms, they created the conditions whereby a military coup became necessary and possible -- counting on the military to intervene to preserve the bourgeois state. After March 1973, when the ruling class was united in its support for a military coup, the major problem facing them was the timing and character of the coup. The problem of timing was resolved when the working class movement demonstrated its inability to mount an offensive after the tancazo. The other question -- what kind of coup to stage -- was discussed in relation to two options: a "clean coup" (favored by the liberal CDs) that would "destroy the government, suppress the

left wing political parties, and then quickly return (the country-BM) to some form of guided bourgeois democracy;" or a "dirty coup" involved complete eradication of all working class organizations, the slaughter of the leadership of that class, and the replacement of the government with either a fascist or military government.(O'Brien,1976b:276; Gonzalez,1984:74-75)⁴⁰ The choice was dictated by the relative balance of class forces in July/August 1973. Because the radicalization of the working class had progressed to the point where dual power was widespread, and because the bourgeoisie had won the battle for support from the middle classes, a dirty coup was both possible and necessary. When the coup came, its prime targets were the institutions of embryonic dual power (i.e., the cordones, the JAPs, the peasant councils and the other manifestations of "popular power") that the ruling classes had identified as the main threat to their class power.(Steenland, 1974a:13; Smirnow,1979:113-114; Gonzalez, 1984:74-75; Evans, 1974:245; Santa Lucia,1976:152-153)

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The destruction of the UP government and the working class movement was carried out by the military on behalf of the ruling class. That does not mean the Chilean military was merely an instrument of the ruling classes. The officer corps had a certain degree of autonomy from other portions of the Chilean state and from the bourgeoisie -- a fact evident in the military decision to retain state power after the coup, against the wishes of large sections of the ruling class. However, despite that autonomy, the officer corps was deeply committed to a social order which preserved the dominance of the state apparatus over the masses. When public order and economic stability were challenged, and especially when the generals' monopoly over the means of violence was challenged (because the

cordones talked about the need for arms, and because the mass movement affected the morale of rank and file soldiers), the military could be expected to intervene to defend the existing social order -- with whatever means necessary. (Joxe,1976:263; Roxborough,1977:189-190; North,1976:180)

During the life of Allende's government, the officer corps was split between the reactionary supporters of a military coup and the pragmatic upholders of the constitution -- with the latter forming the majority until 1973.(Smirnow,1979:134) Although there were several opportunities to launch a military coup prior to September 1973, none of those opportunities were taken.(Roxborough,1976:192-193) In fact, until mid-1973 even the reactionaries were unenthusiastic about launching a military coup. The prospect of confronting the working class movement with largely untested troops was a matter of some concern.(Roxborough, 1977:199) Nevertheless, the Chilean military prepared for action during the summer of 1973 (e.g., with the arms raids of July/August 1973, and the pre-coup purge of UP supporters).

The "constitutionalism" of the pragmatists among the officer corps was not a positive endorsement of the UP, so much as a rationalization for inactivity in the face of the contradictory pressures the military faced: support for the nationalist policies of the UP (insofar as economic development would strengthen the place of the military within Chilean capitalism), but hostility to the mass movement of the underclasses and sympathy for the plight of the middle classes in the deteriorating economic situation. (By 1973, the 'middle classes' -- the classes of origin for most officers -- had been won to the side of reaction.) (Nef,1974:64; Roxborough,1977:188; North,1976: 173-174; Kay,1975b:19-20) Gradually, the pragmatists within the officer corps lost ground to those committed anti-communists who

were disgusted by the 'illegal' activities of workers, peasants and members of Allende's own UP.

The UP government's strategy towards the military was deficient in numerous ways. For example, the UP failed to take harsh action against those sections of the military that were discovered plotting against the government; it did nothing to undercut the close relationship between the Chilean and American military, and the UP did not veto the Arms Control law the generals used to terrorize the left and make preparation for the coup. Instead, the UP pandered to the officers by giving them large budgets and political power, as if it were possible to bribe them to disregard their own interests. The UP also prevented other leftists from agitating among rank and file soldiers, opposed the formation of any workers' militias, and built the confidence of the military by taking generals into the cabinet and by calling upon them to assist in resolving the class struggle. (Steenland, 1979:100; Birchall, 1973:11; Gonzalez, 1987:75) Not surprisingly, the reactionary officers were not neutralized by the UP's policy.⁴¹

Several factors strengthened the hand of the reactionaries in the military: the general polarization of Chilean society between 'revolutionary' (the UP left and most of the working class) and counter-revolutionary camps (i.e., the bourgeoisie, the military leaders, the fascists, etc.): the paralysis of the government because of the deadlock between the President and the Congress; the bourgeoisie's demands the UP be forcefully evicted from the presidency (after neither constitutional action nor direct economic action had succeeded); the growth of the economic crisis, and the rise of an autonomously organized and militant working class movement that was seeking arms, occupying factories and beginning to intervene among the military. (Smirnow, 1979:139; Valenzuela, 1978:100) But it

was the last factor, the rise of mass organizations like the cordones that finally pushed the reactionary officers to squeeze the constitutionalists out of the leadership of the military, and launch their coup.(Joxe,1976:245; Furci,1984:125) As long as the officer corps remained divided, the chances of a coup were slim, since the reactionaries feared their disagreement with the constitutionalists might lead to a civil war.(Petras,1974:570-571)

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Our analysis of the revolutionary process in Chile suggests that the pre-revolutionary crisis of 1972 and 1973 could have developed into a revolutionary situation, had there been a mass revolutionary party in Chile. It was only the absence of such a party that limited both the pressures on the ruling class and its institutions (e.g., the military), and the scope for independent revolutionary action by the working class. In other words, a Bolshevik interpretation of the 1972-1973 crisis identifies the subjective factor (i.e., the absence of mass revolutionary consciousness embodied in a revolutionary party) as the key to explaining the non-revolutionary outcome.

However, even though the absence of a revolutionary party doomed the Chilean workers' movement to defeat in 1972-73, the specific form that defeat would take -- whether evaporation of the revolutionary crisis, or its liquidation by reaction or counterrevolution -- was entirely dependent on the development of the revolutionary process. Our analysis of the Chilean case does not claim that the particular outcome which actually occurred in September 1973 was inevitable.(Roxborough,1976:192-193)

Although a successful counter-revolution was the most likely outcome after October 1972, it is not difficult to envisage an alternative outcome. If the Allende government had decided to compromise with the CDs during negotiations in 1972, making the concessions

the CDs wanted against the wishes of the centrists (in affect joining a coalition committed to halting the reform process), that might well have split the UP and pushed the centrists (or some section of them) to form an independent political party. In turn, that would have made it possible for a substantial section of the working class to shake its illusions about Allende and the UP and become consistent opponents of reformism, making a revolutionary outcome more possible. On the other hand, an open split in the UP would have demoralized some workers and split the bourgeoisie, increasing the possibility that the pressures that produced the pre-revolutionary situation in October 1972 might have evaporated before the new left wing opponents of reformism were able to prove themselves in the struggle. In other words, the specific outcome which occurred might have been pre-empted by the alliance of the UP with the bourgeoisie, or by the split of the centrists from the UP coalition.(Roxborough, 1976:194)

However, alternative outcomes to the situation (e.g., workers' revolution or an evaporation of the social crisis) were prevented by the absence of a revolutionary party as well as by the long history of coalition politics between the reformists and the centrists. Neither political current was strong enough to impose its will upon the other, and neither believed it had the support to face growing right wing opposition as well as the antagonism of their former comrades in the UP. Thus, the existence of the centrists made it difficult for the moderates to turn on their base, and the strength of the reformists scared the centrists from striking out on their own. (Roxborough,1977:185) The failure of the reformists and centrists to split the UP meant the bourgeoisie faced a sufficiently 'unified' workers movement to recommend a dirty coup.

In 1972-1973 there were two crucial occasions on which huge numbers of Chilean workers spontaneously took an initiative which -- if encouraged by a mass revolutionary party -- would have dramatically shifted the balance of class power in favour of the working class, and potentially changed the outcome of the crisis. (Even an effort by the Left SP to really organize against the impending coup might have been prolonged the revolutionary crisis.) However, given the strength of the right and the absence of a revolutionary party, those upsurges simply increased the likelihood the crisis would end in a bloody counter-revolution. It is difficult to identify the precise moment when a successful counter-revolution went from being the probable outcome to a certain one. Most likely, it was after the UP attacked the initiatives of the cordones and communal commands in July 1973. If the UP had instead tried to arm the working class and prepare a "coordinated civil resistance" to the coup that was imminent, the working class might still have divided the army and prevented the mass slaughter that occurred. However, "by late 1973, previous mistakes had restricted the options" of the UP moderates and centrists. (Steenland, 1974a:11)

Although the revolutionary alternative to reformism and centrism was not embodied in a mass revolutionary party in Chile, a revolutionary outcome would have been possible if such a revolutionary party had existed. The possibility of a revolutionary outcome to the crisis in Chile is indicated by the degree of mobilization evident among the underclasses, and the divisions within the ruling classes until March 1973. Although the objective preconditions necessary for a successful working class insurrection never fully developed (centralized soviets never developed, the army never split, etc.), the widespread initiative of the underclasses suggests a mass revolutionary party could have altered the objective

balance of class power and generated the conditions necessary for a proletarian revolution.

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In addition to being a bourgeois democratic regime, Chile was also a semi-colonial country, in which the UP was partially motivated by a struggle for 'national liberation' from foreign domination. The national liberation argument shaped the revolutionary process in Chile, by giving the UP's policy (i.e., building a multi-class alliance to undertake national economic development) more resonance and by allowing the moderates to obscure the threat from the domestic bourgeoisie. But, it was not Chile's economic status that made the parliamentary road to socialism impossible in Chile.(Roxborough, 1977:264) Because Chile had its own ruling class, and because that ruling class was a very visible actor during the crisis of 1972-1973, Chilean workers were pushed by their own experience to view their struggle "as a struggle for workers' power, rather than as primarily a formula for (national-BM) economic growth" in the way it was viewed by the UP moderates.(Roxborough,1979:160)

Chile's status within the world capitalist system, as a country highly dependent upon the US, did not make a revolutionary outcome to the crisis of 1972-73 impossible. After all, the revolutionary crisis in Chile occurred in an international context which made it difficult for American imperialism to contemplate direct military intervention, given its severe difficulties with the war in Vietnam. As it turned out, the Chilean bourgeoisie proved strong enough to smash the revolution itself.

Chile provides a textbook case of the termination of the revolutionary process through counter-revolution. After the working class failure to mount a centralized offensive to weaken their opponents, both in October 1972 and again July 1973, Chilean workers

succumbed to despair, division and the counter-revolution. When the counter-revolutionary situation developed after mid-July 1973, the balance of class forces favored the ruling classes. The working class movement was badly split between the moderates and the radicals, with neither grouping able to provide the leadership the working class needed to sustain the fragmented offensive begun after the tancazo. Meanwhile, after the March election, the bourgeoisie was able to unite behind the need for military intervention, even if there was still some debate about what kind of coup was required. Thus, the Chilean case points to the importance for analysts working within the Bolshevik tradition to develop a more detailed analysis of counter-revolutionary situations.

(5.7) Conclusion: Bolshevik Theory and the Revolutionary Process in Chile

The Chilean case confirms the Bolshevik argument that the absence of a revolutionary party impedes the development of a revolutionary crisis and prevents the possibility of a successful workers' revolution. Moreover, it confirms everything the Bolsheviks argued about the dynamics of politicization and centralization of the class struggle as society polarizes during a revolutionary crisis. And, the revolutionary crisis in Chile exhibits many of the same sorts of features the Bolsheviks analyzed as a result of their experience in Europe (e.g., organs of dual power like the cordones).

Although the Chilean case exhibits certain features and dynamics unlike those of the Russian revolution (e.g., the importance of community and consumer based organizations like the JAPS), and although it did not end in a successful working class seizure of power, we can still explain the outcome of the Chilean crisis with the Bolshevik theory of the

revolutionary process. While the precise form of the revolutionary process in Chile (how the constituent parts were combined) was unique, the political dynamics and issues were the same as those raised in Russia in 1917, in Germany between 1918-1923, and other revolutionary crises since then. In other words, the very same ingredients of class struggle were at work in Chile as we saw in the case of Russia; what had changed was the manner in which they were combined.(Beecham,1983:7)

We can conclude by considering what the Chilean experience tells us about the revolutionary process, and whether it necessitates any modification of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process. We can do that by comparing the Russian and Chilean cases. Writing before the 1973 coup, Steenland noted a number of straightforward similarities between the two cases.

There is a real sense in which the UP corresponds to the Provisional Government of the February Revolution after the socialists had entered the cabinet but before the government had lost the support of the majority of the working class. The (Chilean-BM) CP has many analogies with the Mensheviks, with their "correct" Plekhanovite theory of stages. The heterogeneous SP can be likened to the Social Revolutionaries. European imperialism finds its parallel in American imperialism in Chile. The rightist October offensive in Chile would correspond to the retreat of the left during the July days in Russia. Bourgeois industrial sabotage by property owners was, of course, also practiced in Russia.

However, the numerous differences between the two cases are even more striking than the above parallels.(Steenland,1973: 101-102) In the first place, the Russian army virtually collapsed during and after the February uprising, whereas the Chilean army was never seriously tested prior to September 1973. That difference is undoubtedly attributable to the different objective circumstances that triggered the revolutionary crises in each country: the war induced downfall of the Czar in Russia, and the mobilization of the bourgeoisie against the UP government in Chile. However, it is also partly attributable to

subjective differences; the presence of a mass revolutionary party in Russia exacerbated and speeded up the disintegration of the army, while the absence of a revolutionary party in Chile meant that many opportunities to push the class differences within the military into the open, were lost. The predominance of the reactionaries within the military was assisted by the UP's tolerance of the generals'

policy of isolating the military from the rest of society and from the class struggle. It was precisely this isolation which...made impossible any solidarity between workers in struggle against the bourgeoisie and soldiers, NCOs and sectors of officers who had class and material interests in common with the masses. (Smirnow, 1979:145-146)

By doing everything to preserve the 'neutrality' of the military and nothing to promote the independent organization or politicization of rank and file soldiers, the UP allowed the military to "remain...an island of bourgeois hierarchy and discipline in the face of a collapsing bourgeois order -- which meant that its forces emerged virtually intact to make the final coup." (Roxborough, 1977:189,194; Joxe, 1976:262)

The failure of the working class to put sufficient pressure on the military to split it, was just another manifestation of its inability to push the bourgeoisie onto the sort of defensive that would have widened the cracks that emerged in September 1970. After mid-1972, the ruling classes moved steadily towards greater political unity -- a unity that was critical to the outcome. However, that unity was not inevitable. Both the state machine and the army could have been split through the intervention of a revolutionary party that deepened rather than short-circuited the crises that followed the bosses' strike and the tancazo.

A second point of contrast between the Russian and Chilean cases centers on the relative strength of the right in Chile (organized in bourgeois and fascist political parties)

by contrast with its weakness in Russia. This difference obviously flows from the contrast between the pre-1917 rule of the Czar and the pre-1970 rule of the NP and CD presidents. The latter were not nearly as harsh as the Czar's regime, and therefore did not discredit the political forces of the right to the same extent. Moreover, during the revolutionary process in Chile, the class struggle did not break out in armed clashes that demonstrated how bloodthirsty the bourgeoisie actually was until after March 1973. By contrast, the Russian ruling classes demonstrated its brutality repeatedly, in 1905, between 1914 and 1917, and again in July and August 1917. Finally, the difference in class structure between Russia and Chile meant there was a higher proportion of the latter's population in classes and strata that were unlikely to join even a temporary alliance with a revolutionary working class -- some strata of the middle classes.

Third, in Chile, consumer and community based organizations (e.g., the JAPs and the organizations of the shantytown dwellers) were far more critical to the mobilization of the working class than they had been in Russia. Therefore, in Chile, there were communal commands in addition to the cordones. That was so for three reasons. First, the political leadership of the Chilean working class -- both the moderates and radicals in the UP -- displayed little interest in organizing the large portion of the working class that was not unionized. But, in Russia the trade unions and the soviets (including the very important raion soviets, that performed some of the same functions as the communal commands) rapidly embraced almost the entire working class, including the more backward elements of the non-industrial proletariat. Second, the absence of large scale manufacturing industry in Chile meant the social weight of the industrial proletariat, in relation to other sections of the working class, was such that the cordones (which were comparable to the factory

committees in Russia rather than the soviets) could not initially incorporate the non-industrial sections of the working class -- those represented in the JAPs and the shantytown committees that formed the backbone of the communal commands. Finally, the failure of the cordones and the communal commands to centralize the class struggle around the single objective of mass insurrection to establish a workers' state meant the unity of unionized and non unionized workers broke down every time a major working class offensive ran up against the obstruction of the UP or the confusion of the radicals (e.g., in November 1972 and July 1973). In principle, the communal commands had the potential to unite the more organized section of the working class (i.e., the vanguard of industrial workers), along with the unemployed and other sections of the underclasses. However, the whole operation required clear leadership from the vanguard of the working class -- leadership that was missing.

Fourth, the existence of a national system of centralized soviets rooted in every workplace in Russia, contrasts with the merely local system of poorly linked, and weekly rooted cordones in Chile. Chilean workers never viewed "cordone power" as the only alternative to the destruction of their movement, in quite the same way as Russian workers accepted the Bolshevik slogan "All power to the soviets". But, Chilean workers did not hear "All power to the cordones" loudly and clearly, throughout the revolutionary process, the way Russian workers heard Bolshevik slogans -- even before their experience had pushed them towards revolutionary conclusions. The strength of reformism in Chile, and the absence of a revolutionary left, impeded the development of a revolutionary situation, because it inhibited the centralization of the cordones and the development of dual political power. Since dual political power is (together with the existence of a mass revolutionary

party) crucial for the growth of a revolutionary crisis into a full fledged revolutionary situation, the development of the revolutionary process in Chile was stunted by its absence.

Fifth, Chile had well rooted mass parties dominated by the politics of class collaboration, and unchallenged by a substantial revolutionary party. Indeed, the sheer strength of bourgeois democracy and reformism in Chile meant a pre-revolutionary crisis could not really develop until the reformist claims about the existence of a parliamentary road to socialism had been seriously tested. Therefore, the path from a 'normal' state of class relations to a pre-revolutionary or even revolutionary situation, was likely to involve some participation in government by the moderate socialists.(Roxborough,1977:157)

Moreover, since the UP government was able to deliver some tangible reforms during its first 18 months in office, it was initially able to strengthen its grip on the working class. By contrast, the weakly rooted moderate socialist/bourgeois coalition that dominated the Provisional Government in Russia after April 1917, delivered very few reforms, and never established its credibility as a government. To be sure, in the second half of Allende's presidency, the UP proved incapable of continuing the reform process, or even defending reforms won during the first half of his time in office. Nevertheless, Chilean reformism gained a degree of credibility that Russian reformism never did.

And sixth, the final point of contrast between the Russian and Chilean cases was the presence of a mass revolutionary party in Russia, and the absence of one in Chile. The existence of the Bolshevik party in February 1917, gave the vanguard of the Russian working class a forum separate from that of the Russian reformists and centrists, within which to debate the significance of the revolution and their response. By contrast, the vanguard of the Chilean working class never managed to generate an organization separate

from that of the reformists and centrists. As a consequence, the working class was never given a genuine alternative to the reformists.

As in Germany after World War I, the absence of a mass revolutionary organization at the time the revolutionary crisis developed, meant that the vanguard of the working class moved spontaneously towards revolutionary ideas from within the framework of reformism. The most militant portion of the working class, the supporters of the centrist parties and the cordones, moved towards a very militant form of trade union consciousness: they were willing to engage in the most revolutionary forms of struggle, but their objectives were limited to the centrist goal of power sharing between the bourgeois parliament and the cordones. (The self-mobilization of the working class was not seen as an end in itself, as a basis for the creation of a workers' state and an alternative form of society.) In Russia, where centrism was relatively weak, workers moved from cynicism and trade union consciousness to revolutionary consciousness. In the latter case, the centrists (i.e., the left Mensheviks, like Martov) were ground down in the competition between reformist and revolutionary currents within the working class: the moderate socialists in Kerensky's PG and the Bolsheviks, respectively.⁴²

In Chile, the centrist leadership of the SP -- the organization that contained the largest and most important chunk of workers moving towards revolution -- was never challenged by a revolutionary alternative. Though many leftward moving workers spontaneously sought to transcend the limitations of their centrist leadership in 1972-1973, they were unable to do so without the prior existence of a revolutionary party. Thus, besides confirming the Bolshevik critique of centrism as a political strategy incapable of bringing the working class to power, the Chilean case also strengthens the Bolshevik

insistence on the need to build a revolutionary party that incorporates a section of the vanguard before a revolutionary crisis begins.

The Chilean experience, like that of Germany in 1918-1923, suggests the inherent difficulty of building a revolutionary party in the midst of a major social crisis. However, in Chile, there was no Rosa Luxemburg, nobody capable of duplicating even her modest achievement in launching the Spartacus League during the earliest stages of the German revolution. Thus, the Chilean example lends real weight to the Bolshevik argument that the process of building a revolutionary party that incorporates the vanguard of the working class during periods of capitalist 'normality' is critical to the later outcome of revolutionary crises. Certainly, it was unlikely that either the MIR or the left SP could build a Bolshevik style revolutionary party between September 1970 and October 1972. The centrist and elitist nature of their politics meant the creation of substantial revolutionary party could only occur through a split from one of those two groups, probably the SP. Such a development presupposed the intervention of a group of revolutionaries (like the intervention in the centrist USPD by the newly formed German KPD and the Comintern, during the revolutionary crisis in 1919-1920). Such an alternative pole of attraction, outside the left SP and the MIR, simply did not exist.

Besides the comparison with the Russian case, Chilean experience shows that any serious attempt to follow the parliamentary road to socialism, unleashes such a dynamic of confrontation between capital and labour that it will generate a pre-revolutionary situation -- with all the standard features and dynamics of such a crisis. Chile is an example of a major social crisis precipitated by the election of a genuinely reformist government in a bourgeois democracy where a large social democratic left existed. Thus, the Chilean case offers a very suggestive example of what may happen when a government

does give the impression in a bourgeois democracy, that it genuinely intends to bring about really serious changes in the social order and to move in socialist directions, in however constitutional and gradual a manner.(Miliband,1977:412)

Unlike most social democratic parties in the major bourgeois democracies, the UP coalition was serious about introducing major structural reforms, at least until 1972. (The UP differed from most European social democratic parties and coalitions of the post-World War II era, because it had not renounced "Marxism", and ostensibly supported the "class struggle" and the establishment of socialism. In that respect, the UP is more like the German SPD of the early twentieth century, than the social democratic parties of today.) If the determination of the UP leadership wavered, they were disciplined by the fear of losing their base to the centrists. As a result, they refused to organize and participate in the mass repression against workers that the ruling class demanded as the price for an alliance. The downfall of the UP as administrators of capitalism was their inability to revert to sheer pragmatism and repress their working class base. As a left reformist government that took its own rhetoric about reform quite seriously, the UP opened the door to a dramatic escalation in the class struggle and a polarization between capital and labour which it rapidly lost control of. Because it advocated and acted on reforms during a period of escalating class struggle and enormous structural contradictions, the UP helped to provoke a pre-revolutionary crisis.(Henfrey, 1977:54)

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER (5.0)

1. The extreme dependence of the Chilean economy upon the world economy and its vulnerability to US imperialism is clear from certain statistics. In 1968, 90% of Chile's exports were minerals, while 39% of its imports, and fully 70% of all capital goods were from the US. Further, with a foreign debt of over \$3 billion in 1970 (something that required annual payments of \$400 million per year in 1971 and 1972), the Chilean economy was heavily dependent upon foreign capital to stay afloat.(Steenland, 1973:88; Roxborough,1977:54; Stallings,1978:45-46; DeVyllder, 1976:15-16) With a GNP of about \$10 billion per year, the estimated \$1 billion worth of US investment in Chile which led to a net outflow of capital, was critical to the difficulties of the entire economy.(Stallings,1978:45)
2. There were also several fascist organizations in Chile during the Allende years, the most important being a party called Fatherland and Freedom.(Evans,1974:168-173; Roxborough,1979:118-119; Grugel,1985:116-120)
3. The Chilean military was an institution in decline prior to Allende's election -- its share of the national budget having shrunk from over 25% in the 1940s, to 15% in 1958 and 5.3% in 1970.(Joxe,1976:255; Valenzuela, 1978:20) The military's only strength was its close ties -- through arms purchases, military aid, and training -- to the American military.(Palacios,1979:279; North,1976:85-86)
4. For information on Chile's occupational structure, see Roddick (1976:7), Smirnow (1979:20), and Stallings (1978:34).
5. Empleados were encouraged to identify with other white collar employees, helping to bind white collar members of the working class to members of two other classes: the salaried members of the capitalist class, and the new middle class that occupies an intermediary position between capital and labour.
6. Another distinct section of the working class were the domestic workers, of whom there may have been as many as 168,000. (Roddick,1976:7)
7. Thus, the Chilean trade union leadership could not develop a well financed central apparatus that could provide careers for full time union officials.(Angell,1972:213,221-224,231-232)
8. Under a land reform law initiated in 1967, less than a third of the large landowners were expropriated, giving land to some 20,000 peasant families -- about 5% of the agrarian labour force. But that did little to satisfy the remaining hundreds of thousands of agrarian workers who remained landless.(Kay,1975: 427; 1978:124; Cavarozzi,1974:539)
9. Between 1965 and 1972, the level of unionization among the rural proletariat climbed from 1% to 35%.(Faundez,1988:255)

10. The revolution in liberty was backed by the US as part of its "alliance for progress" program to encourage reform and undercut the possibility of another Cuba. (Gonzalez, 1984:47)

11. The popular front program of the Comintern, first introduced at the Seventh Congress by Dimitrov, was simply a variation of the classic reformist strategy for achieving 'socialism'. Thus, it contained all the standard features of Menshevism: a two stage 'revolution' involving first, a multi-class alliance with the progressive (i.e., non-monopoly) sections of the national bourgeoisie, capture of the existing state machine, and a further period of capitalist development and democratization, to be followed by a second stage -- a peaceful transition to socialism. For more information on the popular front strategy of the CI, see Hallas (1985), Braunthal (1967), Claudin (1974), and Birchall (1974). The UP program followed the CP's popular front program very closely. (Roxborough, 1977:32-33; Gonzalez, 1973:28,31; Evans, 1974:80-81)

12. The Statute of Guarantees prohibited the UP from tampering with the power of the Church, the media, the army, the educational system, the judiciary or other components of the state structure. In other words, the bourgeois controlled Congress acquired a virtual veto over the new government. (Gonzalez, 1987:45-46)

13. Thus, US aid to Chile fell from \$1.1 billion during the six years of the Frei administration to \$73 million during the three years of Allende's presidency. (Budiman, 1981:137) Such measures, together with a major drop in the price of copper made it difficult for the government to import sufficient amounts of food to meet the new demand. (Steenland, 1973:82)

14. Despite all its rhetoric about the evils of American imperialism and monopoly capital, the UP "made no adequate contingency plans" for dealing with the sort of actions the US and Chilean bourgeoisie took against them. (Steenland, 1973:90-91)

15. In Chile, the trucking industry plays a vital economic role, carrying more than half the food, fuel, raw materials and other commodities vital to the day to day operation of the economy. (Gonzalez, 1987:41,252)

16. The military leaders were still split between the putchists and the "constitutionalists," with the latter group in control since the failed coup of October 1970. Furthermore, even those officers who favored a coup recognized there had been insufficient preparation. (Smirnow, 1979:76-77).

17. See Angell (1972:233-236) for a discussion of whether the miners were a labour aristocracy.

18. In another strike during the same period, workers at the ministry of public works handled Allende's charge that were motivated by support for the right, by announcing they were quite prepared to join the UP in taking extra-parliamentary action against the right. In addition, they denounced the bureaucratic fashion in which their ministry was run and

called for greater power to be exercised from the bottom up.(Evans,1974:173-174,188; Roxborough,1977:208)

19. For more on the raids, see Palacios (1979:331).

20. An additional feature of the coup preparations was the heightened terrorism of the fascist right in Fatherland and Freedom. From the 26th of July until the 15th of August -- for example -- there were about 250 terrorist acts by the right against various leftist targets.(Palacios,1979:331)

21. The main section of the working class to resist the coup from the factories were the lightly armed left SP. However, their isolation on the left (MAPU and MIR had gone underground, while the CP failed to give any central direction to its members), and the superior numbers and weapons of the army forced SP members to retreat from the factories and undertake scattered resistance from outside the factories. Members of the MIR led isolated guerilla raids against the military, but did not attempt to organize or lead a mass armed struggle against the coup. (Roxborough,1977:233-237)

22. The literature on forms of self-organization and struggle by the Chilean underclasses is extensive. Some of the key sources on the agrarian class struggle, the shantytown organizations and the JAPS include the following: on the countryside see Steenland (1974b), Kay (1975,1978), Roxborough (1977,1980), Chincilla (1974), Petras (1974c), Winn (1974a,1986), and Smirnow (1979); on the class struggle in the shantytowns, see Threlfall (1976), Handelman (1975), Petras (1973) and Klaarhamer (1989); and, on the struggle over consumption, and the JAPs, see Threlfall (1976), Santa Lucia (1976), Ali (1978), Raptis (1974), Smirnow (1979), Roxborough (1977), Kay (1975b) and Steenland (1973).

23. The large drop in the average number of workers per strike, from about 300 between 1968 and 1970 to 112 in 1971, suggests the UP policy of exercising tight control over workers was much less successful in the small enterprises than the large ones. For the statistics on strike rates, see Angell (1972:76), Cordova (1984: 260,262) and Faundez (1988:256).

24. By September 1973, "the manufacturing enterprises of the social area (about 250 enterprises-BM) accounted for over 40% of total industrial production (in sales) and employed around 140,000 workers, approximately 30% of the industrial labour force."(Espinosa,1978:47-50) Furthermore, there may have been as many as 150 more firms occupied, but not yet officially in the ASP by September 1973. (Roxborough,1977:134; Landsberger,1976:527)

25. The complicated structure established by the UP for workers' participation in expropriated firms allowed 5 rank and file workers to be elected to an administrative council (which had the power to make decisions about production, pay, investment and contracts) along with 5 representatives from the government and a government appointed manager.

26. For other, slightly different accounts, see Henfrey (1977:62-63) and Gonzalez (1984:59-60)

27. For information on the internal structure and activities of the cordones, see O'Brien (1973:80) Santa Lucia (1976:149) and Smirnow (1979:84).

28. For example, see Winn on the role of workers from the Ex-Yarur textile plant in the leadership of the O'Higgins cordone. (1986:238)

29. Although the shantytown dwellers' movement had serious limitations because of its class heterogeneity and its focus on demands related to consumption, it displayed an impressive militancy that -- in circumstances where a mass revolutionary organization existed -- would have allowed it to play a key role in a successful workers' revolution.(Threlfall, 1976:189))

30. Some commentators argue that the mass of the Chilean working class had developed a revolutionary consciousness during 1972-1973, despite the absence of a revolutionary party.(Roxborough, 1977:265-269; Petras,1978:219,226) They suggest the outcome of the revolution was determined by the betrayal of the moderate socialists, only because the 'revolutionary' left was dispersed across organizations like the left SP, the MIR, and so on. In our view, the suggestion that workers who supported the centrist organizations were revolutionary, or that a workers' revolution can be made by a centrist organization(s), is mistaken.

31. The other centrist groups, such as MAPU and the Christian Left, as well as the Trotskyist organization called the PSR, were simply too small to even have pretensions of playing that role. Accordingly, we do not discuss them here.

32. For example, within the SP, the politics of the reformists often prevailed over those of the centrists, even though the left had a majority during the Allende years. In general, the reformist faction of the UP was more cohesive, homogenous and unified under the leadership of Allende and the CP leader Corvalan. Certainly, the CP was consistent, homogeneous, and had one leadership which was not seriously challenged during the life of the UP government.(Smirnow,1979:105-106))

33. In the wake of the UP government's announcement of the Millas Plan, the SP shifted left under the pressures of leading the opposition. There was heightened talk about a potential split from the UP. However, with the withdrawal of the plan and the UP's pre-election lurch to the left, the SP remained in the coalition. In fact, the timidity of the left SP meant a growth in the influence of the party's right wing at a March 1973 party congress, where the leadership of the UP government over the working class was reaffirmed.(Evans,1974:165-166)

34. The MIR's limited base among industrial workers is evident from the returns to the election of the CUT executive in 1972, when they polled just 1.8% of the vote.(Prieto,1974:73; Furci, 1984:99) The MIR was more at home in the shantytown committees and JAPs rather than the cordones or trade unions.(Evans, 1974:250; Steenland,1973:100-101; Smirnow,1979:105) Therefore it remained unable to really influence the day to day direction of the class struggle of the industrial working class -- the key to the revolutionary process.(Smirnow, 1979:105)

35. Some idea of the MIR's program in mid-1973, can be obtained from Ratliff (1976:174-175).

36. During the Allende years, members of the MIR operated increasingly within the political orbit of the UP, developing their political positions as a critique of the UP.(Gonzalez, 1984:71) Although the MIR's leadership made some telling criticisms of the UP's reformism, by 1972 the MIR and the left SP had developed a working alliance. It was "consolidated semi-formally in 1973, when the MIR offered public support to the SP in the March elections."(Roxborough,1977:163; Evans,1974:250; Ratliff,1974: 304) Because they shared with the centrists a belief the party had to create socialism on behalf of the masses, the MIR's criticisms of the UP were limited to an attack on the existence of "reformist sectors" in the government. Like the other centrist currents, the MIR did not "define the government as a whole as reformist."(Evans,1974:241) Hence its tendency to foster illusions the UP coalition might move left.(Prieto,1974: 41; Evans,1974:241;250-251)

37. For an analysis of state capitalism in Cuba, see Pinns (1980,1981) and the critique by Blackburn (1980).

38. There is an enormous difference between Castroism or Guevarism, and Marxism.(Molyneux,1985:54-64; Harris,1974:122-127,191-194,316-323) Nevertheless, many Trotskyists, particularly those Latin American ones associated with the Fourth International, were also influenced by Castroism in the 1960s and 1970s.(Munck,1984:96-98)

39. In Chile, the Trotskyist movement was represented by the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), a small organization that enjoyed very little influence. (Evans,1974:15,147; Alexander, 1973:108-110; Munck,1984:104-108; Raptis,1974:85) During the Allende years the PSR was buried inside the SP; it was a small group, without real roots in the workers' movement, engaged mainly in propaganda.

40. There are historical precedents for the ferocity of the Chilean counter-revolution in the cases of the Paris Commune (1871) and the repression after Franco's victory in Spain.

41. In the three years after September 1970, the UP's desire to encourage the 'neutrality' and 'constitutionalism' of the military forced it to do various things: first, the government adhered to the constitution and the Statute of Guarantees (which also meant abandoning their program of reform for the military); second, they refrained from interfering in the military in any way; third, the UP praised the military publicly; fourth, the UP gave the military an increased budget (from 5.3% of the national budget in 1970, to 9.12% under Allende); fifth, the UP appealed to the nationalism of the military and their resentment against the ruling classes; sixth, the UP permitted the military to retain their close relationship with the US military, and seventh, the UP incorporated the military into the government to prevent their government from further opposition from the left and the right.(Allende,1973:36-37; Roxborough,1977:192-193; Palacios,1979:305; Valenzuela,1978:1274; Joxe,1976:247-248,261; North,1976:179)

42. A centrist organization usually develops as a mass party in a parasitic relationship with a mass reformist organization that is hegemonic on the left. After the beginning of the German revolution in 1918, the absence of a mass revolutionary party meant the

revolutionaries had to intervene in the centrist USPD to win several hundred thousand of its members to the newly formed Communist Party.(Harman,1982:196-198)

MUST WORKERS' REVOLUTION ALWAYS FAIL?
BOLSHEVISM, THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY
CRISES IN RUSSIA, CHILE, PORTUGAL AND POLAND

by

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(6.0) Portugal in 1974-1975: The Revolutionary Process in a Previously Authoritarian Regime

When junior army officers in Portugal staged a military coup to overthrow the authoritarian regime of Salazar (and later, Caetano) on April 25th 1974, it began a revolutionary crisis that escalated until November 25th 1975. Only then, after 19 months of escalating struggle, were military officers sympathetic to the Socialist Party Government able to undercut a mass movement of revolutionary workers and soldiers, allowing the Portuguese ruling class to regain some measure of control over the situation. To understand how the revolutionary crisis in Portugal evaporated without either a workers' revolution or a bloody counter-revolution, we begin with a survey of the class structure and contradictions of Portuguese society prior to April 1974.

(6.1) The Class Structure and Contradictions of Portuguese Capitalism in 1974

By European standards, the 8.8 million residents of Portugal were still living in a very backward country in 1974 -- a country dependent upon subsistence agriculture, the export of raw materials and the import of machinery, capital and consumer goods. (Williams, 1984:1-21) But, Portugal was a country in transition, because of a massive influx of foreign capital in the decade prior to 1974, and because the Portuguese regime was losing the colonial wars it was waging to retain its colonies in Africa.¹

With only 23% of the population living in towns with more than 10,000 people, mainland Portugal consisted of two very different geo-political regions: to the north of the Tagus River was the very traditional, conservative region dominated by small independent farms, on which a very poor peasantry barely eked out a subsistence; to the south were the

large estates of the big landowners, worked by an agrarian proletariat. In between, was the city of Lisbon with a population of 800,000.(Porto,1984:86; Robinson,1979:16-17; De Figueiredo, 1975:177; Goldey,1981:47; Bermeo,1986:22-23) Each of the two forms of land ownership and agrarian production was "an expression of Portugal's backwardness," since both were obstacles to boosting agricultural productivity, expanding the domestic market and overcoming the incredible poverty of the peasantry and farm labourers. In the north, the peasantry had insufficient and fragmented land holdings and was too poor to invest in new production methods. In the south, the ample supply of very cheap labour acted as a barrier to capital investment in agricultural production.(Fryer, 1961:146; Gallagher,1983:75,139) The structural backwardness of agrarian social relations guaranteed very low levels of capital investment, stagnation and declining productivity -- a situation where one third of the rural population lived at a subsistence level.(De Figueiredo,1975:177; Cliff,1975a:38)²

* * * * *

For more than forty years prior to the 1974 revolution, Portuguese society was dominated by the authoritarian and corporative regime of the dictators Antonio Salazar and, after 1968, Marcel Caetano.³ Salazar's regime rested on a complex set of authoritarian and corporatist policies, that enabled him to rule on behalf of the traditional petty bourgeoisie, the church, the army, the landed aristocracy and the colonial bourgeoisie.

(Robinson,1987:84; Fryer,1961:115-116; Gallagher, 1983:77; Hammond,1988:30)

'Salazarism' was designed to preserve and protect the existing class structure of backward Portugal from the corrupting influences of liberalism and socialism, and the institutions associated with those ideologies: parliament, trade unions, a free press, and so

on.(Gallagher,1983:100; Lomax,1983: 110)

Salazar sought to impose 'class harmony' on Portugal with his corporate state, which kept workers, peasants and the colonial inhabitants subjugated, while controlling regulating the economy.(Porto,1984:84-85; De Figueiredo,1975:51,71) Salazar's repressive policies towards the exploited classes, freed the industrialists and large landowners from the fear of rebellion, and bolstered the influence of traditional institutions like the church and the military.(Fryer,1961:136-137; De Figueiredo,1975: 39,43,65; Wheeler,1978) The cornerstone of the regime was an elaborate bureaucratic system of social, political and military institutions run by the state. For example, Salazar's social policy was based on using compulsory, state run organizations to enforce social discipline (e.g., government sponsored, craft-based trade unions).(Fryer,1961:124; De Figueiredo,1975:71) Under Salazarism, strikes, public meetings and other independent expressions of political or economic dissent were strictly forbidden, and basic civil liberties (e.g., freedom of the press, freedom of association, free elections, etc.) were non-existent.(Fryer,1961:185; Raby,1988:2) The whole corporate system was designed to institutionalize social stability and preserve the existing class society, both by outlawing independent class activity, and by providing the regime with a "complex network of...institutions" to co-opt and control the underclasses. (Schmitter,1975:22; Gallagher,1983:69; Leeds,1984:20)

Behind the organizations of "social persuasion and pacification" that were central to the Salazarist state, there was "an equally elaborate and rather more efficient apparatus of social coercion": the military, the regular police, the National Republican Guard, Salazar's own Portuguese Legion, the secret police (PIDE), along with institutions like the state's censorship boards.(Fryer,1961:125-127; Hammond,1988:37,38-39; De

Figueiredo,1975:67,126-158; Gallagher,1983:85-86,100-101; 1984: 483)

Salazar's economic policy was nationalist, imperialist, isolationist, protectionist and profoundly reactionary in character. It promoted economic autarchy to protect the interests of the landed aristocracy, the commercial bourgeoisie (based in the colonial trade) and the small and medium scale industrialists who served the domestic market. Until the 1960s, the regime deliberately frustrated industrial development with traditional protectionist measures (e.g., high tariffs, limitations on foreign investment, quotas, price controls, industrial licencing, protected colonial markets, etc.), because it threatened the traditional agricultural and colonial basis of Portuguese society.(Porto:1984:85; Gallagher,1983:188; Leeds,1984:13,22-29) As a result, Portuguese capitalism remained backward, with a small industrial working class dispersed among many employers.(De Figueiredo,1975:41-43,50-51) The corporate state insured the price of Portuguese labour was kept very low -- cheap labour being essential to the profitability of the uncompetitive Portuguese economy.(Porto:85; De Figueiredo,1975:162-163; Bruneau,1984:3-4; Leeds,1984:14)

Ironically, Salazar's protectionist industrial strategy had the opposite effect to the one desired, creating "a stagnant and inflexible industrial sector, unable to absorb the domestic labour force leaving agriculture."(Leeds,1984:33-34) By the 1970s, Salazarism meant poverty, a perpetual problem with high levels of emigration, a very low productivity of labour, a restricted domestic market, and a complacency and backwardness on the part of Portuguese industry.(Leeds,194:44)

Prior to 1960, Portuguese industry was extremely backward. Productivity was low, with manufacturing concentrated in the consumer goods industries (e.g., clothing, textiles and food processing), much of it in very small factories and shops.

(Baklanoff,1978:111) With a heavily protected economy, largely cut off from the world economy around it, Portuguese capitalism grew increasingly uncompetitive during the decades of Salazar's rule. Foreign trade consisted of exports of agricultural products and imports of industrial equipment and luxury goods.(Fryer,1961: 140; Williams,1985:9-10)

Despite the weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, capital was highly concentrated. It was dominated by a small number of large consortia owned by about 40 very wealthy families, linking together the major landowners, industrialists, and financiers.

(Baklanoff,1979:800-802; Hammond,1988:32-33) Protectionism bred an oligarchy in which Portuguese capital was dominated by two giant corporate empires: CUF (Companhia Uniao Fabril) and Champlimaud.(Gallagher,1983:75; Baklanoff,1978:110) CUF alone owned between 10 and 20% of all Portuguese industry, with important holdings in the chemical industry, textiles, brewing, shipping and ship building, banking, real estate, mining, and manufacturing. (Ali,1978:91; Fryer,1961:141-142; Robinson, 1978:84)

Prior to 1960, the presence of foreign capital in mainland Portugal was minimal.(Porto,1984:86,93) But, in the 1960s, under the pressures of the war to retain its African colonies, the Salazarist regime was forced to abandon its protectionist policies and integrate into the European economy.(Williams, 1984:9-10,19-20) Only by allowing a massive inflow of foreign capital could Salazar hope to achieve the rate of economic growth necessary to sustain the war effort.(Baklanoff,1979:801; Minter, 1972:116) The new importance of industrial development during the 1960s and 1970s, meant a increase in the power and influence of the industrial bourgeoisie within Portuguese society, and a decline in the power of the traditional ruling classes. (Baklanoff,1979:802)

As a consequence of its integration into the European economy, the industrial base of the Portuguese economy changed rapidly during the 1960s. Companies like ITT, Timex, Ford, Grundig, Renault, British Leyland and Plessey all took advantage of the opportunity to get established in a low wage zone in close proximity to European markets. They were attracted to a country with newly liberalized laws regarding the transfer of profits, and a docile and cheap labour force.(Baklanoff,1979: 805,808-809; Ali,1978:91; Mailer,1977:67-68) Huge amounts of foreign capital entered Portugal to establish capital intensive plants geared towards manufacturing consumer goods for the European market (e.g., textiles, electrical gadgets, etc.). (Deubner,1984:170) Between 1963 and 1969 foreign investment in Portugal rose by 300%, and "in 1971 alone 392 branches of foreign firms started operating in Portugal, constituting over 20% of the country's total capital."(Mailer,1977:68)

The massive influx of foreign investment transformed the face of the Portuguese economy, as manufacturing grew at an annual rate of 9.1% during the 1960s.(Porto,1984:93)⁴ New industries were built, including "an integrated iron and steel mill, a modern ship repair and shipbuilding complex, vehicle assembly plants, oil refineries, petrochemical plants, pulp and paper mills and electronics plants."(Baklanoff,1979:801) During the 1970s, manufacturing was the leading sector of the economy, with the most dynamic sectors being those which produced consumer goods for export and capital goods (e.g., basic metals, machinery and transportation equipment, etc.).(Baklanoff,1979:805-806)

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The third and final pillar of Portuguese capitalism was the exploitation of its colonial possessions in Africa: Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. For many years, those colonies provided Portugal with very cheap raw materials, foreign exchange, profits,

and a captive market for the manufactured goods Portuguese capital could not peddle elsewhere. Because there was little military resistance from their African subjects, the Portuguese ruling classes could use their earnings from the colonies to offset the deficit in Portugal's trade balance with the rest of the world.(Da Ponte, 1974:23-24; Porto,1984:87; Minter,1972:32; De Figueiredo,1975:73,164-166; Anderson,1962c: 104-105) But, the Salazarist regime was not only economically dependent upon the existence of its colonies. Their mere existence provided a political rationale for a regime perched atop a stagnant economy. Loss of the colonies would demonstrate the bankruptcy of the regime, and virtually guarantee its downfall.(Anderson,1962c:108)

But, the loss of the colonies was virtually assured by the backwardness of Portugal. Portuguese imperialism proved unable to make the transition from the superficial extraction of wealth through brute force to a more intensive form of exploitation based on the use of capital backed up by a neo-colonial regime. Long after other imperial powers had abandoned the struggle to retain direct control of their colonies, Portugal continued. (Anderson,1962b:96-98,113) The weakness of Portuguese capitalism meant there could be no neo-colonial solution to its problems in Africa.(Minter,1972:33-34) Independence for the colonies would immediately destroy their economic reliance upon Portugal.⁵ Furthermore, loss of the colonies would worsen Portugal's balance of trade with foreign countries.(Minter,1972: 31)

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the economic value of the African colonies had changed dramatically. For the first time in history, Portuguese colonialism was challenged by well armed national liberation movements -- making retention of the colonies more expensive than they were worth.(Da Ponte,1974:25) As the cost of the wars grew, the

prospects for the continuation of a Salazarist regime in Portugal grew dimmer. The Portuguese ruling class would pay a very high price indeed for its inability to wean itself from dependence on its colonial possessions -- sustaining massive casualties and enormous military expenditures. (By 1971, 58% of the entire state budget was required to keep 200,000 men in the field.(Ali,1978:90)) Ultimately, the military effort, which did not succeed in eliminating the guerilla threat, could not be sustained financially.(Minter,1972:100-113,128-143)

For the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the escalating costs of the war effort, plus the growing importance of the European market made the African colonies less and less valuable. Not surprisingly, those sections of the ruling class with the strongest ties to the colonies, and with the least ability to carve out a niche for themselves in the new Europe-oriented Portugal, disapproved of the attempt at a neo-colonial solution to the problems in Africa. The result was a serious split in the ranks of the ruling class.(Cliff,1975a:5) The costly wars had prepared the way for an ever mounting crisis the regime could not survive.

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The industrial transformation of Portugal during the 1960s, changed the class structure of the country. During the 1960s, the Portuguese working class expanded dramatically, increasing from 25% of the adult population in 1950 to 35.8% in 1970.⁶ By 1974, there were more than 1 million industrial workers in Portugal.(Robinson,1987:90) Meanwhile, the proportion of the population still on the land declined from 47% to 30%. The large surplus population that was not absorbed by the expanding urban economy emigrated in search of work.(Ali,1978:91; Cliff,1975a:5)⁷ Despite these changes, however,

there still remained an enormous rural proletariat in the south, and an even larger peasantry in the north.

Before the large influx of foreign capital, the Portuguese working class was dispersed in relatively small workplaces.(De Figueiredo,1975:41) Thus, in 1964, there were only 49 factories employing over 1,000 workers (e.g., the Lisnave shipyards and the Sacor oil refineries).(Mailer,1977:69) But, the influx of foreign investment led to a large increase in the number of workers employed in medium sized manufacturing plants. Still, in 1972, 71% of all enterprises employed 4 or fewer people, with only 2.6% of all enterprises (1,112 enterprises) employing 100 or more people.(Baklanoff,1978:111)

The vanguard of the Portuguese working class were the skilled and semi-skilled industrial workers in these new plants (or in the newly expanded divisions of old industries), concentrated in the Setubal-Lisbon area. They could be found in modern workplaces such as TAP (the Portuguese airline), the major shipyards (Lisnave and Setenave), the new plants built by foreign capital (e.g., Timex, Ford, Grundig, Renault, etc.), and in the media. (Lomax,1983:115; Mailer,1977:138; Hammond,1988:103-104) In the early stages of the revolution, many vanguard workers supported the Communist Party (PCP). Later, their affiliations were split. While many older workers continued to support the PCP, many of the younger ones supported the revolutionary left or were non-party activists in the new organizations that arose during the revolution.(Hammond,1988:103-104)

The more backward section of the Portuguese working class were composed of the unskilled workers employed by the many tens of thousands of small capitalists with fewer than 5 employees.

A good example of this section of the working class is provided by the many thousands of construction workers who were employed by very small companies. Often they were "peasants who had (recently-BM) migrated to towns for work; some were blacks from the Cape Verde islands."(Robinson,1987:113)

The imperial character of Portuguese capitalism meant that a disproportionately large section of the working class was employed in the service sector and in white collar occupations. After 1960, much of the growth of the non-agricultural workforce was concentrated in transportation, construction, banking, insurance, and real estate.(Logan,1983: 136,138) During the revolutionary process, most white collar workers supported the Socialist Party.

The extreme backwardness of Portuguese capitalism forced the urban working class to live in misery. Wage levels were kept low by the absence of independent trade unions, the overall backwardness of the economy, and the constant supply of cheap labour from the countryside. The steady flow of people out of the countryside, coupled with the low urban standard of living, meant at least a quarter of the population was living in inadequate housing.(Mailer,1977:204-205) According to the OECD, labour's share of the national income in most European countries averaged about 70%, versus 30% for capital. In Portugal, labour's share of the national income was only 45%.(De Figueiredo,1975:183)* To make matters worse, galloping inflation of 25-30% on the eve of the revolution meant declining living standards for Portuguese workers.

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By the time Caetano replaced Salazar as dictator of Portugal, in 1968, the regime in Portugal faced a series of insoluble problems, including: 1) the potential loss of the

colonies that had been one of the main economic props of Salazarism; 2) the threat to the traditional structures of economic and political power caused by the government's decision to open up the Portuguese economy to foreign capital; 3) the backwardness of Portuguese agriculture that was blocking economic development and leading to a mass emigration from the country; 4) the shortage of skilled manpower because of the massive rate of emigration and conscription; 5) a growing threat from those classes dissatisfied with the old regime, including both a section of the ruling class and the urban working class; 6) the growth of dissatisfaction in the army over the un-winnable colonial wars, and 7) the enormous and growing cost of the war effort. All these problems were -- of course -- closely linked to the authoritarian character of the Salazarist regime.(Baklanoff, 1979:809-810; Robinson,1987:84-85; Porto,1984:87)

Salazar's forced shift from economic autarchy towards the European market, under pressures produced by the colonial wars, destabilized the regime. Ultimately, that shift in economic policy led to demands for political and economic reforms which the dictatorial regime proved unable to resist.(Williams:19-21; Hammond,1988:54-55) The growing crisis of Portuguese capitalism forced Caetano, to attempt a gradual liberalization of the regime in 1968.(Porto:95-96) Caetano relaxed censorship, allowed the return of some political exiles (e.g., Mario Soares), permitted trade unions to run internal elections without having the candidates vetted by the police, and allowed political elections that made it possible for an opposition coalition of Communists, catholics and dissident intellectuals to campaign against the Government.(Robinson,1987:85; Porto,1984: 94-95; De Figueiredo, 1975:223)

The most important of these political changes were those that affected the trade unions. By the 1970s, Portugal had a highly unionized working class. But, the unions were

craft-based Salazarist controlled unions. Thus, the 2 million unionized workers belonged to over 400 different craft unions, with some factories having as many as 30 or 40 unions present among the workforce.(Cliff,1975a:14) Despite all this, sections of the Portuguese working class began to openly rebel against Caetano's regime, with a wave of strikes in 1968-1969.(Logan,1983:139) Caetano's changes in labour legislation allowed opposition slates to capture control of several unions after the summer of 1969, and swing them left - including the metalworkers in Lisbon and Oporto, and white collar workers in Lisbon (e.g., bankworkers, insurance workers, etc.).(Logan,1983:140-142; Hammond,1988:59-61) Within two years, there were about 20 trade unions with newly elected leaderships, giving rise to the formation of "a semi-legal federation called the Intersindical."(Robinson,1978: 85; Mujal-Leon,1978:277) These new union leaders used their positions "for aggressive wage bargaining...to raise the level of class consciousness and...to develop links among unions for political lobbying."(Logan,1983:140,141)

By October 1970, Caetano's regime was retreating on its former strategy of trying to liberalize and co-opt the emerging labour militancy. The government tightened its labour policy, issuing new decrees which gave the government the ability to both "suspend union officials and close union offices."(Logan,1983: 141) But, the brief period of liberalization had opened a door that was difficult to shut. The rapid growth of the economy, and conscription created a shortage of skilled labour. The liberalization of 1958-69 had allowed skilled industrial workers an opportunity to organize themselves and build some confidence. In 1973, when inflation skyrocketed, the vanguard of the industrial working class began to demand raises.

Employers resisted, and that fall workers responded with an unprecedented strike wave. Illegal strikes spread from factory to factory. In each (factory-BM)...workers...held an illegal meeting, voted for a strike on the spot, and

elected a commission to represent them. An estimated 60,000 workers went on strike in the six months before April 1974.(Hammond, 1988:60)

The 1973 strike wave hit the new manufacturing industries, including companies like GM, Ford, ITT, Timex, and the Lisnave shipyards.(Ali,1978:92; Mailer,1977:75) One of the most spectacular strikes of this period was a 15 day strike waged by metalworkers at the Portuguese airline TAP. They occupied a Boeing 707, elected a workers' strike committee, battled police, and won their wage demands, reinstatement for those fired, and compensation for workers shot by the police.(Robinson,1987:86) The strike wave of 1973 spilled over into 1974, providing the basis for the massive offensive by the Portuguese working class in the days following the April 25th military coup.(Lomax,1983: 112-113)

The growth of working class militancy coincided with a general growth in disaffection with the regime. That was even evident within the ranks of the conscript army -- who were faced with fighting unwinnable wars.' Ironically, the military provided many of its conscripted junior officers (university graduates, some of whom had been exposed to radical ideas) "with handbooks on guerilla war by authors such as Mao Tse Tung...and Che Guevara, in order that they might understand the mind of the enemy. In many cases the handbooks actually succeeded in radicalizing their Portuguese readers."(Ali,1978:90-91; Hammond,1988:66; Fields,1976:5)

The growing crisis of the Caetano regime forced it to vacillate between reform and repression. That led to a serious rift within the ruling class, with one wing favoring controlled democratization as a necessary accompaniment to a reorientation towards Europe, and the other wing defending the old strategy of state repression and colonialism. However much Caetano wanted to reform the regime from above, the spontaneous movement from

below deterred him.(Robinson,1987:85) In that sense, "Portugal provides an awful example...of what happens if you try to turn a dictatorship into a democracy too slowly." Caetano's "gradual approach to liberal reform... succeeded only in antagonizing the extreme right, in frustrating the democratic opposition and in giving the revolutionary left a rare opportunity to gain power." (Economist,1977:4)

By 1973, the Portuguese ruling class had split. On the one side were the traditionalists, supporting a barely liberalized version of Salazarism. On the other side were the liberals, technocrats and the European oriented section of the bourgeoisie -- all advocating a reorganization of the state, reorientation of the economy away from agriculture and the colonies towards the European market, control of the economy through the market rather than the state, a neo-colonial solution in Africa, further industrialization, agricultural reform to expand the home market, expansion of the financial system and a further increase in foreign investment, and end to protectionism (Kayman:48-49; Baklanoff,1978:114) The coup of April 25th 1974 finally happened when sections of the Portuguese bourgeoisie like CUF and Champlimaud swung into open opposition to the regime. General Spínola was the person who would ultimately act as the bridge between the major capitalists and the junior officers who carried out the coup.(Harman,1988:277-278)

The military coup of April 25th was the immediate cause of the revolutionary crisis that developed.

(6.2) The Strategies and Goals of the Portuguese Left in the Revolution of 1974-75

After the coup of April 25, 1974, the political vacuum that had existed under Salazar's Portugal was filled by about 70 or 80 different political parties.(Mailer,1977:169,184) Not surprisingly, the Portuguese left covered the spectrum, from a European style social democratic party through a Moscow oriented Communist Party to a broad variety of Maoist, Trotskyist, Guevarist, and other assorted 'revolutionary' groups.* These political organizations embodied the many visions of socialism (along with the respective strategies for getting there) that competed in Portugal during the revolutionary process.

Obviously, we cannot discuss all the organizations active on the Portuguese left here. Instead, we will examine the four major political parties and groupings on the left that shaped the revolutionary process in Portugal: the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), the Socialist Party (SP), the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), and the Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat - Revolutionary Brigades (PRP/BR). (The wide assortment of Maoist and Trotskyist groups that were too small to affect the outcome of the revolutionary process will not be discussed here.¹⁰⁾

* Throughout this Chapter, we use the expression 'revolutionary left' to refer to the collection of Maoist, centrist, Trotskyist, Guevarist and hybrid organizations that operated to the left of the Socialist and Communist Parties. Because most of those organizations were too small to warrant discussion here, and because of the sheer diversity of their politics, we refer to them collectively as the 'revolutionary left.' That does not mean that any or all of them should be considered revolutionary parties in the Bolshevik tradition.

FIGURE 6.1 MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPINGS ON THE PORTUGUESE LEFT DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS

Socialist Party (SP)

LEADER: Mario Soares

SUPPORTERS: white collar workers, urban petite bourgeoisie, sections of the bourgeoisie

POLITICS: reformist (social democratic)

GOAL: Western European style bourgeois democracy

Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)

LEADER: Alavro Cunhal

SUPPORTERS: industrial workers, rural proletariat

POLITICS: Stalinist, pro-Moscow

GOAL: Eastern European style state capitalist regime

Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat - Revolutionary Brigades (PRP/BR)

LEADER: Isabel de Carmo

SUPPORTERS: young industrial workers, students, activists in the neighbourhood commissions

POLITICS: centrist, a mixture of Guevarism and Trotskyism

GOAL: Cuban style 'popular power', combining a radical MFA dominated state with factory and neighborhood commissions

Armed Forces Movement (MFA)

(A) **moderate current** and AMI (Military Intervention Group)

LEADER: Melo Atunes

POLITICS: aligned with SP

(B) **PCP current**

LEADER: Vasco Goncalves

POLITICS: aligned with PCP

(C) **radical current** and COPCON

LEADER: Otelo de Carvahlo

POLITICS: aligned with revolutionary left groupings, especially PRP/BR

* * * * *

In April 1974, the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) was the largest political party in the country with about 5,000 members.(Robinson,1987:92) And, the PCP was the only party to have a record of decades of active opposition to Salazarism within Portugal, giving it enormous moral authority within the Portuguese working class.(Gallagher,1983:112; Raby,1988:50-53; Harman,1988:279) After Salazar's regime fell, that moral authority was quickly translated into political muscle, as the PCP grew into an organization of 100,000 members (most of them industrial workers and members of the rural proletariat), and gained firm control over the trade union movement, municipal governments, sections of the media, and portions of the military. As a result, the PCP's strength at the grassroots of Portuguese society "was immeasurably greater" than that of any other party in the early stages of the revolution.(Birchall,1979:80; Gallagher,1983:197; Harman,1988:280)

As a Stalinist party that had operated in conditions of illegality for decades, the PCP was not an organization accustomed to tolerating internal debate. However, the revolution changed all that. Because the PCP grew so rapidly after April 25 1974, it had a large base of relatively 'undisciplined' members. That posed some real problems for the PCP leadership during the revolution, since PCP members proved very susceptible to the arguments coming from the revolutionary left.(Bruneau,1986: 46,57) Politically, the PCP and its leader, Alvaro Cunhal, were both renowned for their ultra-orthodox Stalinism and their fidelity to Moscow. The PCP's goal was to establish Soviet style state capitalism in Portugal. Throughout the revolution, the PCP was an implacable and unwavering foe of all working class initiatives not controlled from above by its members.(Mailer, 1977:172-173)

Prior to the 1974 revolution, the cornerstone of the PCP's strategy in the fight against Salazarism remained adherence to the popular front strategy adopted by Stalin's

Comintern in 1935. That strategy called for the PCP to build a multi-class alliance to transform Portuguese society through a two stage 'revolution.' First, an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist alliance of the PCP and other parties (representing the petty bourgeoisie and the 'progressive' sections of the national bourgeoisie) would replace Salazar with a bourgeois democratic regime. Then, after bourgeois democracy had enabled Portuguese capitalism to develop the country further, the PCP would begin the second stage of the struggle, the battle for soviet-style 'socialism'.¹¹

During the revolutionary process of 1974-75, the PCP followed two separate strategic plans. Between April 1974 and March 1975, the PCP followed a classic popular front strategy, acting as a conservative part of the governing coalition. To defend their position in the multi-party and multi-class government established after April 25th, the PCP rejected any suggestion the Portuguese revolution could go beyond the limits of capitalism, doing everything in their power to prevent the Portuguese working class from fighting for reforms or intensifying the class struggle. Over and over again they proclaimed their intention to defend the interest of all classes except the largest monopoly capitalists and their western imperialist allies.(YICA,1966:141; 1970:242-243) And, following the logic of the popular front strategy, they subordinated the immediate needs of the working class (e.g., for wage increases) to the PCP's needs to build an alliance with the 'progressive bourgeoisie.'(Gallagher,1983:197; Cliff,1975a:12-16; Mujal-Leon,1977:25) Thus, during the first 11 months of the revolution, the PCP supported every Government initiative to halt the revolution, campaigning against strikes and supporting government repression against other leftists, striking workers and rebellious soldiers.(Harman,1988:281) Party leaders argued against any militancy that might alienate the "progressive bourgeoisie" or the petty

bourgeoisie, and attacking all the "ultra-leftist" initiatives being taken from below, by working class militants.(Schmitter,1979:354; Hammond,1988:111)¹²

But, for a period of about seven months, between March and September 1975, the PCP shifted its strategy away from conventional popular frontism to another strategy designed to win the PCP immediate political power.¹³ In early 1975, when it became clear to the PCP leadership that the parliamentary road to state capitalism was blocked, and that they were losing support to the SP and the revolutionary left, the PCP adopted a strategy modeled on that followed by Communist Parties in eastern European during 1945-48.(Cabral,1983:195; Harman,1988:280; Mujal-Leon,1977:26-27) After the war, those parties entered coalition governments with other anti-fascist parties to ostensibly guarantee that the new 'Popular Democratic' governments would eliminate the last vestiges of feudalism and fascism, and create bourgeois democratic regimes. The presence of the Soviet army in those countries backed up the Communist claims to acquire cabinet posts that put them in charge of the repressive apparatus of the state: the police, the military, etc. Once the Communists had collaborated with their bourgeois allies to put down any insurgency from below, they were free to use their control over the repressive apparatus of the state to turn on their erstwhile allies and impose a revolution from above. They purged the state machine of people not loyal to the CP, thereby creating "a bureaucratic instrument...which subordinated to itself all other social forces."(Harman, 1974:36) Over a period of time, the CP was able to use its monopoly of control over the repressive apparatus of the state to buy off or eliminate its competitors. Within a few short years, the PCP effectively controlled the entire state machine. From there, it was a relatively short step -- using bribery, intimidation and terror -- to consolidating their control over the remainder of

society.(Harman,1974:4-48)

For about six months, the PCP leadership believed they could bring about an eastern European style revolution from above, provided they could gain control over the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and the military. They cultivated a section of the MFA leadership, hoping to gain effective control of the repressive wing of the state apparatus.(Ali,1978:106) The PCP's goal was not to smash the existing state machine, but to capture its core institutions.(Hammond,1988:261)

Neither of the PCP's two strategies worked. The Stalinists were in no position to set themselves up as the permanent mediator between capital and labour in Portuguese society. Nor were they able to seize power and establish state capitalism as the PCP had in Eastern Europe after World War II. For although the PCP had gained control over many positions of importance and influence in the state machine, the military, the trade unions, the nationalized industries and the media, they proved incapable of controlling the working class and unable to prevent the dynamics of the revolutionary process from operating.

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The Socialist Party (SP), led by Mario Soares, was formed in 1973, by members of the Portuguese middle class in exile. From its inception, the SP was a standard European social democratic party, committed to the establishment of a bourgeois democratic regime acceptable to NATO (i.e., a regime in which the PCP and the revolutionary left had virtually no influence).(Mailer, 1977:172) The SP was destined to become the main weapon employed by the Portuguese ruling class to stop the revolution in 1975. (Birchall,1986:155; Raby,1988:233-234)

When the revolution began in April 1974, the SP had about 200 members, being little more than a party leadership in search of a political base.(Robinson,1987:92) In the wake of Caetano's downfall, the SP grew rapidly, just like all the other political organizations on the left. By the crucial period in the revolutionary process -- the summer and fall of 1975 -- the SP was a mass political party of between 80,000 and 100,000 members. (Birchall,1986:155; Smith 1979:190; Gallagher,1983:207) One year after the fall of Caetano, the SP received 38% of the popular vote in a national election. Six months after that, the SP dominated the government and played the crucial role in defusing the revolutionary crisis. After the revolutionary crisis had evaporated, an SP government presided over the elimination of the gains made by the working class.(Birchall,1979:73; 1986:158-159) The SP was able to accomplish all this without a large base inside the industrial working class. (Within the working class, the SP's base of support was among white-collar workers, "trade unionists in banking, insurance and the post office."(Birchall, 1986:155; Pimlott,1977b:40)) There is no doubt the SP could mobilize some workers (in addition to the peasants, petty bourgeois and bourgeois supporters it got out) for its rallies. But, the participation of the working class in such events was small, as was the presence of the SP inside the trade unions. (Harman,1988:296-297)

Because of the peculiar conditions of its birth as a party -- in the midst of a revolution -- the SP followed a particular strategy to get itself established. During the first year of the revolution, the SP was a heterogeneous organization, that tried to be all things to all people. Thus, while the SP courted bourgeois opponents of the revolution, it also frequently outflanked the PCP on the left, distancing itself from many of the conservative measures the new Government took, and which the PCP defended (e.g., an anti-strike

campaign). Furthermore, Soares frequently used 'Marxist' sounding rhetoric to attract left-wing opponents of the PCP.(Gallagher,1983:208; Cliff, 1975a:16)) Soares was prepared to tolerate an ideologically diverse party during the early stages of the revolution, to build up the SP's membership with opponents of the PCP, so he could eventually challenge the larger and better organized PCP for power.(Harman, 1988:294; Pimlott,1977b:40)

By the time the revolution entered its second year, the SP had become the focus of all bourgeois and middle class opposition to the mass movement that was pushing the revolution forward. The Portuguese and international bourgeoisie viewed the SP as the last obstacle to a Communist takeover, and as their prime instrument for halting the revolution.(Harman,1988:294)¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the SP received financial aid and political advice from organizations like the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party and the German Social Democrats -- organizations that had proven their loyalty to the capitalist class on many previous occasions.(Mailer,1977:172; Harman,1988:294)¹⁵ The financial assistance the SP received allowed them to develop a serious organizational apparatus" in preparation for the March 1975 elections.(Opello,1985:96)

* * * * *

The third of the left wing forces we need to analyze to understand the revolutionary process in Portugal is the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) -- the organization which carried out the military coup of April 25th. The MFA was a politically heterogeneous grouping of 400 junior army officers (out of about 4,000), who wanted to replace the Salazarist regime by some kind of left nationalist regime, one that would be populist and anti-imperialist in character.(Kayman,1987:105)

The junior officers who led the coup of April 1974 and established the MFA came from petty bourgeois backgrounds.(Cliff, 1975a:30)¹⁶ They turned against the regime that was making them fight unwinnable wars in the colonies on behalf of wealthy merchants and settlers.(Cliff,1975a:27) Members of the MFA believed the colonial wars could only be ended by pulling out of Africa.(Harman,1988:284) Decolonization was -- along with the democratization and further development of Portugal - one of the main pillars of the MFA's politics.(Fields,1976:87) The MFA program of April 1974 was anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and hostile to monopoly capital.(Sweezy,1975a:8) The junior officers wanted to overthrow the Caetano regime, purge the army and the police of fascist sympathizers, dissolve the PIDE, bring about a political solution to the colonial wars, improve the living standard of the population, and hold elections to a constituent assembly within a year.(Mailer,1977:357-360; Ali, 1978:93-94)

The MFA had no intentions of sparking a social revolution. (Ferreira,1986:183) But, the overthrow of Salazarism sparked a revolutionary crisis. As that crisis deepened and Portuguese society polarized, the gradually split into three distinct political currents: a moderate wing associated with the social democrats in the SP, a PCP current (led by Vasco Goncalves), and the radicals (led by Otelo de Carvalho) with links to the revolutionary left. Since the basic strategic objectives of the SP and PCP have already been outlined, it remains to say something about the radical wing of the MFA.

The politics of the MFA radicals had all the characteristic features of left populism: "stress on popular unity and on independence from partisan ties, the appeal to a multi-class, heterogeneous mass following, (and-BM) the belief in the efficacy of direct action."(Raby,1983:74) The radical MFA claimed socialism could be created without the

existence of a revolutionary party, through the action of the radical MFA from within the existing state, supported by all the organizations of dual power that arose during the revolutionary process (e.g., the workers' commissions, neighborhood commissions and soldiers' commissions). In short, the radical MFA's politics were a species of centrism, seeking the institutionalization of dual power, under the guidance of the MFA itself.

* * * * *

The fourth and final political grouping that we need to discuss is the Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat- Revolutionary Brigades (PRP/BR). Of all the many revolutionary groups that existed to the left of the PCP, the PRP/BR probably had the greatest impact on the revolutionary process.

The core of the PRP/BR was composed of former PCP members who were inspired by Guevarism to leave the party in order to engage in armed struggle against the government through the BR.(Cliff, 1975a:18; Raby,1988:233,242-243) In September 1973, after pursuing a terrorist strategy, the BR fused with a number of other currents to form the PRP/BR -- an organization whose politics combined elements of Guevarism, centrism and Trotskyism.

(YICA,1974:203; Cliff,1975a:18) During the 1974-75 revolutionary crisis, the PRP/BR rejected the idea of a two stage revolution, supported the need for an armed to struggle to create socialism, criticized the PCP without characterizing them as 'social fascists' (as the Maoists did), and argued the fate of the Portuguese revolution would depend its spread to other countries.

In calling for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the PRP/BR

also supported the need for something like workers' councils -- although in their view those councils were to share power with the MFA government, which controlled the bourgeois state machine. (Cliff,1975a:18-19; Robinson,1987:98,118)

When the Portuguese revolution began, the PRP/BR was still a relatively small organization with weak roots in the working class. However, during the revolutionary process, it won support among some industrial workers and soldiers, developing a close connection with the radical MFA.(Ali,1978:125; Mailer,1977:176-177) During the revolution, the PRP's most notable initiative was an attempt to establish councils of workers, soldiers and sailors, something discussed further below. But, throughout the revolution, the PRP/BR remained a party whose politics combined a recognition of the need for a working class revolution to include workers' councils and capture of the state by the MFA, together with a Guevarist (i.e., Blanquist) view of armed insurrection as a primarily military problem. (Harman,1988:292) As a consequence, the PRP conceived of a proletarian revolution as something that could be carried out by army officers in conjunction with the PRP/BR, on behalf of the working class.

(6.3) The Dynamics of the Revolutionary Process in Portugal

The revolutionary process in Portugal began with the military coup of April 25th 1974, organized by the junior officers of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). It ended, effectively on November 25th 1975, with a military confrontation in which leftist soldiers were forced to surrender to military units sympathetic to the SP, intent on halting the revolution. In this section, we examine the shifting balance of power between the classes,

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and the overall dynamics of the revolutionary process during that period.

FIGURE 6.2 KEY EVENTS AND MAIN PERIODS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN PORTUGAL, 1974-75

<u>Key Events</u>	<u>Main Periods</u>	<u>Balance of Power</u>
	prior to April 25th 1974	NON-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION
MFA coup overthrows Caetano (April 25, 1974)	<u>(April 25 - Sept. 28 '74)</u>	<u>PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION DEVELOPS;</u> ruling class split and on the defensive; portions of the state machine disintegrating; working class on an uncoordinated offensive against vestiges of the Salazar/ Caetano regime
Attempted right wing coup by General Spínola defeated (Sept. 28, '74)	<u>(Sept. 28 - Mar. 11 '75)</u>	working class offensive against the old regime deepens; ruling class in retreat & divided over how to stop revolution
Second attempt at right wing coup by Spínola defeated (Mar. 11 '75)	<u>(Mar. 11 '75 - Sept. 19 '75)</u>	working class goes on major offensive, new forms of dual power created; revolution being transformed from struggle against old regime to struggle for workers' power; ruling class forced to unify behind SP after failure of military option
Formation of 6th Provisional Government dominated by SP after collapse of MFA Government (Sept. 19 '75)	<u>(Sept. 19 - Nov. 25 '75)</u>	ruling class control over SP government, but state machine still

split; dual power growing
(especially in army); working class
not able to launch a centralized
offensive

SP and moderate MFA carry
out coup against radical MFA
(Nov. 25 '75)

(Nov. 25, 1975 - June '76) PRE-REVOLUTIONARY

SITUATION ENDS SP launches
a successful coup and demobilizes
leftist soldiers and puts workers'
movement on the defensive; SP
stabilizes regime and re-establishes
bourgeois control over state
machine

* * * * *

The MFA coup was the immediate cause of a protracted revolutionary crisis -- a crisis that began in the days after April 25th. The MFA disbanded the secret police, declared an amnesty for all political prisoners, abolished censorship, ended restrictions on political and trade union activity, indicated their desire to grant the colonies independence, and promised free elections within one year.(Mailer,1977:357-360) Thus, the MFA initiated a limited process of reform from the top down, dismantling a portion of the Salazarist state machine. But, instead of purging the Salazarist officers from the military, the MFA agreed to install the conservative General Spínola as President, in the hope of avoiding an open split with the conservative officers.(Ali,1978:95)¹⁷ Unwittingly, the MFA had set the stage for future conflict with the new regime.

Almost immediately, the MFA's political revolution was transformed into a social revolution. No longer fearful of Salazarist repression, workers sought to improve their living standards and working conditions, and purge supporters of the old regime from

positions of power in the workplace.(Downs,1989:16)¹⁸ The pre-coup strike wave accelerated.

In mid-May, Spínola chose a prime minister and formed a Provisional Government (PG) which incorporated a broad cross section of the opposition to Caetano, including the SP and the PCP.(Ferreira,1986:32-36,184; Gallagher,1983:192; Kayman,1987:76) The post-coup strike wave forced Spínola to seek the participation of the SP and the PCP in the new PG, in the hope they could contain the upsurge.(Harman,1988:282; Gallagher,1983: 197) However, neither the social democrats nor the Stalinists could contain the spontaneous working class offensive.

FIGURE 6.3 THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENTS (PGs) FORMED DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN PORTUGAL

<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>POLITICAL COMPOSITION</u>
1st PG	May 16 '74 - July 8	Palma Carlos as Prime Minister, PG dominated by General Spínola
2nd PG	July 18 - Sept. 28	General Vasco Gonçalves (chairman of the MFA co-ordinating committee) as Prime Minister, PG split between Spínola and the MFA (7 out of 16 cabinet posts for the MFA)
3rd PG	Sept. 28 - Mar. 25 '75	Costa Gomes as President, Gonçalves as Prime Minister, PG dominated by MFA
4th PG	March 25 - July 11	Costa Gomes as President, Gonçalves as Prime Minister, PG dominated by PCP faction of MFA
5th PG	July 21 - Sept. 6	Vasco Gonçalves as Prime Minister, PG dominated by triumvirate representing all three wings of

the MFA

6th PG

Sept. 19 - July 22 '76

Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo as
Prime Minister, PG dominated by SP

Source: Faye (1976:15-24), Mailer (1977:33-36), Kayman (1987:277)

The unity of the anti-Salazarist movement in April did not last long, since both capital and labour had their own, quite divergent visions of the new Portugal. While the bourgeoisie wanted a negotiated end to the African wars with a neo-colonial solution, modernization of the economy and further integration into the European market, the working class wanted an immediate end to the wars, an improved standard of living, the right to their own class organizations and the elimination of Salazarism in the workplace and all spheres of society.(Birchall,1979:74) Because the goals of the two main classes were incompatible, and because the destruction of the repressive arm of the Salazarist state had altered the balance of class power in favour of the working class, the class struggle heated up. Within weeks of the April 25th coup, the Portuguese ruling class had lost effective control over the situation.(Harman,1988:282)¹⁹

The vanguard of the working class (i.e., the industrial workers in the large plants) took advantage of the new situation to organize workers' commissions (CTs) in the factories and initiate a new round of strikes. During the early months of the revolution 400 workplaces were affected as workers made economic demands (e.g., for a 40 hour week and a minimum monthly wage of 6000 escudos) and more political ones -- like the demand to purge management of authoritarian bosses and police informers (a process called saneamento) and to rehire union activists victimized in the recent past.(Ali,1978:96; Mailer,1977:33,86-93,107; Downs,1989:17; Ferreira,1986:37) The demand for saneamento

became so popular that it spread far beyond strike bound workplaces, to the media, local government, and many other institutions.(Cliff,1974a:9) Saneamento went furthest in the trade unions and 200 municipal governments, institutions where the PCP quickly established hegemony.(Cliff,1975a:15; Downs,1989: 17; Ali,1978:99)

The spontaneous offensive launched by the vanguard of the Portuguese working class quickly spread to more backward sections of the working class, and from the factories to the neighborhoods and -- later in the revolution -- to the countryside and the army. In the cities, thousands of unoccupied housing units were seized and occupied in May, as urban residents began to organize in neighborhood commissions (CMs) and squatters associations. (Downs,1989;1983:151,162) In the countryside, agricultural workers, who had been excluded from trade unions under the old regime, began to organize.(Bermeo,1986:45-47; Hammond,1988:87-89)

The massive upsurge in the level of organization and struggle from below proved impossible to contain, despite the best efforts of the bourgeois government, with the assistance of the PCP.(Plotke,1976:48-49) The PCP Labour minister in the new PG, and the PCP leadership of the Intersindical (the trade union central) used their positions to denounce the strikers as reactionaries and fascists.(Ali,1978:97; Birchall,1986:155; Hammond,1988:79) The PCP's efforts to prove its loyalty to the bourgeoisie discredited them in the eyes of many vanguard workers.(Gallagher,1983:197) For example, in June, when 35,000 postal workers went on strike, the PCP organized meetings and demonstrations to urge strikers to scab.(Cliff,1975a:12-13) The strike was defeated when the military occupied the post offices -- with the blessing of the PCP.(Ali,1978:97-98; Mailer,1977:85, 98) Not surprisingly, the PCP stance alienated many working class

militants, pushing some of them into the ranks of the many small revolutionary organizations that did support the strikes. (Harman,1988:282)

By late May, the PG was forced to take its first steps to undercut the mass movement, by making concessions to the working class, including an increase of the minimum wage to about \$130 per month (a measure that affected 40% - 50% of the workforce). (Hammond,1988:79,146; Downs,1989:17) By July, the level of strike action was slowing down, because many workers had won important victories.(Hammond,1979:418)

The massive offensive by Portuguese workers frightened the ruling class.(Hammond,1988:83; Lomax,1983:113) With the political revolution well on the road to becoming a social revolution, the more conservative sections of the Portuguese ruling class encouraged Spínola to create a more repressive government. But, Spínola's July proposal to centralize more power in his own hands was blocked by the Council of State and the MFA, leaving the government in a crisis.(Ali,1978:98-99; Mailer,1977:104) After the 1st PG fell on July 8th, the MFA created the 2nd PG under the leadership of Vasco Gonçalves, a member of the MFA Coordinating Committee.(Ali,1978:99; Downs,1989:19) The new MFA dominated 2nd PG purged more supporters of the old regime (e.g., in the field of education, but not within the military), and sent emissaries to Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau to negotiate independence for the colonies.(Ali,1978:100) But, the new PG could not resolve the problem in Angola, nor was it able to end the revolt within Portugal itself.(Harman,1988:282-283) The most important decision made by the 2nd PG was to establish a new MFA led military command for the district of Lisbon, to give the junior officers and their new government a loyal military instrument that could also be used to police strikes and demonstrations. The new unit was called COPCON, and was led by

General Otelo de Carvalho (the organizer of the April coup).(Downs,1989:19; Lomax,1983:117; Ali, 1978:100)

In the summer of 1974, the MFA advocated law and order, with little hint of how much some of the junior officers would radiucalize during the revolutionary crisis.(Reeve,1975:5) In August, the PG proclaimed a new labour law which severely restricted the right to strike, outlawed plant occupations, and imposed a 30 day cooling off period on workers wishing to strike. (Mailer,1977:118) However, within weeks, the law was being violated so regularly that it was unenforceable. In late August and early September, several very political strikes took place in Lisbon -- at the newspaper Jornal do Comercio, at the Portuguese airline TAP, and at the Lisnave shipyard -- in defiance of the new law. In the latter case, 6,000 shipyard workers protested outside the labour ministry -- in defiance of the PG, the MFA, the PCP and the law -- to back up demands for a further purge of management in their workplace. COPCON troops sent by the PG to suppress the demonstration, debated the legitimacy of the workers' cause with the strikers and decided to allow the demonstration to proceed (Downs,1989:20; Mailer,1977:34,115-116; Cliff,1975a:14, 21) "This was the first occasion...on which troops refused to follow orders to intervene against civilians." (Hammond,1989:93)²⁰

Thus, despite their independence from Spínola and the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the MFA cannot be characterized as enthusiastic supporters of social revolution during the summer of 1974. The MFA temporarily filled the political vacuum that existed, trying to balance between the movement from below and the reactionary opposition from above.(Kayman,1987:95-96) Just a few months into the revolutionary crisis, neither the bourgeoisie nor the militant sections of the working class yet had the political instruments

they required to resolve the crisis in their favor. It was "the convergence of this twofold weakness" that made it possible for the MFA to play a central role in the situation.(USFI,1975:1140)

By September, the MFA and the conservative generals were hopelessly at odds. Spínola and his allies opposed the MFA's decision to grant independence to Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and were disgusted by COPCON's failure to repress demonstrations and strikes.(Ferreira,1986:33) Sections of the ruling class worked with Spínola to plot the downfall of the MFA PG and the end of the revolution.(Ali,1978:99) On September 10th, Spínola called for a demonstration by the 'silent majority', to oppose the direction of the revolution and the spread of "anarchy."

The aim was not to restore the fascist regime, but to give the impression of mass popular opposition to the left. The demonstration was intended to be 300,000 strong. The presence of armed groups of fascists would provide the generals with the excuse to intervene and 'restore order' on their own terms. (Harman,1988:283)

The demonstration -- scheduled for September 28th in Lisbon -- never happened. Spínola was denied his excuse to take action against the left and impose martial law.(Mailer,1977:34; Downs, 1989:21; Gallagher,1983:203) Spínola and his bourgeois allies had neglected to take into account the reaction of the working class to the threat of a coup.(Cliff,1975a:21)

The whole working class movement -- including the SP, the PCP, the revolutionary left, the trade unions, the workers' commissions (CTs) in the factories, and the neighborhood commissions (CMs) -- denounced Spínola's actions, and mobilized to defend the revolution. An ad hoc workers' militia set up armed roadblocks throughout Lisbon on the 27th. Workers and soldiers from COPCON cooperated to search all vehicles entering

Lisbon for arms. Transport workers refused to work on the trains and busses supposed to bring right wing supporters from the north into Lisbon for the demonstration. And, the same vanguard workers denounced by the MFA and the PCP for striking in recent weeks - - workers from Lisnave, Jornal do Comercio, TAP, and other bastions of working class militancy -- took to the streets in a demonstration to physically confront Spínola's right wing supporters. This mass mobilization by the working class "shifted the balance within the army command from Spínola to the MFA" and prevented other officers from rallying to Spínola's side.(Cliff, 1975a:21-22; Ali,1978:102-103; Hammond,1988:95-96; Mailer,1977: 114,122-130)

The September defeat of Spínola was a critical moment in the revolutionary process. It tilted the balance of power even further to the left. Having realized that the revolution might be extinguished by a right wing coup, the vanguard of the working class moved to deepen the revolution by breaking the economic power of the ruling class. The logic of fighting for a radical democratization of society was pushing the more advanced workers towards support for social revolution. Furthermore, Spínola's failed bid for power, and the massive working class response it provoked, forced the MFA to the left. The MFA arrested some right wingers (including the two biggest capitalists in the country), banned the right wing parties that had organized for Spínola's demonstration, replaced Spínola with a new president, General Costa Gomes, and formed a new PG.(Hammond,1988:95; Mailer,1977: 125) Spínola's resignation in late September, ended the first phase of the revolution.

* * * * *

The second phase of the revolution began with the September defeat of Spínola, and ended with an attempted coup by him on March 11th, 1975. During this period, the

majority of workers still regarded the revolution as an effort to democratize Portuguese society, even though sections of the vanguard now sought a social revolution. The new balance of class forces guaranteed a further radicalization of the working class. The defeat of Spínola "confirmed the predominance of the MFA," while pushing the junior officers to look to the left for allies. (Hammond, 1988:97-98) Inside the MFA, different political currents were coalescing, groupings which were not yet sufficiently developed to force the MFA into a split, but which did prevent it from undertaking any kind of concerted offensive.

During the fall, the economic situation in Portugal continued to deteriorate. Throughout 1974, the growth in the GNP fell from 8% in 1973 to 2-3%. Meanwhile, new investment virtually disappeared, inflation remained high (25-30%) and unemployment rose to 8-10%. In addition, the trade deficit doubled, while the balance of payments shifted from a \$255 million surplus in 1973 to a deficit of \$647 million. (Cliff, 1975a:35) The 10% decline of the economies of the Western capitalist countries during the 1974-75 recession paled by comparison with the 30% decline in the Portuguese economy. (Mandel, 1978:56) The effects of the world recession and oil crisis also hit Portugal hard, but the crisis was compounded by the growing fears of the ruling class. Sections of the Portuguese bourgeoisie had concluded after September that there was no short-term, peaceful road to terminating the revolutionary crisis. Accordingly, many large employers began to counter the workers' offensive by engaging in economic sabotage of various kinds. Smaller employers, who had the most to fear from the large wage increases of the summer, responded to the adverse situation with layoffs or plant closures. But, this economic counter-offensive was met by hundreds of strikes, factory occupations, and campaigns to

establish workers' control.(Harman,1988:282; Mailer,1977:131)

In the fall of 1974 the rural proletariat in the south also began to flex its muscles, conducting negotiations for the first time with the large landowners.(Hammond,1988:115-116) In the cities, neighborhood commissions (CMs) proliferated as urban residents continued to organize and fight with landlords, local governments and the PG for new housing, improved services, better transportation, improved schools, garbage collection and many other changes.(Hammond,1988:84-87)

The new political context in the fall -- with the bourgeoisie discredited by its involvement in Spínola's plans, and the working class taking direct action to assert its control over production -- forced the MFA to deal with the economic crisis. To secure its political position, the MFA decided to take action against economic saboteurs (through economic intervention in the affected companies), undertake selective nationalizations, and deliver more welfare measures -- while reaffirming its commitment to a mixed economy.(Makler,1983:253; Kayman,1987:112) Being anxious to avoid an all out capital strike, the MFA wanted to reassure the Portuguese ruling class "that it would not adopt economic policies threatening capitalists' interests."(Hammond, 1988:101;Downs,1989:22; Makler,1983:255)

In January 1975, the SP entered a bitter debate with the PCP over a new trade union law that recognized the Communist led Intersindical as the sole trade union federation -- a measure which institutionalized the control of the PCP over the labour movement. The SP wanted to break the PCP monopoly of control within the trade union movement by creating several distinct union federations. But, the SP's position was overwhelmingly opposed by the working class, something evident after the PCP organized a

mass demonstration of about 300,000 Lisbon workers in support of its position.(Mailer,1977:146-150; Gallagher,1983:208-209; Cliff,1975a:16; Harman,1988:288-289,294)

But, the growing challenge to the PCP from the far left was evident a month later. On February 7th, there was a demonstration organized by the Inter-Empresas, an inter-factory committee that included representatives from the 40 most militant factories in Lisbon. Between 40,000 and 80,000 Lisbon workers demonstrated to protest growing unemployment and the NATO maneuvers taking place off the Portuguese coast -- despite opposition to the event from the PCP, the MFA and the government. Furthermore, troops sent out to keep the demonstration away from the US embassy and to guard the ministry of labour, openly disobeyed orders and proclaimed their solidarity with the demonstrators.(Mailer,1977:150-152; Downs,1989:24; Hammond,1988:106-107,282)

By February, the class struggle was heating up in every sphere of Portuguese society. What had started in May as a strike wave had become a generalized offensive by virtually all of the exploited and oppressed classes.(Cliff,1975a:23) In February, 30,000 farm workers in southern Portugal protested the government's failure to confiscate land from the large landowners, by staging the first land seizures.(Downs,1989:24; Bermeo,1986:55) At the same time, another wave of housing occupations took place in the major cities.(Downs,1983:162-163; 1989:24) By March, the Portuguese bourgeoisie was faced with an escalating working class offensive. Meanwhile, the MFA's agency of repression -- COPCON -- had proven completely unreliable, as rank and file soldiers displayed ever greater support for the actions of the underclasses.(Downs,1989:24-25; Kayman,1987:116) In the estimation of the ruling classes, the 3rd PG was losing control of

the situation. Even the more liberal sections of the Portuguese ruling class -- those who had believed electoral activity might suffice to curb the revolution -- became fearful the spring election would simply ratify the revolution. Their insecurity and the growing splits inside the MFA encouraged Spínola to attempt a coup in March 1975.(Ali,1978:105; Mailer, 1977:196) Spínola and his allies wanted to mount "a frontal attack on the working class and its social conquests," restore discipline in the army, and eliminate the most "radicalized elements of the MFA."(USFI,1975:1137)

On March 11th, Spínola's attempted coup began with paratroopers attacking an artillery base in Lisbon (the home of troops known to be supporters of the revolution). Spínola hoped that move would spark right wing officers to join the movement. Once again, his efforts were foiled by the spontaneous actions of the Portuguese working class and rank and file soldiers. In Lisbon, workers responded by leaving their workplaces, building barricades and demanding arms from sympathetic troops. Police barracks were stormed by workers seeking weapons, and the attacking troops were themselves surrounded and subjected to a steady barrage of political argument from local workers and the politicized soldiers under attack. This mass mobilization against the coup "prevented officers sympathetic to the right from declaring for the coup," and putting "the loyalty of their men to the test."(Harman,1988:286) (In certain key regiments, rank and file soldiers refused to obey the orders of right wing officers.) A few right wing generals and bourgeois conspirators were arrested, while the headquarters of the right wing parties were ransacked. (Mailer,1977:196-198; Feirrer, 1986:33; Downs,1989: 25; Ali,1978: 108; Gallagher,1983:210; Cliff,1975a:244-25; Harman,1988:285-286; Mailer,1977:196-199) The coup had failed.

* * * * *

The failed coup altered the balance of power, giving the working class, the MFA, the PCP and the revolutionary left greater latitude to go on the offensive against the ruling class. Spínola had raised the stakes in the revolution and lost. Immediately, more factories were seized, more land seizures took place in the countryside, and more unused property was taken over in the cities. In the wake of the attempted coup, "hundreds of thousands of Portuguese workers held mass meetings to demand further action to press home the revolution." (Cliff, 1975a:25) Typical were the bank workers who occupied their workplaces to prevent a flight of capital from the country. They demanded and won nationalization of the banks. At the same time, empty buildings, luxury homes and other real estate was seized by homeless people in the urban areas. Particularly important was the massive movement in the Southern countryside, where the property of many big landlords was seized and transformed into cooperative farms. (Gallagher, 1983:211; Ali, 1978:107; Hammond, 1988:148)

For many workers, the events of March 1975 transformed the anti-Salazarist revolution against the old regime into a socialist revolution. (Ali, 1978:105-106) By backing the coup, the ruling class had demonstrated its unwillingness to democratize society. Therefore, dual power was strengthened everywhere -- in the factories, in the urban neighborhoods, on the land, and later, in the army. After March, the resolution of the revolutionary crisis would depend upon the ability of the CTs and the other organs of dual power to clarify their goals, centralize their power, and mount an offensive to create a workers' state within Portugal.

The massive working class offensive in the wake of March 11th pushed the MFA to the left. A new MFA body was formed, the Supreme Council of the Revolution, becoming the most powerful institution in the country. At the same time, a 4th PG, with PCP allies in the key posts, was formed.(Graham,1979:244; Kayman,1987:127-128; Ali,1978:105-106) In addition, the MFA decided to break the power of the bourgeoisie and deal with the economic crisis by nationalizing the banks, insurance companies, and many large industries (e.g., steel, oil, shipbuilding, petrochemicals, the national airline TAP, etc.), comprising 60% of the economy.(Ali, 1978:107; Gallagher,1983:210-211; Mailer, 1977:199,201; Harman, 1988:286-287) More than 100 large, heavily capitalized firms were nationalized.(Hammond,1988:145) During the spring, other changes would follow, including an agrarian reform law.

Despite all this, the MFA again passed on the opportunity to carry out a purge of the officer corps.(Ali,1978:107) The radicalization of rank and file soldiers -- a process previously only visible in the reluctance or refusal of many soldiers to repress striking or demonstrating workers, or to support right wing officers -- also began to take more positive forms. In a few regiments, rank and file soldiers organized mass meetings to decide on the need to remove right wing officers after the coup. (Ali,1978:108; Cliff,1975a:24) But, dual power had not yet emerged at the base of the army.

Needless to say, the combined working class and MFA offensive left the Portuguese bourgeoisie "disorganized and internally divided." It lost much of its capacity to take the initiative within society. But "it was still a powerful social force," retaining its support among the non-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the officer corps and the international bourgeoisie.(Harman,1988:288)²¹ The weakened position of the

Portuguese bourgeoisie, when coupled with the absence of a mass revolutionary party, allowed the 400 members of the MFA (and in particular the PCP faction in the MFA) to become the dominant force within Portuguese society for a period. The MFA "dominated the government, it appointed the administrators of the newly nationalized industries, and it held the chains of command inside the military." Nevertheless, the MFA remained a small minority within an officer corps of thousands, most of whom were very hostile to the revolution. The right wing officers

"bided their time" waiting for an opportunity to act against the MFA and the revolution.(Harman,1988:287,288) Thus,

the leaders of the MFA could seem all powerful inside the military because there was a balance between the majority of officers, who did not yet feel powerful enough to give vent to their increasingly right wing inclinations, and the mass of rank and file soldiers who, although unwilling to attack the workers, did not yet feel confident enough to overturn the formal power of the officers. But this was necessarily...an unstable equilibrium. In time either the rank and file would challenge the prerogatives of the officers, or the officers would regain complete control in the barracks and use their power against the workers. In either case, the MFA would loose its footing and come crashing down.(Harman,1988:287-288)

In the interim, the MFA moved towards institutionalizing its power. After March, the three main currents in the MFA -- the moderates supporting the SP, the Communist sympathizers who dominated the PG, and the radicals with links to the far left -- would argue about the fate of the revolution. In the meantime, the MFA's control over Portuguese society had an "objectively contradictory character." On the one hand, it was directed against the ruling class, and therefore "tended to foster initiatives by workers and soldiers." On the other hand, sections of the MFA were also trying to consolidate their position in opposition to the initiative of the masses from below.(USFI,1975: 1137) The contradictory character of the MFA flowed from its simultaneous nature as a central part of the state machine, but also

being dependent upon working class mobilizations (in September 1974 and March 1975) for its power.(USFI,1975:1141)

The MFA tried to handle the contradictions by "establish(ing) paternalistic relations" with the working class movement, emphasizing their own role in directing the activity of the masses, and establishing themselves as the arbiters between capital and labour.(USFI,1975:1141)²²

After asserting themselves in March 1975, the PCP and radical factions of the MFA were reluctant to hand power over to which ever party might be elected in April. So, the MFA compelled all political parties entering the election to agree the new Constituent Assembly would be mandated only to draw up a constitution. Thus, the MFA retained the right to veto the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, thereby insuring their continued political dominance.(Ali,1978:110; Gallagher,1983:212) Having failed twice to regain control over the state through direct action, the Portuguese ruling class now resorted to less direct methods. In April, they rallied around the SP -- a reliable reformist party -- hoping Mario Soares could crush the revolution.(Cliff,1975a:17) On April 25th, the election gave the SP 38% of the popular vote, while the PPD (the major bourgeois political party) got 26%, the PCP got just under 17% (the combined total for the PCP and its front group the MDP) and the revolutionary left only 4%.(Sobel,1976:99) After the election, the SP shifted its strategy, as Soares started to differentiate his party from the PCP. The SP demanded an end to the anarchy created by the PCP and the revolutionary left, a restoration of the authority of the state, and a halt in the trend towards totalitarian dictatorship by the PCP.(Frank,1975:1768-1769) Under the guise of defending bourgeois democracy, the SP began attacking the revolution.

By contrast, the rhetoric of the PCP had turned to the left, as Cunhal publicly rejected any suggestion Portugal would become a bourgeois democracy.(Gallagher,1983:216) The electoral results indicated the PCP was in no position to set itself up as the accepted arbiter between capital and labour. As a consequence, the PCP shifted strategy, hoping they could seize power using the model employed by Communist parties in Eastern Europe after World War II. Cunhal hoped that a CP/MFA alliance (led by Goncalves, the MFA prime minister) would suffice to win the CP effective power.(Ali,1978:111) Despite the PCP's control over many positions of importance and influence in society and the state machine (e.g., the military, the trade unions, the nationalized industries and the media), they proved incapable of controlling the Portuguese working class in the face of serious competition -- both from the revolutionary left and from the SP.(Harman,1988: 288-289,296)

The post-election maneuvering occurred against the backdrop of a continuing economic crisis, with falling production and investment levels, and continuing high rates of inflation and unemployment.(Ali,1978:106; Hammond,1988:146-147) The impact of the world economic crisis in Portugal was amplified by the capital strike being waged against the revolution by Portuguese and foreign capital.²³ Throughout the summer, the governing MFA and its backers in the PCP repeatedly urged workers "to rescue industry from its low productivity" by joining the government led "battle of production" -- a call that went largely unanswered. (Hammond,1988:146-147)

In June, the MFA Assembly met to debate the course of the revolution. Despite the mobilization of 40,000 workers on a demonstration in favour of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the moderate and PCP factions of the MFA joined to outvote the radical wing, and announced the PG would follow a pluralist and democratic route to

socialism.(Downs,1989:28; Mailer,1977:226-227; Hammond,1988:201)

In June and July, the focal point of the class struggle was the question of workers' control over the Lisbon media. At Radio Renascenca, the workforce and owners (the Catholic Church) began a bitter dispute over control of the program content of the station. In addition, printworkers at the newspaper Republica seized control of the daily, charging the owner was turning it into a mouthpiece for the SP. Under the control of the CT, the paper established an independent editorial policy that was well to the left of the PCP. Both these disputes were highly publicized, with the SP using them to claim they were defending freedom of speech from the totalitarian PCP. Workers at both Republica and Radio Renascenca benefitted from enormous support among the most militant workers in Lisbon, holding several large solidarity demonstrations, despite PCP opposition. In fact, because COPCON refused to carry out the PG's orders to repress the strikes, the government was forced to nationalize the press.(Cliff,1974a:10; Mailer,1977:227-236; Downs,1989:27; Harman,1988:295; Kayman,1987:146)

Throughout these summer months, the exploited and oppressed classes of Portuguese society continued to build the institutions of dual power. By the end of April, more than 3,000 urban properties had been occupied in Lisbon, and more than 20,000 nationally. Lisbon alone had at least 21 CMs and 38 squatters associations by May. When the PG discussed a new law that would make 80% of the occupations already carried out illegal, 30,000 protested in Lisbon and another 30,000 in Porto.(Mailer,1977:269; Downs,1983:163-164) Likewise, before March 11th, only 9,000 hectares of agricultural land had been occupied in southern Portugal. But, by the end of July over 206,000 hectares had been taken over by agricultural workers in a wave of occupations. (Mailer,1977:257;

Kayman,1987:115,133; Bermeo,1986:62-75; Hammond,1988:178-185)

The revolution from below was given new impetus by developments in the MFA. The leading Goncalves faction of the MFA (i.e., the PCP faction), faced increasing pressure from the leftward moving working class to abandon its alliance with the moderate MFA and side with the radicals (grouped around Carvalho and COPCON). The July 4th Republica/Radio Renascenca demonstration of 40,000 finally pushed the Goncalvists leftwards. On July 8th, the Goncalvists switched sides and supported a document from the radical faction of the MFA, calling for the establishment of an MFA/PEOPLE alliance to create "popular power." (PTS,1975:4; Robinson,1987:105-106; RA,1975:65-68)

The MFA/PEOPLE document was a centrist argument in favor of MFA domination of the state, supported by the CTs and CMs, and geared towards the creation of socialism. The new socialist regime would link the existing organizations of popular power -- the CTs and CMs -- into local popular assemblies, municipal assemblies, and a national assembly. These assemblies, would act as a "parallel authority to the state and the parliamentary system." (Robinson,1987:106; Mailer,1977:225; PTS,1975:5-8) The MFA's new position, which was supported by the revolutionary left and the main grassroots workers' organizations, pushed the SP to resign from the PG. (PTS,1975:4-9; Downs,1989:29; Gallagher,1983: 216-217) Soares threatened to paralyze the country if Goncalves did not resign, signalling the beginning of an all out campaign against the PG, the PCP, the left and the revolution. (Gallagher, 1983:218; Mailer,1977:234; Mailer,1977:241-242) The polarization of Portuguese society was deepening, as both the far left and the far right became more active. (Harman,1988:296)

The reactionary offensive by the SP and the bourgeoisie

proceeded in two stages. First, the SP -- with the backing of the Church and the right wing parties -- targeted the PCP, by attacking its influence in the PG. By "playing on the traditional conservative sympathies of the northern peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, as well as on the inadequacies of the economic programs of the post-fascist governments," the SP hoped to bring down the Goncalves government. Then, after the PCP dominated PG had been replaced by an SP led government, the moderates would attack the power of the PCP and radical MFA in the military, with the aim of rebuilding a reliable repressive apparatus that could be turned against the revolution.(Plotke,1976:49)²⁴

The SP's campaign to paralyze the government and the revolution involved the organization of rallies and counter-demonstrations throughout the country, as well as tacit support for the terrorist activities of the far right.²⁵ Nowhere was the strength of the counter-revolutionary and reactionary forces stronger than in the northern and central portions of the country. There, the peasantry provided the foot-soldiers for reaction. Opposition to the revolution was rooted in the failure of the MFA government to devise any agrarian reforms that would give the peasantry a real stake in a new social order.(Gallagher, 1983:220; Robinson,1987:107-108; Hammond,1988:209-213; Mailer, 1977:264-268)²⁶ Northern peasants were not relieved of their enormous debts, nor were the all important agricultural credit institutions altered to make available additional credit on easy terms -- a measure needed when high inflation affected the prices of key agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilizer).(Robinson,1987:108) So while the revolution gained steam in Lisbon and southern Portugal, it was the reactionary movement that was growing in northern and central Portugal, sharpening the class struggle overall.(Robinson,1987:108)

The polarization of Portuguese society drove the MFA into crisis during the summer of 1975. In the south, the pace and intensity of the revolution increased as factory workers, farmworkers and urban slum dwellers all took further action to occupy factories, land and buildings, and to demonstrate their support for "popular power." As the social revolution intensified, the PG grew weaker, losing much of its ability to control rank and file soldiers. Under the pressures from the SP, from the working class, and from the continuing economic crisis,

the MFA was beginning to crack.(Harman,1988:297)

In desperation, a 5th PG was formed, composed exclusively of MFA members, with a triumvirate consisting of three officers -- each representing a different faction of the MFA: Costa Gomes for the moderates, Goncalves for the center and Carvalho for the radicals. But, rather than taming the class struggle, the 5th PG and the MFA were ripped apart in August.(Harman,1988:296,298) The crisis within the MFA exploded into public, with both the moderates (aligned with the SP) and the radicals attacking the dominant PCP faction, and advancing different proposals on how to resolve the crisis. The 'Document of the Nine', written by the moderate MFA (and quickly endorsed by a majority of officers in the military and the SP), argued the revolution had to be stopped, and many of its accomplishments rolled back.(PTS,1975: 11-14; Gallagher,1983:222; Cliff,1975a:29; Hammond,1988:215)

Meanwhile, the radical faction (grouped around Carvalho and COPCON) published a document arguing the crisis was rooted in the failure of the PG to overthrow capitalism. The COPCON document advocated an immediate shift to the left and the creation of popular power.(Faye,1975:155,180-183; Kayman, 1987:157)

In the midst of this public debate, the PCP called for a half hour general strike in support of the PG, getting very little response from the working class.(Mailer,1977:275; Sweezy, 1975b:10) Meanwhile, the COPCON proposals were endorsed by a number of groups on the revolutionary left. Together, they called a mass demonstration on August 20th, mobilizing between 70,000 and 100,000 workers and soldiers behind the radical MFA proposals. That demonstration included delegations from the 200 to 250 factory commissions, farmworkers' committees and tenants' organizations that formally endorsed the COPCON document, and the call to continue the revolution.(Harman,1988:297; Mailer,1977:275 -276; Cliff,1975a:29; Hammond,1988:201-202; Robinson,1987:109) Under growing pressure from below, the PCP temporarily shifted left and joined a united front with the PRP/BR and a variety of other revolutionary groups -- the Revolutionary United Front (FUR). On August 27th, FUR called a joint demonstration in favour of the "continuation of the revolutionary process," which attracted an estimated 500,000 people.(Mailer,1977:277; Harman, 1988:299)²⁷ The massive demonstration, which was five times larger than the one called by the revolutionary left the week before, was living proof that the main obstacle to a serious fight for workers' power was the division inside the working class movement, between the workers who supported the PCP and those who supported the revolutionary left.(Harman,1988:299)

Within days, the PCP had abandoned its brief flirtation with the revolutionary left, and approached the SP about participation in a new PG.(Mujal-Leon,1977:32) On September 6th, the MFA moderates won a majority on the Revolutionary Council, guaranteeing the formation of an SP dominated 6th PG and the beginning of a concerted attack on the power of the PCP and the radicals within the military.(Mailer,1977:280-281;

Kayman,1987: 158-160) At the same time, the revolution from below took a major leap forward, when rank and file soldiers formed a new organization, independent of the MFA, to oppose efforts by the right and the SP to control the military. On September 8th, Soldiers United Will Win (SUV), a revolutionary movement of rank and file soldiers, issued its first communique, calling for a workers' and soldiers' revolution against the state.(Mailer, 1977:312) Days later SUV led a demonstration of 30,000 people (including 1,500 soldiers) in Oporto with another large demonstration of 100,000 in Lisbon on September 26th. Within weeks, SUV had won support from soldiers' commissions (CSs) all over the country.(Robinson,1987:110)

The Portuguese revolution was heading for another major test of strength. The capitalist class had still not succeeded in regaining control over the entire state apparatus, while the working class had not even attempted to really smash the old state machine. Until September, the "unstable balance" of power between the classes had its "center of gravity" in the MFA. (Cliff,1975a:41) With the fall of the 5th PG in early September, the MFA lost that role, leaving a very polarized situation.

* * * * *

The final stage in the revolutionary process began with the formation of the SP dominated 6th PG on Sept 19th, and lasted until a military confrontation developed between the SP affiliated moderate MFA and the radical MFA on November 25th -- an event which dramatically altered the balance of class power and ended the revolutionary crisis.

The creation of the SP led 6th PG gave the opponents of the revolution control over a portion of the state machine. But, economic and military power was still fragmented,

given the existence of SUV, the radical MFA, COPCCN, the CTs and the CMs.

The SP still had to use the portion of the military it was allied with to purge the PCP from the remainder of the state machine, and the PCP, radical MFA and SUV from the military.(Kayman,1987: 161; Mailer,1977:313) In short, the SP was in office, but it was not yet fully in power.(Downs,1989:30) The SP led PG moved first to smash radical control over the media, by tightening censorship rules and attacking workers' control at Radio Renascenca.(Frank, 1975:1768) The PG tried to stop the growth of SUV by banning the publication or broadcast of any statements from the military, without government approval.(Kayman,1987:162) Media outlets that violated the ban were occupied by units of the army the SP thought were reliable. But, media workers argued with the occupying forces, winning the soldiers to support for SUV. (Harman,1988:302-303) Again and again the government sent supposedly reliable troops to occupy media outlets or break up demonstrations defending the media, always with disastrous results.

The PG's hold over the military was so weak that it was finally reduced to terrorism to silence the leftist media. On November 7th, the government sent paratroopers from the Tancos airbase to blow up the Radio Renascenca transmitter. Soon after, even those troops turned against the PG expelling their right wing officers from the barracks.(Harman,1988:303; Jeffreys,1976: 14) But, the SP PG did manage to reorganize a section of the army, as the moderates put together a small but seemingly reliable force -- the pro-SP Military Intervention Group (AMI). (Downs,1989:32; Kayman,1987:162)²²

Still, the situation of the 6th PG remained extremely precarious, amid the growing public discussion of the likelihood of a coup or civil war.(Kayman,1987:164) In mid-November, 100,000 striking construction workers -- a traditionally backward section of the

working class, out on strike for the first time --surrounded the Constituent Assembly building for two days, holding the SP government inside hostage. The strikers, initially led by the CP, had quickly adopted a more militant leadership. During the two day seige of the parliament buildings, the strikers blockaded the streets, erected barricades, and armed themselves. The frightened government called on COPCON to disperse the crowd, without success. The government, shaken by the experience, made the necessary concessions.(Foley,1975b:1701; Downs,1989:32; Hammond,1988:239-240; Ensign,1976:63 Mailer,1977: 324-325; Harman,1988:307; Robinson,1987:113; Jeffreys,1976:14)

That kind of strike action was quite uncommon by the fall, because the more conscious sections of the working class realized the crisis could only be resolved through political action. Moreover, by the fall, most factories were either nationalized or under workers' control anyway. The 'economic' dimension of the class struggle was more important in the countryside, where the months of September through November were a time of great activism, as the amount of land occupied quadrupled.(Mailer, 1987:284; Lomax,1983:120)

After the fall of the 5th PG in September, the PCP abandoned its former hostility to strike action and demonstrations. The PCP launched a variety of initiatives (e.g., the construction workers' strike, a November 16th anti-government demonstration, and a 2 hour general strike on November 24th) to consolidate its position on the left, and push the SP into negotiating a role for the PCP in the PG. Throughout the fall, the PCP vacillated between active opposition to the new PG, and attempts at reconciliation -- keeping all its options open in the effort to regain a foothold in the PG.(Hammond,1988:227; Robinson,1987:116) The PCP still opposed SUV and working class action to defend Radio

Renascença from the government. But, the CP's leftward shift was sufficient to enable it to "dominate a new coordinating centre" of the class struggle in Lisbon, the Workers' Committee of the Lisbon Industrial Belt (CIL).(Harman,1988:304-305) The revolutionary left failed to make major inroads into the PCP's support.

By November, another major test of strength between the revolution and counter-revolution was imminent. During October and November, there was much debate about the likelihood of a civil war, with commentators speculating about "which military units would fight for the left and which for the government." (Harman,1988:304; Ali,1973:128) On the eve of the decisive confrontation, the bourgeois state machine was still extraordinarily weak. But, the Portuguese working class had not succeeded in centralizing the institutions of dual power (i.e., the CTs, CMs and CSs) into an embryonic workers' state to confront the bourgeois state. Rather than 'dual power', the situation was one of 'fragmented power', with the CTs, CMs and CSs still largely uncoordinated.(Harman,1988:289) To make matters worse, the absence of a coordinating center for the fragmented bits of dual power created by the working class, was compounded by the absence of a mass revolutionary party.

With the mass movement still radicalizing and the 6th PG gradually succumbing to paralysis, the SP had to move quickly.

On November 18th, Soares met with supporters from the moderate wing of the MFA to establish a command center for officers who supported the SP and the right.(Robinson,1987:114) On November 20th, the SP government announced it was suspending its activities until President Costa Gomes could re-establish the law and order required for the government to continue, provoking a constitutional crisis and forcing the moderate MFA to act.(Downs, 1989:32; Gallagher,1983:223; Ensign,1976:64)

The decisive confrontation began when the MFA's Council of the Revolution removed the radical COPCON commander Carvahlo from his position on November 24th, replacing him with a member of the moderate faction of the MFA. Overnight, the Tancos paratroopers (the group used by the SP to blow up Radio Renascenca just weeks before) rebelled in protest, occupying their barracks. (Officers associated with the PCP encouraged the paratroopers to take the action, hoping it would add to the pressure on the SP to cut a deal with the PCP.(Harman,1988:308)) Meanwhile the COPCON forces occupied their barracks, while refraining from any kind of offensive. The PG -- knowing the protests among the troops were not coordinated, that COPCON and the working class were unlikely to move very rapidly in defence of the politically backward Paratroopers, and that the PCP was only seeking more influence in the PG (and not starting an uprising) -- saw an opportunity to deal the left a decisive blow. The PG upped the stakes in the situation, claiming it was facing an armed insurrection by the revolutionary left, and used the incident as a pretext to send in a force of several hundred reliable commandos from AMI to confront the rebellious troops in each of the occupied barracks, disarming them one by one, without serious resistance.(Robinson, 1987:115; Ali,1978:132; Harman,1988:309) Thus, right wing and moderate military officers used the situation to carry out a coup.(Downs,1989:32,195) (Part of the operation involved declaring a state of emergency so the SP could establish control over the mass media, make searches, arrest people and outlaw demonstrations.(Udry,1975:1805))

Without a centralized and disciplined revolutionary leadership, the leftist troops in each unit were isolated in their decision about whether or not to resist the PG troops in defence of the Paratroopers. There was no attempt by either COPCON or the PCP to offer

direction or assistance to the soliders, nor did the working class mobilize to resist the SP initiative.(Robinson,1987:115; Mailer,1977:341) The revolutionary left responded very badly, proclaiming the time had come for an insurrection against the "fascist threat." The left did not call for a general strike and demonstrations to counter the PG troops, the kind of tactics that had worked in March, when masses of unarmed workers had surrounded the right wing troops and argued with them.

Certainly, strikes and demonstrations in support of the rebel troops would have given them some leadership and encouraged them not to surrender.(Robinson,1987:115)" Instead, revolutionary workers and soldiers were isolated by the inactivity of the CP, the ultra-leftism of the revolutionaries, and by a "barrage of lies orchestrated by the government" about an insurrectionary plot.(Robinson,1987:117) As a consequence, left wing workers and soldiers faced an unfortunate choice

"between the civil war urged on them by the forces of the far left and the option of peaceful retreat urged on them by the far larger forces of the Communist Party." Give the choice between a civil war no one had prepared for, and what seemed like a major -- but not catastrophic defeat -- soldiers "were bound to opt for retreat."(Harman,1988:311)

Missing was a revolutionary party with the political clarity and credibility to offer both the soldiers and the most militant workers some effective direction in dealing with the situation.

* * * * *

The revolutionary crisis evaporated after the political defeat of November 25th. In the days and weeks following that event, the bourgeoisie made the transition from a situation of revolutionary crisis to a more or less 'normal' and 'stable' regime -- where

they enjoyed a monopoly of control over the state apparatus.(Robinson,1987:115-116)

Besides restoring their control over the state machine, the victory by the moderate MFA and the SP over the radicals allowed the PG to regain control over the media, as hundreds of radical journalists were fired.(Mailer, 1977:351-353) Most importantly, the defeat of the leftist soldiers was a serious blow to the confidence of the Portuguese working class.

To understand why the events of November 25th sapped the power of the workers' movement, we have to recognize that Portuguese workers attributed many of their victories (e.g., the March 11th defeat of Spínola) to the actions of the MFA rather than to themselves. Therefore, working class militants exaggerated their loss on November 25th, overestimating the importance of the MFA and SUV, and underestimating the significance of the elements of dual power that remained -- the CTs and CMs. Even the most class conscious workers felt "they had lost everything on November 25th." (Harman,1988:311) For that reason, the political defeat on November 25th shifted the balance of class forces to the point where the CTs and CMs "fell into inactivity." (Hammond,1988:253) Within the ranks of the working class "there was a widespread realization that (henceforward-BM) successful action would be more difficult," because the opposition had consolidated their grip on the military. After November 25th, "the appeals to caution made by the PCP and the SP became more attractive" to workers who did not see a realistic revolutionary alternative. (Robinson,1987:116)

The social democrats and the right had gained the initiative. In the weeks after the right wing coup,

many factories, farms, CMs (i.e., neighborhood commissions-BM) and other popular organizations were searched by the commandos and police; officers and soldiers sympathetic to the popular movement were demobilized and some imprisoned; among the workers who lost their jobs were approximately 120 journalists fired from the major newspapers; all wage increases were

cancelled; and both Republica and Radio Renascenca were returned to their owners....The right was on the offensive, demanding the return of nationalized banks and factories, an end to the agrarian reform, and carrying out many bomb attacks against leftist targets. (Downs,1989:33)

The initial gains made by the right on November 25th were quite limited.

Nevertheless, those events allowed the right to move onto the offensive, giving them an opportunity to re-establish their control over the army. The PG was able to purge the military, disbanding revolutionary units.(Cliff,1977:21) But, the right had not gained enough ground on November 25th to launch an all out offensive on the working class. That offensive, to drive down living standards and restore the power of capital in the factories, came the following year.(Harman,1988:311)

(6.4) Forms of Self-Organization and Struggle Among the Portuguese Underclasses

The revolutionary crisis in Portugal enabled the exploited and oppressed classes to organize themselves and take collective action to defend their interests. In doing so, they created a whole series of new organizations and generated a variety of new forms of struggle that shaped the revolutionary process. A systematic review of the new forms of organization and struggle that arose in Portugal would force us to examine a number of important phenomena that cannot be considered here, including:

the land seizures by the rural proletariat in Southern Portugal, and the establishment of agrarian cooperatives; the neighborhood commissions (Comissoes de Moradores, or CMs) established in the urban areas to exercise control over healthcare, education, housing and transportation, and the squatters associations engaged in the struggle to occupy unused

buildings for housing.³⁰ Here, we can only examine the most important forms of struggle and organization, including: the workplace based struggles by the urban proletariat through the workers' commissions (Comissoes de Trabalhadores, or CTs) and the struggle for workers' control over production; the trade unions and the strikes for improved wage levels; the organizations created by rank and file soldiers (especially Soldiers United Will Win, or SUV), and finally, the various efforts to link these basic institutions of "popular power" into more centralized institutions.

* * * * *

The MFA coup in April 1974 dramatically changed the objective circumstances in which the strike wave of 1973-74 was taking place. The fall of the old regime sent a clear signal to Portuguese workers: they could strike without fear of the repression that they had suffered in the past. During May, at least 200 workplaces in the Lisbon area alone experienced strikes (by the end of the summer more than 400 strikes had taken place), as the vanguard of industrial workers demanded wage increases and

saneamento. (Harman, 1988:279; Hammond, 1988:77-78; Jenkins, 1975: 119-122;

Mailer, 1977:107) As a result of these strikes and the new minimum wage conceded by the PG, labour's share of national income rose from 46.% in 1973 to 63% in

1975. (Kayman, 1987:189; Hammond, 1988:146; Jenkins, 1975:122) But, Portuguese workers soon made new demands designed to alter the labour process (e.g., elimination of piece rates, changes in shift work, greater attention to health and safety, etc.) and to humanize the workplace (e.g., the provision of child care, cafeterias, locker rooms, etc.). (Hammond, 1988:79-81; Logan, 1983:142)

Because of the revolutionary context in which these demands arose, the individual employers' response had little affect in undercutting the militancy. Concessions to the workers provoked new demands, just as resistance to them did. Vanguard workers in large industrial plants, with a record of militancy that pre-dated the April coup, had the most success in winning concessions. Many of the strikes in small and medium sized workplaces were met with extreme intransigence by outraged employers. The campaign of economic sabotage against the revolution -- which included layoffs and plant closures -- had its origins among small and medium sized employers.(Logan,1983: 142) The old craft based trade unions, inherited from the Salazarist era, did not lead the strike wave. Workers created new workplace organizations, the workers' commissions (CTs). Among vanguard workers, the CTs were led by the same people who led the illegal strikes that occurred under the old regime.(Hammond,1988: 78)

The official trade unions, which were taken over by the PCP, had too little credibility to halt rank and file militancy. Similarly, the MFA led PG tried to curb workers' militancy with its August 1974 labour law. But the new 'anti-strike law' -- which prohibited factory occupations, solidarity strikes, and other forms of militant action -- was soon rendered unenforceable by the 'illegal' actions of vanguard workers like the shipbuilders at Lisnave.(Logan,1983:143; Cliff,1975a:13-14; Jenkins,1975:153-154)

The revolutionary crisis led to several dramatic changes in the trade union movement. First, it grew when workers previously excluded from unions (e.g., farm workers) organized.(Graham,1983: 242; Hammond,1988:77) Second, the trade union movement became more centralized as the Intersindical (the confederation of Portuguese trade unions) grew to embrace the majority of trade unions.(Logan,1983:145) Third, the

PCP emerged as the dominant force in the trade union movement, controlling the Intersindical from the top, while party members dominated many unions on the shopfloor. But, in gaining effective control over many unions, the PCP captured the existing trade union machine, without really transforming it.(Hammond,1988:77; Logan,1983:145-146)

The PCP's opposition to strike action and its hostility to the CTs, forced some of the militants leading the strike movement to abandon the PCP and join the small revolutionary parties that did support strikes. Many workers rejected the PCP's moderation, its uncritical support for the PG, and its bureaucratic efforts to control the working class through the trade unions.(Hammond, 1988:79) By late 1974, the PCP's iron grip over the trade union movement was being challenged in some unions by an anti-PCP coalition composed of the SP and the Maoists. By the summer of 1975, the SP/Maoist alliance had won control over many white collar unions. This traditionally militant section of the working class wanted a more aggressive fight for improved wages than the PCP would tolerate, while rejecting the bureaucratic practices of the PCP.(Logan,1983:146-147)³¹

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The battle for workers' control over production was led by the CTs in each workplace. By October 1974, there were about 4,000 CTs in existence, mainly among industrial workers. (Robinson,1987:90; Kayman,1987:215; Mailer,1977:132) The CTs were workplace based committees, elected at general assemblies (with the delegates subject to recall), that emerged during the strike wave after April 1974.(RA:47; Mailer,1977:248) Those CTs remained active inside the workplace, after the initial strike wave died down, campaigning for further concessions from the employers. In some factories, workers shared power with management in the selection of supervisors and the exercise of discipline. In

others, they moved very rapidly towards full control over these areas, making full use of the weapon of saneamento.(Hammond,1988:99-101) The CTs did much more than simply conduct the battle against the employer. In some workplaces they "published newsletters and sponsored literacy classes and political discussion groups." In cases where the CTs had "well defined political sympathies," they often "mobilized their members to take part in (the many political-BM) demonstrations" that occurred throughout 1974-75.(Hammond,1988:103; Mailer,1977:134)

The rise of the CTs did not eliminate the sectionalism among Portuguese workers. For example, the more class conscious workers who led the CTs frequently fought for egalitarian measures that would lessen the differences between blue collar and white collar workers (e.g., a reduction in wage differentials). In the circumstances of the Portuguese revolution -- where the various sections of the working class were never compelled to unite in action to defend the revolution against a serious and protracted counter-revolutionary threat (both the September 1974 and March 1975 mobilizations against Spínola were too short to draw the entire working class into united action), and where soviet-type institutions that could unite the entire class never emerged -- the fight for greater egalitarianism encouraged sectionalism. (Hammond,1988:80,103; Mailer,1977:138)

The CTs can be divided into three different political types. First, were the most politicized and militant CTs -- which arose in the large factories that existed in the Setúbal-Lisbon area. They were led by the vanguard of the industrial working class: young and often skilled or educated male workers.(Lomax,1983: 115; Mailer,1977:138) The vanguard workers in these key commissions

were especially likely to be attracted by the militancy of the far left parties. Their commissions pursued saneamento and wage equalization most vigorously. They were very likely to become involved in political

organization outside the plant. These commissions often rejected formal power within the firm, not wishing to compromise themselves by shouldering capitalists' responsibilities.(Hammond,1988:103-104)

Second, were the CTs in the older plants dominated by the PCP, which had a very different attitude towards the question of workers' control. These commissions "tended to be more conservative," and

were more concerned with consolidating their own power and creating a well structured organization than with confrontation. Far more than the commissions led by far leftists, they worked to secure formal management recognition of their right to share in decision making. In 1975...PCP dominated CTs led the struggles for nationalization, and where it occurred the commissions played an active role in carrying it out.(Hammond, 1988:104; Mailer,1977:138-139)

By contrast, CTs led by the revolutionary left emphasized the need to create a socialist regime before workers' assumed any responsibility for running their workplace.(Hammond,1988:104)

Unlike the CTs dominated by the far left or the PCP, the third type, those in the smaller, more backward plants and enterprises, were much less motivated by political considerations. Their actions were dictated by "economic necessity," especially when "owner recalcitrance made shutdown likely."(Hammond,1988:103-104) The existence of an immediate economic threat to these more backward layers of the industrial working class often forced them to seize control of the plant and establish a workers' cooperative, without reference to any broader political strategy.(Bermeo,1983: 182-185)

By the fall of 1974, the CTs were well known for their role in leading workplace seizures. Workers' control of production in Portugal took two forms: self-managed firms, where the enterprise was worker-run but state-owned (e.g., in enterprises nationalized from above during March 1975), and workers' cooperatives, established from below, which gave

the workforce both ownership and control over the enterprise.³² During 1974-75, at least 280 firms (most of them commercial or manufacturing enterprises) were nationalized from above and put under workers' self-management, while about 660 enterprises (mostly in manufacturing and construction) were taken over from below by workers' cooperatives. (About 70% of the more than 900 enterprises affected were manufacturers.(Bermeo,1983:182-184))

In many of the largest, most heavily capitalized plants (e.g., the Setanave shipyard), workers refused to take control of the workplace from management, believing that the absence of a socialist state to give workers control over the entire economy made workers' control of industry impossible. Perceptions changed somewhat as the economic crisis deepened and after the banks and many of the large industries were nationalized in March 1975.(Robinson,1987: 104; Cliff,1974a:9) The MFA's wave of nationalizations in March 1975 resulted in 117 large, capital intensive firms (including the banks) being placed under the control of state appointed administrators.(Mailer,1977:201; Hammond,1988:145)³³

When many small and medium sized employers resorted to layoffs and plant closures to fight the revolution in the fall of 1974, the CTs often seized total control over their workplace (expelling the owners), and establishing a workers' run co-operative.(Downs,1989:18) At least 57% of the takeovers carried out from below occurred after the firm had been closed or declared bankruptcy.³⁴ As a result, the firms under workers' control were often in desperate financial shape.(Bermeo,1983:185-187; Hammond,1988:21-22) The CTs in these workers' cooperatives often had severe difficulties (e.g., getting cooperation from professional staff, and distributing their products), forcing the workers themselves to develop new skills.(Hammond,1988:162-163) Such experience

necessarily pushed some workers in the co-operatives towards revolutionary conclusions.(Mailer,1977:40-141; Reeve,1975:4)

When the PCP began to campaign for the nationalization of the banks and the large companies in early 1975, partly to regain support among militant workers it had alienated during 1974, Cunhal's vision of socialism involved an MFA/PCP state machine running the economy from the top down, with the loyal assistance of the trade unions and the CTs.(Hammond,1988:112) The PCP's campaign, which was adopted by many CTs, was opposed by the revolutionary left for two reasons. First, many vanguard workers and leftists feared the PCP was trying to create a bureaucratic form of socialism, run from the top down as in the USSR. (Hammond,1988:107,112-113,148) Second, many leftists ridiculed the idea that nationalization would enable the working class to control the economy, without the creation of a socialist state.

Although the PCP's hostility to the CTs and to militancy kept it weak in some of the key workers' commissions, the campaign to demand nationalization helped the PCP to displace the revolutionary left from the leadership of some of the CTs in the largest plants (e.g., at the Lisnave shipyard).(Hammond,1985:212) The PCP's success is partly attributable to its "strong latent support" among many industrial workers, and the desire by many workers for a strong party that would lead the fight for socialism. When it appeared the PCP had abandoned its former moderation, many previously disenchanted workers rallied to the PCP banner.(Hammond,1988:113) The PCP would lose much of that support once again during the summer of 1975, regaining some of it in the fall.

* * * * *

The Portuguese working class did not give up strike action after the summer of 1974. Strikes continued during the fall of 1974 and into 1975. However, after March 1975, there was a sharp division within the working class regarding strike action. Once the large workplaces had been nationalized and many medium or smaller firms had been taken over by workers' cooperatives, strike action ceased to be the key form of struggle for workers in those enterprises. Strikes could only "threaten the economic viability of enterprises controlled by their own workers' committees," forcing workers in those plants to believe any further solutions to their continuing problems had to be political in character.(Cliff,1975b:4-5) Therefore, after March 1975, an important proportion of the industrial working class abandoned strike action in favor of political strikes and demonstrations. (Harman,1988:307-308) (More on this in section 6.5.)

But, while the more class conscious and experienced sections of the working class abandoned economic strike action after March, there were still backward sections of the working class that were just becoming organized and confident enough to initiate economic strikes for the first time.(Reeve,1975:8-9; Harman,1974:12) One very dramatic example of this phenomenon is provided by the 100,000 construction workers who launched a strike for higher wages and secure employment in November 1975. The workers -- who were employed by very small companies -- had not been active prior to November 1975.(Robinson, 1987:113) But, they waged a very militant strike, laying siege to the parliament buildings for two days, while the terrified government cowered inside. Although the strike was initiated by the PCP to embarrass the SP government, the PCP union officials lost control of it to a rank and file committee that encouraged workers to blockade the streets and arm themselves.(Foley,1975b:1701; Downs,1989:32; Hammond,1988:239-240);

Mailer,1977:324-325; Harman,1988:307; Robinson,1987:113)

The construction workers' strike was an economic strike, launched by a backward section of the working class, despite the existence of an economic crisis. But, it quickly became a major political threat to the PG and to the reformist PCP, demonstrating the importance for any revolutionary movement of harnessing the untapped energy of less conscious sections of the working class in any drive to establish workers' power.(Foley, 1975b:1701; Hammond,1988:240; Cliff,1975b:4-5)

* * * * *

Before we examine the various efforts made to unite the fragments of dual power in the factories and neighborhoods into more centralized institutions, we need to consider the extent to which dual power developed within the military.

The MFA was a populist and anti-imperialist movement of junior officers, dominated by the class interests of the petite bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the MFA officers around COPCON were sufficiently radicalized by their direct contact with the workers' movement to develop a centrist political position to the left of the SP and the PCP. But, there were serious limitations to the radicalism of even the most leftist section of the MFA. (Hammond,1988:190) For example, the radicals in the MFA never advocated the subordination of officers to soldiers' commissions (CSs) -- a development necessary to eliminate the power of right wing officers. Even the officers in the radical MFA never viewed enlisted men as equals.

In September of 1974, the MFA created military assemblies which incorporated rank and file soldiers in some military units, in order to co-opt the growing discontent in the ranks. But, those assemblies did not give soldiers real control over their

units.(Brinton,1977:17-18; Sweezy,1975a:20-23; Robinson,1987:110) In most cases, those assemblies (often referred to as soldiers' commissions or CSs) remained under the effective control of officers until the September 1975 formation of Soliders United Will Win (SUV).(Cliff,1975a:29,30) Before March 1975, the radicalization of soldiers was mainly visible in their refusal to suppress striking or demonstrating workers or to obey orders from right wing officers (as in March). After March, that radicalization began to take more positive forms as soldiers in some units organized mass meetings to discuss purging right wing officers.(Cliff,1975a: 24; Foley,1975a:588) But, until August 1975, rank and file soldiers "had been followers of the left-wing officers, not...a force organized in their own right. (Harman,1988:300) Until September 1975, most soldiers did not organize independently of the officers, since the MFA seemed to be actually leading the revolution.(Cliff,1975a:33) But, in a few COPCON units, rank and file soldiers organized independently, to spread revolutionary literature, publish their own newspapers, and -- in one unit -- challenge "the most visible sign of class divisions within the barracks, the separate messes for officers." (Harman,1988:300; Mailer,1977:194; Jenkins,1975:220)

Only when the MFA disintegrated in August, did rank and file soldiers begin to organize themselves independently in SUV. (Hammond,1988:234-235) Initiated by members of the revolutionary left in army, SUV defended the independent interests of soldiers, advocated workers' power, and opposed the rightward drift of the revolution after the fall of the 5th PG.(Hammond,1988:233-235; Mailer,1977:309-311,317; Robinson,1987:109; Harman,1988:300-303) SUV's leaflets talked about the class differences in the military, advancing demands for improved living conditions and pay, an end to arbitrary discipline, the right for all soldiers to form elected commissions (CSs), the right

to refuse to obey reactionary orders, opposition to imperialism, and the need to purge the army of right wing officers. SUV's manifesto argued that in the past soldiers had been too willing to subordinate the struggle for their own demands to the need for an alliance with the MFA.(Frank,1975:1838; PTS,1975:37-38) However, since the alliance with the MFA had failed, SUV declared its intention to bring about the "destruction of the bourgeois army and the creation of the armed wing of the power of the working class: the people's revolutionary army."(Mailer,1977:395; Harman,1988:301-302; Hammond,1988:233)

SUV's first major activity was a September 10th demonstration of 1,500 troops and 30,000 civilians in Oporto.

The next day, 33 units of the military were represented at a SUV demonstration in Lisbon, along with participants from FUR and some CMs.(Mailer, 1977:309) After the demonstration in Oporto, many military units elected soldiers' commissions (CSs), modeled on the CTs. Within weeks, SUV was a national organization on "the leading edge of the opposition" to the 6th PG, hampering the moderates' efforts to secure control over the military.(Hammond, 1988:233; Mailer,1977:309; Robinson,1987:110; PTS:37) On September 25th a SUV demonstration in Lisbon attracted 100,000 people to demand the release of two SUV activists arrested for distributing SUV literature. The demonstration ended in a dramatic confrontation with COPCON commander General Carvalho outside the military prison. Carvalho refused to release the men and instructed an elite unit of the military to disperse the demonstration. But, SUV activists and veterans convinced the troops not to oppose them, and forced the release the soldiers.(Harman,1988: 302; Mailer,1977:312; Hammond,1988:233; Robinson,1987:110)³⁵

But, SUV did more than just demonstrate. For example, when the PG tried to transfer some SUV activists out of a transportation unit near Oporto, the soldiers resisted, prompting the commander of the region to disband the unit and expel the soldiers from their base. The soldiers took refuge in the barracks of a friendly artillery regiment nearby, where the CS

organized in their support. Repeated demonstrations by the revolutionary left in support of the soldiers led to violent clashes with rightists, and eventually victory for the rebels. (Sobel,1976:118-119; Mailer,1977:315-316; Porch,1977:216-217)*

In Lisbon, SUV was actively supported by about 12,000 soldiers. But, the politicization of the troops was quite uneven. The most radical units were those with extensive exposure to the broader revolutionary movement -- the units concentrated in the urban and southern hot bed of the revolution.(Hammond,1988: 235) Among troops stationed elsewhere, SUV was weak. But, even in units where SUV was strong, many soldiers exhibited a very uncritical attitude towards the most insidious features of a bourgeois army -- like hierarchy and loyalty to one's unit. Sectionalism was rife. Even though units held general meetings and elected CSs, they often "retained their hierarchical structure. As units they remained cohesive. Many soldiers (remained-BM)...proud of their regiments or battalions."(Mailer, 1977:314) Thus, even though SUV had declared itself opposed to the bourgeois nature of the army, many units retained the structure of such an army.(Robinson,1987:110)

SUV never succeeded in creating a national, centralised structure and leadership for the CSs. In Lisbon, 16 out of 20 military units had elected representatives that met regularly to discuss common policy by October 1975.(Ali,1978:124; Porch,1977: 216-217)

But that very loose structure did not give the movement the capacity for a centralized response to the kind of event that occurred on November 25th.(Raptis,1980:167) Radical soldiers required a much more discipline and experienced organization to either prevent the premature rising by the paratroopers, or organize an appropriate response once the movement had started. SUV was not a centralized and disciplined organization when the decisive confrontation came. On that crucial day, the radical officers in MFA hesitated, wavered and then refused to take action. Soldiers in the most radical units "were caught in a totally defensive position."(Cliff,1975b:3) Unfortunately, SUV was unable to provide an alternative strategy to the passivity of the PCP, and the premature insurrectionism of the revolutionary left.

The sectionalism that plagued SUV could not be rectified unless the organization was linked up to a centralized movement of CTs. Only in a centralized, nationally based, soviet-type institution, that combined both workers and soldiers delegates, could the soldiers be won away from loyalty to their units, to loyalty to the revolution. Only soviet-type institutions that fought for the interests of workers, soldiers and poor peasants, and offered "an alternative authority to that of the bourgeois state" could break down the sectionalism of the soldiers. (Robinson,1987:110) The peasants, rural proletarians and workers who made up the ranks of the conscript army needed to put themselves in the service of an embryonic workers' government, one which could offer them a clear vision of socialism, and a realistic political strategy to establish workers' power in Portugal.

* * * * *

Throughout the Portuguese revolution, the problem of how to link up the CTs, CSs and CMs into centralized institutions was a persistent, and ultimately unresolved difficulty.

In each of three sectors -- the military, neighborhoods and factories -- groups of commissions banded together temporarily to pursue particular goals. But the leap from particular and sectional concerns to a revolutionary view of the class struggle, required the development of soviet-type institutions that united all workers, soldiers and community activists. Centralized dual political power, with the embryo of a future workers' state taking initiatives to shape the course of the revolutionary process, never emerged. We have already examined SUV, the main effort to build a centralized expression of the dual power emerging in the military. Now we need to examine some of the most important efforts to centralize the CTs.

The first attempt to build a centralized organization that embraced the CTs was the federation of workers' commissions called Inter-Empresas (IE). Best known for organizing the large anti-NATO demonstration in February 1975, IE emerged from the CTs at some of the most politicized workplaces in Lisbon and Setubal (e.g., TAP, Lisnave, Setenave, Efacec-Inet, etc.).(Mailer,1977: 143,150-152; Lomax,1983:119; Reeve,1975: 8,24-25) But the IE, which was dominated by Maoists, did not last long. After sponsoring one major demonstration, it succumbed to the bitter infighting between the Maoists and others on the left.(Hammond, 1988:107; Peterson, 1977:17; Mailer,1977:248-252; Lomax,1983: 119; Robinsol,1987:99-100)

A second attempt to centralize the fragments of dual power and create soviet type institutions was launched in the spring of 1975 by the PRP/BR, together with a few activists from some of the key CTs. CMs and CSs in Lisbon: the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors (CRTSMs). Launched in April 1975, the CRTSMs were active until the MFA voted to establish popular power on July 7th. Then, the CRTSM

project was abandoned in favor of support for the MFA plan to form popular assemblies.(Cliff, 1975a:30; PTS,1975:20-25)³⁷

The CRTSMs -- which were supposed to be created at the local, regional and national levels -- were launched to carry out the "political clarification of the workers, the control of the economic and financial aspects of various enterprises, saneamento, and the arming of the working class."(Mailer,1977: 252) The movement to build CRTSMs had a short-term impact on the class struggle. Their June 17th demonstration of 40,000 in Lisbon helped to force the PCP section of the MFA to abandon its alliance with the MFA moderates in favour of an alliance with the radicals.(Cliff,1975a:44) But, the CRTSMs were born with at least two fatal defects. First, they were the artificial creation of a single political party, launched at a time when the working class was not really engaged in class wide action. Therefore, although the idea to form a national network of revolutionary councils was very popular among a small layer of vanguard workers, there were only two workplaces where the plan was endorsed by the CT (i.e., the two shipyards, Lisnave and Setanave).(Robinson,1987:105-106; Mailer,1977:255)

A second, more important problem with the CRTSMs, was their sectarian attitude towards the CTs. Instead of fighting to create a national coordinating committee of the CTs, the militants in the CRTSMs tried to act as "political overlords" to the CTs -- which were dismissed as institutions concerned with mere economic demands.(Peterson,1977:18) That criticism of the CTs was ridiculous since they had organized political demonstrations, strikes, occupations and a variety of other actions. Even if the charge about the CTs had been true, the condescending attitude of the CRTSMs activists towards the economic struggle was fatal. It indicated a failure to see the unevenness within the working class as

a political issue. If the more backward layers of the working class had to radicalize through the experience of collective struggle for their immediate economic interests, then such action had to be encouraged.(Ali, 1978:116) No organization aspiring to play the role of a soviet could disparage the struggle for economic reforms and expect to be embraced by a majority of workers.(Robinson,1987:105-106) Although the CRTSMs may have been discussed in as many as 100 factories, the sectarian and ultra-leftist flavour of the CRTSM movement, prevented the organization from becoming rooted in the working class.(Peterson, 1977:18-19; Cliff,1974a:19)

A third attempt to give the class struggle from below a more centralized form, came from the MFA in July 1975. The MFA call to establish an MFA/PEOPLE alliance to build "popular power" came from a coalition of the radical and PCP factions of the MFA. Their plan involved integrating the existing organizations of popular power -- the CSs, CMs, and CTs -- into a series of popular assemblies at the local, citywide and district levels, culminating in a national Revolutionary Council. These assemblies, which would be protected by the MFA, could then act as a "parallel authority to the state and the parliamentary system"(Robinson,1987:106; Peterson,1977: 19) This proposal was not a scheme to establish a genuine workers' state. Popular power was to be created from the top down, and it was to preserve the existing structures of the state. The scheme was a centrist plan to institutionalize a form of dual power.(Hammond,1988:202-203) Nevertheless, the revolutionary left welcomed the proposal as one which would create 'socialism.'(Peterson,1977:19)³⁸ They failed to recognize that to create a workers' state based on direct democracy would required a decisive confrontation with the state machine

(e.g., the right wing officers in the military) and its political defenders (e.g., the SP, etc.).

Few popular assemblies actually came into being. Those that did developed in neighborhoods where there were military units dominated by the radical MFA.(Lomax,1983:122) Nevertheless, these popular assemblies had two serious weaknesses. First, to be successful, the core of these local assemblies had to be the CTs. But, typically they were dominated by the CMs and CSs. Secondly, as with the CRTSMs, these new organizations were "set up from above as an initiative of the left in the MFA and not from below as a response to the class struggle."(Robinson,1987:106)

One example of this initiative was the Pontinha Assembly. Centered on the regiment of army engineers stationed in Pontinha, the assembly started with representatives from 17 local factories and 30 local tenants' associations. At its largest, the Pontinha Assembly attracted about "200 delegates from its constituent associations."(Robinson,1987:106) Despite that, the Pontinha Assembly had a lot of weaknesses. For one thing, the presence of the CTs was weak -- because there were few major factories in the area, and most of the local CTs were dominated by the PCP, opponents of the popular power scheme. Furthermore, the Assembly "defined its main task as the organization of defence in the case of an offensive from the right."(Peterson, 1977:18) Thus, it did not undertake the sort of offensive action required to build the assembly into an institution that would exercise some measure of dual power.

A fourth attempt to establish a centralized body institution of dual power was evident in the sort of initiative behind the Setubal Committee of Struggle (SCS). The SCS was a popular assembly, established in late September, well after the MFA/PEOPLE program of the radical MFA had collapsed (along with the 5th PG). The SCS was formed

in Portugal's third largest city (Setubal) in response to the 6th PG's occupation of Radio Renascenca, "to coordinate activities in case there were further rightward moves on the part of the national government, as well as to coordinate ...local struggles and to initiate more general struggles."(Downs,1983: 173; 1989:58) Thus, unlike some of the other efforts to centralize the fragments of dual power (e.g., the CRTSMs), the SCS had the virtue of emerging as a direct response to a shift in the balance of class forces.

During October and November the SCS had regular meetings with between 300 and 500 participants, from the local CMs, CTs and CSs. The SCS organized demonstrations, occupied the local newspaper to purge its director, organized support for nearby land occupations, started constructing public housing, and initiated discussions about how to convert local factories in serious trouble to other kinds of production.(Downs,1983:173-174; 1989:58-62) In general, the SCS functioned "as an alternative to the (local-BM) government, not only as a center of political opposition, but also as the distributor of government and economic resources."(Downs,1989:42)

The SCS was typical of a whole series of locally based popular assemblies that developed during the fall of 1975.³⁹ Each of these popular assemblies -- which tried to centralize the local CTs, CMs and CSs -- emerged from the efforts of vanguard workers "to grapple with the immediate economic and political problems confronting them in the fall of 1975.(Frank,1975:1777; Hammond,1988:196,199-200) The severity of the crisis, and the absence of a revolutionary party with the ability and desire to centralize the fragments of dual power nationally, meant local activists were being compelled to try and build dual political power from the local level up. Popular assemblies like the SCS could have served as the core of soviet type institutions -- if they could be centralized into a national

structure. But, to centralize the newly emerging institutions required either a prolonged confrontation with the ruling class (like the truckers' strike in October 1972 in Chile) or the intervention of some national political force with a lot of authority and credibility. like a revolutionary party.(Frank,1975: 1777)

Politically, these popular assemblies demonstrated enormous confusion about the role of the MFA in the revolutionary process. For example, the Marvila Assembly -- which involved the CS from the important RALIS unit -- proclaimed that assemblies like itself must "replace the organs of the state apparatus...taking into its own hands the power to legislate, at a local level, over all the problems which affect the workers." While this seemed to be a step beyond the centrism of the radical MFA, the Marvila Assembly also stated its intention to "reinforce the alliance between the popular masses and the MFA."(cited in Mailer,1977: 285-286; Peterson,1977:20)

In November, there was a fifth example of an effort to centralize the basic organizations of the workers' movement. The PCP held a conference to link together the Lisbon area CTs under its leadership. On November 8th, more than 400 delegates from the major CTs formed the Lisbon Industrial Belt (CIL), dominated by the PCP. In the days that followed, the CIL displayed its muscle, organizing a major demonstration on November 16th -- when between 200,000 and 300,000 people demonstrated for a new, more leftist government to replace the 6th PG. (Robinson,1987:112; Peterson, 1977:20) The creation of the CIL was a critical development in the class struggle. It had the ability to organize the kind of defensive general strike needed to defeat the military coup of November 25th. (The CIL also had the potential to lead the revolutionary movement, particularly if hooked up to the local popular assemblies, like the SCS.) But, the

dominance of the PCP within the CIL made that impossible.(Peterson,1977:20) On November 25th, it did nothing when the moderate MFA confronted the rebellious troops.

Unfortunately, the revolutionary left abstained from the political fight with the PCP inside the CIL. Even though the PCP members who built the CIL were clearly "to the left of their own party," revolutionary groups like the PRP/BR and the UDP boycotted the November 8th conference because it was dominated by the PCP.(Robinson,1987:112)

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Because the power of the bourgeois state was not being challenged by a rival state machine based on workers' democracy, it is more appropriate to describe the situation in Portugal as one of fragmented dual power, rather than anything else.(Harman, 1988:289) The basic building blocks of dual power existed, but they had not been assembled into the soviet structure (or inter-factory structure) from which the working class could launch a serious bid for power. And, the existence of a centralized council of popular assemblies (or some other body uniting the CTs, CSs and CMs), with some experience of undertaking national political initiatives, was an absolute precondition for a revolutionary outcome to the crisis.(Ali,1978:133) Without a nationwide organ of dual political power, there was no way for the Portuguese working class to generalize from the experience of sections of the class, no forum in which the political parties could prove or disprove the value of their strategies before the whole class, and no nationally recognized leadership for the entire working class.

There are at least three fundamental reasons why the working class did not centralize the CTs into something like soviets.

First, the mere existence of the MFA and of COPCON helped to undercut the emergence of soviet type institutions in Portugal. The course of the revolutionary process suggested to many workers that the fate of the revolution depended upon the radical MFA/COPCON rather than their own activity and organization. After Spínola's second attempt at a coup, COPCON engaged in some of the activity traditionally associated with a soviet type institution -- mobilizing to aid different sections of the working class. The manner in which the radical MFA and COPCON intervened in the class struggle fostered the idea that victory was a result of the activity of the radical officers, rather than a result of the determination, solidarity, self-reliance and self-organization by the working class. Thus, even the best sections of the working class and the revolutionary left "fell, to a greater or lesser extent, for this delusion." (Harman, 1988: 306) Thus, by the fall of 1975, politics for many working class militants and revolutionaries centered on what happened inside the armed forces rather than what happened within the working class. (Harman, 1988: 307-308)

Because many workers believed the MFA was "on their side," and that the MFA was steering the revolution towards socialism, they did not see the need to organize independently of the MFA, in centralized soviet-type institutions. (Cliff, 1975a: 32) The two periods of class wide mobilization against the old ruling class -- September 28th 1974 and March 11th 1975 -- both ended quickly, and with workers under the same illusion "that the left wing officers in the army had been responsible for the defeat of the coup. Had the fighting lasted a few hours longer, then conditions would have forced the workers in Lisbon to begin to organize themselves on a class basis" in new institutions of dual power (e.g., councils of CTs). (Cliff, 1975a: 32) Unfortunately, there was insufficient opportunity for the Portuguese working class to test its class-wide strength against the ruling class prior to

November 25th. Because the confrontations in September 1974 and March 1975 ended so quickly, Portuguese workers never had the opportunity to experience the real balance of class forces. Going into the fall of 1975, vanguard workers did not know how many reactionary officers remained in the military, how confused and impotent the MFA radicals actually were, and, how inadequate their own "popular power" was for a major confrontation with the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the absence of soviet type institutions is not explained solely by the presence of the MFA. A second reason for the failure of such organizations to emerge was the opposition by the reformists to all independent organizations of the working class. The PCP and the SP opposed any centralization of the fragmented initiatives taken in the barracks, the neighborhoods and the factories.(Cliff,1975a:33) The PCP and SP leaders did everything they could to undermine the formation, effectiveness and coordination of institutions like the CTs.(FI,1979:119)

The third reason why soviet-type institutions were not established in Portugal was the weakness (both numerically and politically) of the revolutionary left. If there had been a sizeable revolutionary party with sufficient political clarity to argue workers should "rely on their own strength" rather than relying on the good intentions of a minority of the country's officers, then the fragmented bits of dual power might have been united into the embryo of a future workers' state.(Harman, 1988:290) But, no such party existed. All the organizations to the left of the PCP promoted the idea that a working class alliance with the radical MFA could substitute for working class self-organization in institutions of dual political power. The examples of the SCS and the CIL are instructive. They show that even though there were enormous objective pressures on the vanguard of the working class

to centralize the fragments of dual power, they were unable to do so beyond a local level (as in SCS) without the intervention of a major political party (as with the PCP in the case of the CIL). Unfortunately, the vanguard workers and soldiers who led the fragmented bits of dual power embodied in the CTs, CSs and CMs, proved unable to unite the working class in the fashion necessary for a Bolshevik type revolution. As a result, the level of dual power that existed was sufficient to disrupt the ruling class and the SP PG, but not to generate a loud call for "all power to the CTs and the popular assemblies."

(6.5) Political Parties and Revolutionary Consciousness Within the Portuguese Working Class

The revolutionary process in Portugal produced many tens of thousands of workers who considered themselves 'revolutionaries,' but who were insufficiently clear about what that entailed to actually carry out a revolution. The vanguard of the Portuguese working class -- the leadership of the key CTs (e.g., Lisnave, TAP, Efacec-Inel, etc.), CMs, CSs and popular assemblies (e.g., the Setubal Committee of Struggle) -- did not develop a fully revolutionary consciousness in 1974-75. Nor did they belong to a single political organization with a clear revolutionary strategy. In this section, we examine why the working class mobilizations against Spínola's coup attempts, and the intense period of organization and struggle during the summer and fall of 1975 failed to generate the revolutionary consciousness and organization necessary to create workers' power.

* * * * *

The Portuguese revolution demonstrates that there is nothing permanent about the kind of passivity that characterizes the working class under authoritarian regimes.(Robinson,1987:121) Following the MFA coup, the "fear and sense of impotence" that characterized the Portuguese working class under Salazarism evaporated, as workers became convinced that "change could actually happen."(Birchall,1986:154) The kind of compliant consciousness which is endemic to an authoritarian regime withered after the April 1974 coup. Furthermore, the vanguard of the industrial working class -- workers who displayed a trade union consciousness during the last years of the Salazarist regime -- moved spontaneously towards revolutionary consciousness during 1974-75, their political evolution being blocked only by the absence of soviets and a mass revolutionary party. There are several good indicators of the radicalization Portuguese workers underwent during 1974-75. We will examine them, before analyzing the factors that account for the level of working class consciousness and organization achieved during the revolutionary crisis.

The first sign that revolutionary sentiment was on the rise during 1974-75 is evident in the problems both the PCP and the SP had with left wing elements in their parties. At the SP's December 1974 convention, Mario Soares faced a very strong challenge from a revolutionary Marxist in the election for party leader (Manuel Serra received 37% of the vote). Thus, despite the commitment of many SP members to bourgeois democracy, 'revolutionary' ideas had some resonance among SP members. (Gallagher,1983:207; Mailer,1977:172) Unfortunately, the revolutionary left did not succeed in pulling SP members into the kind of joint struggles that would have encouraged them to question their SP membership. Strike action was vital to splitting white collar workers from their SP leaders.

The PCP also had its problems with the leftist character of its many thousands of new members. From the first few weeks of the revolution, the PCP lost members and supporters (especially young workers in major industries) to the revolutionary left, because of its opposition to strikes.(Reeve,1975:6; Bruneau, 1986:46) Because the PCP expanded so rapidly in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, many of its members were not hardened and loyal Stalinists. And, because its members were quite influenced by their experience in the CTs, CMs, and by the arguments of workers to the left of them, there were some "hard and awkward arguments" inside the PCP.(Robinson,1987:121)

Throughout 1974-75, the critique of the PCP's leadership and policies by the far left got a warm response among many party members.(Mujal-Leon,1977:20) Thus, it is hardly surprising the PCP leadership found it necessary to periodically tack left in order to retain control over its base.(Bruneau,1986:46; Robinson, 1987:118) That certainly explains the PCP's short-lived enthusiasm for the MFA/PEOPLE pact (July and August 1975). And, just before the PCP swung left to briefly join a coalition with the revolutionary left (FUR) in late August 1975, its call for a half-hour, national general strike to defend the 5th PG had not been widely supported.(Reeve,1975:9; Mailer,1977:275; Sweezy, 1975b:10; Maxwell,1986a:128) Still, disaffected militants in the PCP did not automatically join the revolutionary left. The absence of a mass revolutionary party to the left of the PCP meant that many dissidents stayed in the party to push it leftwards. Others flowed back and forth between the PCP and various groups on the revolutionary left, as events warranted.

A second indication that the Portuguese working class was shifting left was the size and frequency of the political demonstrations that occurred (mainly in Lisbon). Political demonstrations happened for a variety of reasons, including: mass celebration (e.g., Mayday

1974); anti-government protest (e.g., against the 1974 anti-strike law); street confrontations with counter-revolutionaries (e.g., on Sept. 28th, 1974), and support for various political programs (e.g., the huge FUR demonstration in August 1975). The size of some demonstrations, the militancy displayed on them, and the willingness of the demonstrators to disregard the wishes of the major parties, break the law, and even confront troops sent out to stop them, leaves little doubt that these events must be taken as serious indicators of the mood of the working class.

FIGURE 6.4 SOME KEY POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS ORGANIZED BY THE LEFT DURING THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION, 1974-75

DATE	LOCATION (if other than Lisbon), SPONSOR & PURPOSE	SIZE
----1974----		
May 1	all parties, Mayday, celebrate overthrow of old regime	600,000
Sept 12	Lisnave strikers protest anti-strike law	6,000+
Sept 28	Striking workers - TAP, Lisnave, Jornal do Comercio, etc., anti-coup demo	40,000
----1975----		
Jan 14	PCP/Intersindical, for single union structure	300,000
Jan 16	SP against single union central	15,000
Feb 7	Inter-Empresas, contra NATO exercises and unemployment	40,000+
June 18	CRTSMs demo for revolutionary councils	40,000
July 4	demo by militant workplaces (TAP, CTT, etc.) to support radio Renascenca	40,000
July 15	SP demo demanding the resignation of Goncalves	20,000
Aug 20	Revolutionary left supporting COPCON document & peoples' power	100,000
Aug 27	FUR demo (involving PCP and the revolutionary left) for a leftist government	500,000
Sept 10	SUV in Oporto	30,000
Sept 26	SUV demo against arrest of SUV activists	120,000
Nov 9	SP/PPD demo in support of 6th PG	30,000

Nov 12	striking construction workers surround Sao Bento palace	100,000
Nov 16	PCP demonstration called by CIL (120 workers' commissions	200,000
Nov 23	SP rally	40,000

Analyzing demonstrations provides us with one measure of both the extent of support for particular political goals and parties, as well as the intensity of that support. By those standards, the commitment of SP supporters to their party's cause was much weaker than that displayed by supporters of the PCP and the revolutionary left -- since the latter mobilized on demonstrations in greater number and with greater frequency than SP supporters. SP members would vote for their party, but they would not go into the streets for it. (Mailer, 1977:300; Hammond, 1988:237; Harman, 1988:296-297)

The most important political demonstrations occurred during the late summer and fall of 1975, after the widespread seizure of factories had undermined the usefulness of strike action as a political weapon for vanguard workers. The size of those demonstrations shows the support among Portuguese workers for a socialist solution to the revolutionary crisis. An important indication of the political dynamics underlying the class struggle is evident from the fact that when "the PCP and the far left campaigned together for demonstrations...(as in the FUR demo of August 27-BM) the response was massive, including... many of the workers who had voted Socialist." (Harman, 1988:304) Indeed, the demonstrations of late August 1975 showed very clearly the relative strengths of the PCP and revolutionary groups coalesced in FUR. When the revolutionary left and the radical MFA called a joint demonstration on August 20th, they mobilized 100,000. When the PCP joined those groups to mobilize for the August 27 demonstration, 500,000 workers took to

the streets.(Harman,1988:299; Mailer,1977:299) Portuguese workers were prepared to mobilize in the fight for radical demands when it appeared the fractured left had overcome its divisions.

A third indication of the developing consciousness of the Portuguese working class was the dramatic growth of interest in revolutionary ideas. Once the coup had abolished state censorship, there was a massive demand for revolutionary literature (despite the high rate of illiteracy). The writings of Marx and Lenin were available everywhere; socialist ideas were discussed openly in the mass media, and films like Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin played to full houses in movie theatres in Lisbon.(Ali,1978:99) Indeed, in the fall of 1974, books by Marx, Lenin and Luxemburg rivaled sex manuals at the top of the best seller lists, with Lenin's Left Wing Communism, number two on the list in September 1974.(Blackburn,1974:25; Reeve,1975:32) The wide dissemination of Marxist literature fueled the political discussions and debates that occurred in the CMs, CTs, and CSs.

The fourth sign that Portuguese workers had moved left during the revolution, was evident in the election results from April 1975. Those results demonstrate that enormous sections of the Portuguese working class supported the creation of 'socialism'. The vote gave the SP the largest number of seats with 38% of the popular vote, while the PPD (the major bourgeois political party) got 26%, the PCP got just under 17% (the combined total for both the PCP and its front group the MDP) and the revolutionary left only 4%.(Sobel,1976:99) Interpretation of those election results tell us a few things.

To begin with, the election was a rebuke to the PCP. The overall vote for the PCP/MDP (903,000 out of a total of 5.4 million votes) was much smaller than predicted, given the PCP's ability to mobilize the working class on demonstrations -- indicating they

were being punished for preaching moderation throughout 1974, and for being linked to the repressive regimes in the Eastern bloc.(USFI,1975:1139; Gallagher,1983:91) (The election results tell us little about support for the groups on the revolutionary left, since many of them did not run candidates.) The election was also a clear defeat for the right, since parties that claimed to be advocating socialism won a majority of the votes (59% in total, if we add the SP, the PCP/MDP, and the revolutionary left).(Ali,1978:107)⁴⁰ About 3.3 million people voted for some kind of 'socialism', indicating the radicalization extended well beyond the ranks of the 1 million industrial workers.(Robinson,1987:90) While the vote for the revolutionary left and the PCP/MDP (21% of the total vote) was obviously a vote for 'socialism', what about the 38% of the vote that went to the SP? Since the SP presented so many contradictory faces to the electorate, we have to ask which workers voted for the SP and why.⁴¹

In southern Portugal (including Lisbon), industrial and rural workers both voted for the PCP over the SP by a margin of more than 2 to 1. White collar workers voted overwhelmingly for the SP. No doubt, part of the SP's vote in the south came from backward sections of the working class who voted SP because the word 'socialism' was in the party name at a time when everybody campaigned in support of socialism.(Birchall,1979:74; Hammond, 1988:157; Harman,1988:295; Opello,1985:97) In the conservative north, industrial workers voted for the SP, with the PCP far behind.(Hammond,1979:264; Birchall,1979:76) To the extent that SP votes came from workers who opposed the PCP's bureaucratic and manipulative behavior (e.g., white collar workers), or its opposition to strike activity (e.g., workers influenced by Maoism), the SP was reaping the benefits of being a more open party that had supported strikes the PCP

had condemned. It is impossible to determine exactly how many workers voted for the SP because it was a leftist opponent of the PCP's bureaucratic and right wing politics versus how many voted for the SP because it was a softer socialist option than that presented by the PCP or the revolutionary left. But, one reason why the SP was so successful electorally, was that its lack of ideological definition meant it could be all things to all people. Prior to the SP's major offensive against the revolution (during the summer of 1975), its political platform was so ill defined that it simultaneously gained votes for being anti-fascist, anti-communist and anti-capitalist.(Kayman,1987: 139-140) Thus, "the SP...won its victory by presenting a contradictory image and attracting very different types of voters in different areas."(Hammond,1979:266-268; Pimlott,1977b:46)

These electoral returns suggest several conclusions about the state of working class consciousness in April 1975. First, there was an incredible unevenness between the workers in the north who mainly voted SP, and those in the south, who voted PCP. Second, there was a serious split between white collar and blue collar workers, with the former voting SP and the latter PCP. Third, the small size of the vote for the revolutionary left (bearing in mind that many revolutionary groups did not contest the election) indicates the vanguard of the working class was split, with one portion supporting the revolutionary left, a larger portion supporting the PCP and a small portion supporting the SP. In short, the consciousness of the Portuguese working class, while moving leftward, remained uneven and not yet revolutionary. While a large majority of Portuguese workers wanted 'socialism,' neither of the two mass parties most of them supported offered a realistic strategy for achieving that end.

How successful was the revolutionary left at attracting working class support away from the reformist PCP after April 1975? One measure of the revolutionary left's gains between April and November 1975, and an indicator of the extent to which the working class continued to shift leftwards after April 1975, is evident in the electoral returns from the presidential election of June 1976 -- a campaign that took place seven months after the revolutionary crisis had evaporated. In addition to PCP and SP candidates, a coalition of the revolutionary left ran the former leader of COPCON, Otelo de Carvahlo as their candidate. Overall, Carvahlo received 16.3% of the vote, compared with 7.5% for the PCP candidate and 61% for the SP victor. But, a close examination of the results show that in the southern portion of the country, the PCP candidate and Carvahlo received a combined 64% of the votes from rural workers employed on cooperatives (34% for Carvahlo and 30% for the PCP), 47% of the votes from rural workers employed elsewhere, and 64% of the votes from industrial workers in the urban areas (40% for Carvahlo and 24% for the PCP). (Hammond, 1985:216,219) In other words, even six months after the November 25th coup, substantial portions of the Portuguese working class in the areas where the revolution had been most advanced, still supported the struggle for popular power that Carvahlo was identified with.

In addition, Carvahlo drew much of his vote from sections of the population that had voted for the PCP in the April 1976 elections for the National Assembly. Thus, in the rural south, Carvahlo attracted 18% of SP voters and 41% of the PCP voters. In the urban south, he attracted 13% of the SP vote and 57% of the PCP vote.⁴² Thus, during the crisis of 1974-75, the revolutionary left did win a serious following within the working class. But the 16.3% of the vote the revolutionary left received in the June presidential elections,

compared with their miserable 3.4% share of the vote when they ran as individual groups less than two months before that, shows the Portuguese working class did not perceive the fragmented left as a viable alternative to the PCP. * * *

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These four indicators of the leftward shift in working class consciousness -- the electoral results, the rise of left wing pressures inside the SP and PCP, the size and character of left-wing demonstrations, and the popularity of revolutionary literature -- do not suggest the leftward moving working class had become consciously revolutionary. In fact, they do not even indicate that the vanguard of the working class had really developed a revolutionary consciousness.

Certainly, the vanguard of the industrial working class (from workplaces like Lisnave, TAP and Efacec-Inel, etc.) -- who led the CTs and CMs, organized the demonstrations, and supported the revolutionary left -- moved beyond the demand for economic reforms and the democratization of society, to the struggle for 'socialism' during the summer and fall of 1974.⁴³ And, the fall 1975 effort to build locally based soviet-type institutions, like the Setubal Committee of Struggle (SCS), indicates some vanguard workers were searching for a political strategy that could transcend the centrist limitations of the radical MFA, and the revolutionary left. But, that did not mean the vanguard of the Portuguese working class had yet developed a clear vision of the 'socialist' society they wanted to create, or the means to achieve it. Most vanguard workers developed a very militant form of trade union consciousness, seeking a radical reform of Portuguese society through the actions of an MFA government supported by the institutions of popular power (i.e., the CTs, CMs, etc.). The vanguard of the Portuguese

working class never consciously adopted the goal of creating a Bolshevik-type workers' state through a mass workers' insurrection, based on the CTs, CSs or even popular assemblies like the SCS.

Although many vanguard workers had broken from the PCP by the summer of 1975, a smaller portion remained in the PCP, criticizing the party's leadership and trying to push it leftward.(Frank,1975:1830) The vanguard workers outside the PCP were divided among the many small revolutionary groups. Others remained outside any political organization whatsoever, rejecting party politics in favour of activity within their CT or CM. At the same time, the mass of the working class remained in the PCP and the SP with illusions that those parties could further the struggle for socialism. Although they desired socialism, most workers had too little political experience to understand that neither the SP nor the PCP could create socialism.

In addition to the obvious unevenness in the consciousness of the different sections of the working class, there was also a critical unevenness between workers and soldiers. Some of the soldiers who led SUV were clear that the radical MFA/COPCON would not lead the struggle for socialism. Their direct experience with the radical officers convinced them of that. But, with the formation of SUV, the class struggle within the army had reached its limits, given the absence of a stronger lead from the industrial working class. Soviet-type institutions were necessary to give radical soldiers a sense of how the revolution could defeat the bourgeoisie and its many supporters in the officer corps.

* * * * *

Now that we have determined that Portuguese workers moved left during the revolution, but that revolutionary consciousness was not widespread, even in the vanguard of the working class, we have to consider the major factors which shaped the development of working class consciousness.

The first and most obvious factor to affect changes in working class consciousness was the absence of a mass reformist party in Portugal during the first months of the revolution, and then the subsequent development of two such parties -- the SP and the PCP. One of the reasons why the Portuguese working class exploded the way it did in May/June 1974 was the total absence of large reformist organizations to act as a brake on the movement. (Lomax,1983:115) The fall of the old regime created an enormous political vacuum which neither the PCP, the SP nor the trade union leaders could immediately fill. That made it very easy for the vanguard of the working class to launch strikes, form CTs and deepen the revolutionary crisis. But, that political vacuum was a double edged sword. On the one hand, it offered great opportunities to the revolutionary left to get involved in a movement not yet controlled by the reformists.(Birchall 1979:73) On the other hand, that vacuum could only exist because the PCP and the SP were initially so weak that most workers did not have any first hand experience of the limitations of reformist politics -- experience they would have to gain during the revolutionary process itself.

With their different political strategies, the two wings of Portuguese reformism complemented each other in undermining the possibility of a successful workers' revolution. Until the summer of 1975, the PCP was the wing of Portuguese reformism which played the main role in trying to limit and defuse working class militancy. Meanwhile, the SP was free to cultivate support from the bourgeoisie while making "occasional declarations of...

radicalism," so it could attract workers disillusioned by the PCP.(Robinson,1987:120) By the late summer of 1975, when the PCP had lost its initiative, the SP was able to assume the role of main opponent of the mass revolutionary movement. To understand how Portuguese reformism shaped workers' consciousness, we need to examine the PCP and the SP more closely.

The PCP was a consistent opponent of spontaneous militancy within the working class. The party leaders frequently engaged in bureaucratic maneuvers to strengthen their grip on some institution (e.g., the media, the trade unions, the military, etc.) at the expense of the working class movement. In that way, the PCP gave credibility to the SP's constant attack on the Stalinists for trying to create an authoritarian dictatorship. (Cliff,1975a:17; Ali,1978:111) Radical workers were angered by the PCP's policy of taking control of existing institutions at the top, rather than transforming them from the bottom. Nevertheless, while the PCP regularly discredited itself, it remained the largest working class party in Portugal for four reasons. First, no matter what the PCP did, it retained a measure of loyalty among many older industrial workers who viewed the party "not as architects of betrayal, but as prominent anti-fascist fighters, as fellow sufferers under the old regime."(Robinson,1987:117; Reeve,1975:6; Bruneau,1986:46) Second, the PCP won the support of some workers because of its continued attention to the trade unions. While the revolutionary left concentrated on the CTs and CMs, virtually ignoring the trade unions, the PCP patiently consolidated their grip upon more backward sections of the working class through the trade unions (e.g., the construction workers).(Robinson,1987:100) Third, the PCP had a lot of influence among those workers employed in the small and medium firms that had been transformed into workers' cooperatives. While many of those workers wanted

socialism, PCP slogans about winning the "battle for production" appealed to people trying desperately to keep their plants running so they could avoid unemployment.

(Robinson,1987:112)

Finally, every time the PCP tacked left or undertook some major left initiative (e.g., pushing nationalization in early 1975, organizing demonstrations against the 6th PG in the fall of 1975, etc.) it boosted its credibility. Indeed, whenever the PCP appeared to be shifting left, it won back some of the supporters it had lost to the revolutionary left in the previous period. (Hammond,1985:22; 1988:111-113) This flow of supporters from the PCP to the revolutionary left and back again, can be explained by the fragmented character of the revolutionary left. None of the political groups in the quagmire of small competing organizations to the left of the PCP was able to distinguish itself as a serious alternative to the PCP (i.e., as a party able to really lead the entire working class). Thus, when it appeared the revolutionary left had succeeded in pushing the PCP leftwards, many workers would rejoice, and shift back to the PCP. This movement of vanguard workers in and out of the PCP reflected the desire for a revolutionary party that was both large, and to the left of the PCP. Thus, throughout the fall of 1975, the PCP remained the single most powerful working class organization. The PCP's residual strength, plus the revolutionary left's continued fragmentation and political confusion made adherence to the PCP seem a much safer option to many workers than any gamble on following the revolutionary left into a suicidal insurrection on November 25th.

Like the PCP, the SP made its own unique contribution to undermining the development of revolutionary consciousness in 1974-75. To do that, the SP had to be a social democratic party unlike any other in Europe. Because the SP was operating in the

midst of a revolutionary crisis, it had to do more than simply collect dues from loyal union officials and turn out election posters every few years. For example, the SP had to be able to mobilize large numbers of people in the streets to prove that it too was a mass party.(Birchall,1979:75) The SP's strength was its political heterogeneity. Before the summer of 1975, it tried to be all things to all people, with considerable success. Besides attracting support from bourgeois and petite bourgeois opponents of the revolution, the SP was supported by some newly awakened sections of the working class.(Mailer,1977:173; Bruneau,1976:64) For those without much experience of political life, the SP was appealing since it promised leadership that was "not capitalist, but also not very strongly or clearly defined." In that respect, the SP represented everything that was "immature and confused in the masses' consciousness."(Cliff, 1975a:17) At the same time, the SP was popular among the white collar section of the working class -- the public functionaries, office workers and semi-professionals -- for whom Western style social democracy had an obvious appeal, in contrast to the PCP's authoritarian and bureaucratic style of politics.(Hammond,1979:268)

The heterogenous character of the SP gave its leaders enormous flexibility. They could outflank the PCP on both the left (mainly before April 1975) and the right (especially after July 1975), embracing widely divergent political positions. The loosely knit structure of the SP allowed the party leadership and its members scope to hold contradictory positions.(Birchall, 1986:155) In addition, SP leaders were quite adept at using 'Marxist' rhetoric for working class audiences, while presenting themselves as the "responsible" and "moderate" alternative in bourgeois and middle class circles.(Birchall,1979:74; 1986:156; Hammond,1988:114; Mailer,1977:172)⁴⁴ Finally, the SP

cultivated close working relations with Maoist organizations on the left, and tolerated a left wing inside the party, in order to attract leftists disenchanted with the PCP.(Birchall,1979:77)

In the summer of 1975, the SP campaign to end the revolutionary crisis had several components to it: first, the SP attacked the PCP and the PCP led 4th and 5th PGs as anti-democratic in character; second, the SP leaders criticised workers' control over the mass media (i.e., Republica and Radio Renascenca) as totalitarian, and third, they cooperated with the Maoists and the right in encouraging a series of vicious attacks on the offices and members of the PCP, the Intersindical and the revolutionary left throughout northern Portugal. Having worked hard to establish its leftist credentials, the SP leadership portrayed its attack on the revolutionary movement as a defence of democracy from the totalitarianism of the PCP -- a claim that was believed by some workers.(Frank,1975: 1768,1775; Mandel,1979: 16-17,19) Unfortunately, portions of the working class stuck with the SP even when it shifted right. Some more backward sections of the working class did not have the ability to discern the differences between the SP and other organizations. The SP's leftist rhetoric, its apparent tolerance of a left wing and of strike action, combined with the PCP's prominence in the campaign to stop strikes was sufficient for the SP to retain the support of some workers with little political experience.(Harman,1988: 294) Moreover, the SP retained much of its support among white collar workers because neither the PCP nor the revolutionary left had a convincing strategy for resolving the escalating crisis "on terms favorable to the masses of the population." Therefore, "many workers came to see the SP as the party best able to protect the gains they had made since April 1974."(Robinson,1987:103)

In the battle between the two main reformist parties, SP eventually prevailed over the PCP. But, the SP "succeeded by default rather than through the intrinsic merits of its program, ideology or organization." Many workers (e.g., white collar workers) "accepted the SP pragmatically, for want of an alternative, rather than having any positive commitment to its politics." (Birchall, 1979:81)

A second factor which helped to shape the changes in working class consciousness was the experience that many industrial workers had in the small and medium sized factories taken over by CTs. The experience of actually running the workplace had a contradictory impact on workers' consciousness. Some workers generalized from their immediate experience of workers' control in the workplace to the need for workers to assert their control over the entire economy. By the summer and fall of 1975, many industrial workers (including those in many of the large nationalized plants) recognized that the economic crisis "had reached a point where a political solution was required" (i.e., socialism), to solve the economic difficulties. (Harman, 1988:307)

But, not all industrial workers engaged in controlling their own workplaces drew a very clear connection between their immediate economic struggle and the larger political issue of who should run society. Some workers in the smaller plants, who were fighting desperately to save their own jobs, were attracted to the PCP's appeal to win the "battle for production." (Robinson, 1987:112) Those workers were so absorbed in the day-to-day task of trying to keep their plants open "that they failed to see the larger perspective," linking the "struggles in the workplace to the contest for the state." (Hammond, 1988:189,258) Furthermore, many of the CTs in workers' cooperatives depended upon the

state so heavily (e.g., for financial assistance) that they were deterred from openly criticizing the PG.(Hammond,1988:186) Thus, direct experience of workers' control did not guarantee that workers overcame their sectionalism and developed a revolutionary consciousness.

Another of the main obstacles to the development of revolutionary consciousness was the widespread belief that the working class could rely on the radical MFA/COPCON to win their struggles, and even to create socialism for them. The role played by the radical MFA/COPCON in the revolutionary process was the third critical factor that shaped the development of working class consciousness during 1974-75.

The existence of the MFA/COPCON undermined the development of revolutionary consciousness because it fostered the illusion that working class victories (e.g., in March 1975) were not a result of working class self-organization and self-reliance, but of the alliance with the MFA -- an alliance in which the MFA was viewed as the leader.(Harman,1988:304) Instead of contributing to an attitude of working class independence and self-reliance, the radical MFA and COPCON's interventions cultivated an attitude of dependence. As a result, "'politics' in Portugal...meant, to nearly everybody, what happened inside the armed forces -- at most it meant the progressive officers fighting for power for the workers, not the workers struggling for power for themselves." (Harman,1988:307-308)

By the summer of 1975, many workers believed the MFA and COPCON had moved decisively to the side of the working class in their fight against the ruling class. The repeated interventions by COPCON to defend initiatives by the CMs and CTs convinced many vanguard workers there could be "an easy victory" in the

revolution.(Michaloux,1975:1752) Over and over again, workers won victories against their opponents, without "meeting any great resistance," because sections of the military sided with them. (Udry,1975:1803) Not surprisingly, many Portuguese workers assumed "that a semi-spontaneous and semi-conscious movement could overcome all obstacles without leadership or a clear orientation." Since the weakened ruling class seemed paralyzed by any serious challenge from the working class, when it was backed by COPCON, many workers and revolutionaries were lulled into believing that establishing socialism would not be particularly problematic.(Michaloux,1975:1752; Mailer,1977:239)

Because the MFA opposed Spínola's two attempts to grab power, Portuguese workers never needed to mount a protracted, class-wide action against the ruling class (like the Chilean workers did in October 1972). In both September 1974 and March 1975, Spínola's counter-revolutionary movements collapsed before Portuguese workers were forced to create soviet-type institutions to coordinate their struggle against the threat of counter-revolution, and before they discovered that their power as a class was far greater than that of the radical officers in the MFA. In March 1975, the circumstances existed in which one might expect a massive working class counter-offensive to create soviet-type institutions in the process of seizing control of the economy. Instead, such action was pre-empted by the swift moves taken from above by the MFA.(Jenkins,1975:227; Hammond,1988:142)

Because there was no opportunity for the working class to really discover its strength, and because the workers' movement seemed to control part of state power through the MFA, the "revolutionary education" of the working class remained deficient. Portuguese workers required more "big events" to learn about the real balances of power in Portugal.

(Cliff,1975a:41) They needed to feel the whip of reaction to clarify what was really

necessary to achieve workers' power.

Within the ranks of the working class, the idea that the MFA could substitute for the working class in creating socialism, was widespread. That view was encouraged by both the PCP and the revolutionary left. For example, the PCP leadership -- who thought they could seize power under the guise of the MFA -- built the cult of the MFA, promoting the idea the MFA (specifically the Goncalves, PCP faction of the MFA) was both the organizer and agent of the revolution.(USFI,1975:1140) At every opportunity, the PCP sought to channel the mass movement into support for its faction of the MFA (e.g., trying to subordinate CTs to the PG's battle for production).(FI,1980:119) The same substitutionist view that the outcome of the revolution would be determined by the actions of the MFA and COPCON was a feature of the political strategies of the revolutionary left. Groups like the PRP/BR "became fixated on the content of policy documents coming out of MFA committees or the statements of leading officers rather than what was happening in the factories." (Harman,1988:306; Mailer,1977:239) That was why the PRP/BR happily abandoned its campaign to establish workers' councils (CTRSMs) in favor of promoting the radical MFA/COPCON's proposal for popular power during the summer of 1975. The revolutionary left was so mesmerized by the radicalization of one wing of the MFA that they committed two very serious mistakes. First, they downplayed the importance of the counter-revolutionary majority within the officer corps. For that reason, they underestimated the ability of the Portuguese ruling class to use military force against the revolution. The events of November 1975, showed that the process of disintegration within the army was sufficiently uneven to enable officers who opposed the revolution to marshal the troops they needed to defeat rebellious soldiers.(Udry,1975: 1803) The second mistake

parties like the PRP/BR made was to ignore the class differences within the military --

including the COPCON units led by radicals. Large sections of the revolutionary left were not prepared for the damning critique of the radical officers that was evident in the development of SUV. Thus, the MFA and COPCON both inhibited the development of revolutionary consciousness.

Once the 5th PG had fallen in September, the radical MFA/COPCON could no longer contemplate using the PG to create popular power, since the 6th PG was dominated by the SP and the moderate wing of the MFA. Therefore the situation was ripe for the centrism preached by radical officers (and their leftist supporters) in July and August to be transformed into putchism in the fall. From September through November, advocates of popular power (like COPCON officers and the PRP/BR) would preach the virtues of insurrection, with no more attention to the need to win the working class to revolution than they displayed in July and August.

A fourth feature of the revolutionary process that shaped workers' consciousness was the character of the revolutionary left in Portugal.⁴⁵ When Caetano was overthrown in April 1974, the revolutionary left in Portugal was small, politically varied, and highly fragmented. But, the 19 month revolutionary crisis offered lots of opportunity for a revolutionary organization to emerge from the pack, and challenge the PCP and SP for the support of the working class. Unfortunately, none of the groups on the revolutionary left proved capable of doing that.

The early hostility of the PCP to strikes pushed some young industrial militants towards the revolutionary left.(Lomax,1983: 118) Nevertheless, at the crucial point in the

revolutionary process -- the three month period after mid-August -- none of the groups within the revolutionary left had managed to become a serious political alternative to the PCP. Thus, when the decisive test came in November 1975, the ability of the PCP to keep the working class from entering the fray was far greater than the ability of the revolutionary left to lead the working class in defending the radical soldiers who were under attack.(Cliff, 1975b:3)

Many of the working class leaders of the CMs (and to a lesser extent, the CTs) rejected the visions of socialism advanced by the SP and the PCP. They wanted the revolution to continue, and many of them believed their own organizations provided some of the necessary building blocks for the construction of socialism.(Hammond,1988:105-106) Thus, many vanguard workers eagerly endorsed the July 1975 proposal by the radical MFA to build "popular power," accepting the centrist vision of institutionalizing dual power. There was no alternative vision of socialism on offer from any credible source.

The movement for popular power, based in the CMs and some of the CTs, was not controlled by any one group on the revolutionary left. Organizations like the Movement of Left Socialists (MES) and the PRP-BR, together with the radical MFA, were influential. The inability of any one revolutionary organization to emerge from the pack and establish hegemony to the left of the PCP did not prevent the revolutionary left from having a real impact on the revolutionary process. The revolutionary left launched organizations like SUV, the Inter-Empresas, the CRTSMs, and the Setubal Committee of Struggle, all of which were initiatives that helped to undermine the reformism of the PCP and the PG.(Robinson,1987:118) But, often the organizations and actions initiated by one or another of the small revolutionary groups was undermined by the others. (Some sections of the

revolutionary left indulged in the sectarian practice of considering the immediate interests of their party more important than the fortunes of the working class as a whole.(Cliff,1975a:33))

The fragmentation and politics of the Portuguese left created another problem which limited the development of a revolutionary consciousness -- the phenomenon of 'anti-partyism'. That sentiment, which was widespread, originated in the revulsion many workers expressed towards the sectarianism of some revolutionary groups (particularly the Maoists, who continually attacked the PCP as 'social fascists') and the bureaucratic and manipulative behavior of the PCP -- political conduct which undermined the possibility for united working class action. Hostility to such behavior, led to the view that political parties should be excluded from organizations like the CMs and CTs, and that "workers of goodwill should get together despite the existence of parties."(Harman,1988:292) (Sadly, the natural aversion to the "crude Stalinist notion of the party" as an organization that manipulates and bureaucratically controls the working class movement, in the immediate interests of the party apparatus, was extended to all socialist organizations by some workers.(Cliff,1975b:5))

The whole notion that the CTs should exclude political parties, that the working class was "able to carry through the revolution without political parties," was widespread. (In fact, anti-partyism and illusions about the role of the radical MFA/COPCON combined to contribute to the belief that socialism could be created without a party.) Surprisingly, most sections of the revolutionary left made "enormous concessions" to that semi-syndicalist view.(Robinson,1987:100) Some workers believed the revolutionary left could simply form a coalition (like FUR) and lead the fight for socialism. Others thought an

ostensibly supra-political organization like the radical MFA (who liked to claim they were "above partisan conflict") should lead the fight. (Peterson,1977:20; Hammond,1985:214)

"Anti-partyism" did nothing to prepare Portuguese workers for the actual rigors of the revolutionary process ahead of them. The rejection of parties and politics, in favor of glorifying the spontaneity and creativity of popular organizations, did not give Portuguese workers any real direction about how to improve "the existing level of popular organization" (e.g., by centralizing the CTs) or how to devise "a coherent political strategy" for smashing Portuguese capitalism.(Plotke, 1976:56)

The PRP/BR was one of the revolutionary groups infected by the anti-partyism prevalent on the left.⁴⁶ In the PRP/BR there was little understanding of the importance of organizing vanguard workers into a single large party that could politically influence the mass of the working class through intervening in the CTs, CMs and CSs. (The abstentionism of the PRP/BR was evident from the failure to attend the November 1975 CIL conference of CT representatives.) Instead, the PRP/BR viewed their party as a small elite concerned with organizing an insurrection in conjunction with the radical officers around COPCON -- an essentially Blanquist conception of the revolution. In their view, the radical MFA should lead SUV and groups like the PRP/BR in seizing state power, and then share that power with the CMs and CTs after the fact. And, they argued that such a move was possible, because -- according to the PRP -- "the forces of the right possess no army in Portugal." (cited in Udry,1975:1804)

To conclude, the revolutionary left was just too small, too weak politically and too fragmented to intervene politically in the class struggle with the kind of alternative strategy needed. There was no organization arguing the CMs, CTs and popular assemblies should be

the basis of a workers' state, and then taking the steps necessary to make such a vision of proletarian revolution a material reality. That brings us to the fifth and final factor which explains the failure of the Portuguese working class to develop a widespread revolutionary consciousness -- the absence of a Bolshevik-type vanguard party.

The absence of such a party was bound to limit the development of working class consciousness. Without such a party, there was no grouping of workers dedicated to addressing the unevenness in the experience and consciousness of different sections of the working class. The absence of a mass revolutionary party meant the vanguard of the working class was left without a single unified organization to deal with the "central strategic problem(s)" which confronted the revolution: first, how to answer the crucial questions facing them about what socialism is and how to make a workers' revolution, and second how to win the remainder of the working class to revolutionary conclusions.(Ali,1978:108)

While many of the industrial workers who formed the vanguard of the working class had abandoned the two main reformist parties, the SP still had hegemony among white collar workers, and the PCP still commanded more support among unskilled and backward sections of the manual workforce. Vanguard workers needed to win the confidence of those two vital sections of the working class to make socialist revolution a possibility -- something that could not happen in the absence of a serious revolutionary party. Furthermore the absence of a mass revolutionary party meant the widespread illusions workers had about the radical MFA were never really challenged. Any serious revolutionary organization that had consistently intervened among rank and file soldiers throughout 1974-75, would have been well placed to dispel the illusions about the radical

MFA/COPCON that mushroomed during the summer of 1975.

How can we account for the abundance of organizations on the revolutionary left in Portugal, and yet the absence of any substantial organization in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky? Like Chile, the revolutionary crisis in Portugal occurred during an epoch when Maoism, Guevarism, and other variants of 'Marxism' were predominant. All those political traditions (and the hybrid variations of them) substitute some other agent for the working class in the creation of socialism. Hence the willingness of the revolutionary left to accept the idea that radical army officers could create socialism for the working class. The left in Portugal was permeated with a substitutionism and elitism that was quite foreign to the tradition of Bolshevism, and quite incompatible with Marx's conception of proletarian revolution as the self-emancipation of the working class.(Harman,1988:290)

The absence of soviets and a Bolshevik-type party limited the capacity for the working class to debate the political and strategic issues facing their revolution. In the fall of 1975, there was no soviet-type forum which combined representatives from the entire working class -- vanguard workers, industrial workers in the north, white collar workers, rank and file soldiers, etc. -- in a way that would enable them to learn vital lessons from one another. The existence of a centralized organization embracing the CTs, CMs and CSs, would have allowed Portuguese workers to debate the real issue facing their revolution, in a way that did not happen in any of the existing working class organizations.

The absence of a revolutionary party meant there was no party that could unite the vanguard of the working class, argue against the substitutionist strategies adopted by the rest of the left (e.g., telling workers to rely on the radical MFA/COPCON), and demonstrate in practice the merits of a revolutionary strategy and tactics. Without a

revolutionary party, Portuguese workers were forced to look to the PCP and the revolutionary left for political direction on November 25th -- organizations that gave them advice that was wildly inappropriate (the PCP told them to remain passive, and the revolutionary left called for an immediate insurrection.)

The absence of a mass revolutionary party acted as an insurmountable barrier to the widespread development of revolutionary consciousness. The vanguard of the Portuguese working class may have spontaneously moved towards revolutionary conclusions during 1974-75 (as some of the workers in the SCS and other popular assemblies clearly did), but they never had at their disposal the political instrument they required to fully clarify their views, win the remainder of the working class to the revolution, and then carry out an insurrection.

(6.6) The Immediate Outcome of the Revolutionary Crisis: the Evaporation of the Pre-Revolutionary Situation

The events of November 25th shifted the balance of power and initiative in the class struggle, away from the working class and radical soldiers, towards the bourgeoisie. The period which followed November 25th was one in which the Portuguese ruling class was able to consolidate their control over the state machine and stabilize Portuguese capitalism. There are several key points that need to be made about the outcome of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal.

First, there is no evidence to suggest the November 25th rebellion by the Tancos paratroopers was part of a planned insurrection by the revolutionary left, the radical MFA, the PRP/BR or anybody else.⁴⁷ The paratroopers acted without being urged to do so by the revolutionary left.(Faye,1976; Cliff,1975b; Robinson,1987:116-117; Ensign,1976:65-66; Kayman,1987:169) Sections of the revolutionary left (e.g., the PRP/BR) had made propagandistic calls for an insurrection throughout the fall.⁴⁸ But there is no evidence the revolt by the paratroopers was part of an insurrectionary plan.⁴⁹

The most plausible explanation for what happened is that the Tancos paratroopers were urged to revolt by PCP officers, in order to pressure the SP PG to increase CP representation on that body. (Cliff,1975b:7; IS,1975:3; Hammond,1988:246-247) Once it became "clear that a strong and successful government reaction was underway," the CP got cold feet and retreated, leaving the paratroopers, the revolutionary left and leftist soldiers in other military units exposed.(IS,1975:3) The PCP retreated rather than running any risk of a direct confrontation with the PG -- a fight that might threaten the PCP's entrenched position in other spheres of Portuguese society.(Cliff,1975b:8; Mailer, 1977:341) That left the outcome of the confrontation on November 25th dependent upon the response of the revolutionary left.

Once the paratroopers had made their move, the revolutionary left was faced with a fait accompli, forcing many organizations (e.g., the PRP, MES, and LCI) to declare their support for the paratroopers.(Cliff,1975b:7-8) Unfortunately, the revolutionary left responded by claiming the time had come for an insurrection, even though no political or technical preparations had been made for such a course of action. The inactivity of the CP, the ultra-leftism of the revolutionaries, and by a campaign of lies emanating from the SP and the

6th PG left militant workers and radical soldiers with a choice "between the civil war urged on them by the forces of the far left and the option of peaceful retreat urged on them by the...Communist Party."(Harman,1988:311; Robinson,1987:117) Given the absence of any serious preparations for an insurrection, workers and soldiers did not attempt an insurrection.

The revolutionary left needed to propose a more realistic course of action. The best alternative was to call a general strike in defence of the rebelling soldiers, and then mobilize the unarmed workers to confront the right wing troops and argue with them.(Harman,1988:311) (Although the revolutionary left may have proven too weak to mobilize the entire working class (because of PCP opposition), even a substantial section of it would have made a difference.(Jeffreys,1977:17; Ali,1978:133)) That sort of action would have resulted either in a massacre, or in mass defections by the troops. Furthermore, strikes and demonstrations in support of the rebel troops would have encouraged the other radical units not to surrender to the right wing troops.(Robinson,1987:115) Since the general strike option was not on offer, the workers and radical soldiers chose to surrender to the PG forces rather than initiate a civil war no one had prepared for.(Harman,1988:311) When radical soldiers got no support from the workers' movement, they were in no position to resist the campaign to disarm them and then disband their units.(Cliff,1975b:3)

To conclude, the very serious political defeat the revolution suffered on November 25th was not inevitable. The momentum of the revolutionary movement was destroyed because there did not exist a revolutionary party able to determine what kind of tactics were necessary in the circumstances. Therefore, we are perfectly justified in concluding that the defeat occurred because of the absence of a revolutionary party with the political clarity

and the size required to respond despite the inactivity of the PCP.(IS,1975:4) For want of such a party, the radical wing of the MFA, SUV, and the radicalized military units were "eliminated ...as a political factor" in the Portuguese revolution.(IS,1975:3)

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The political defeat on November 25th did not automatically preclude the re-emergence of a revolutionary crisis. The events of late November were definitely a major setback for Portuguese workers, since they allowed the ruling class to regain a monopoly of control over the military. But, the November defeat did not immediately eliminate the elements of dual power Portuguese workers had built in the factories, on the land and in the neighborhoods. The balance of class forces had been tilted back in the direction of the ruling class, but the revolutionary movement had not been completely liquidated. In other words, despite the November victory of the moderate MFA and the SP over the radical soldiers, the fate of the revolution still hung in the balance.(Cliff,1975b:3-4) The Portuguese revolution might have continued after November 25th. But, for that to happen, the focus of the class struggle would have to shift from the political front back to immediate economic issues. That was the only way the working class could begin to rebuild its confidence. (Cliff,1975b:3-4)

The course of the class struggle after November 1975 depended upon several things: first, the severity of the economic crisis, and the strategy followed by the moderate MFA/SP in their campaign to roll back the gains of the revolution; second, the response of the CP and the revolutionary left after November 25th, and third, the initiative taken by the working class from below. If the moderate SP PG had been forced by economic pressures to follow its November victory with an immediate frontal assault on the economic gains

made by the working class during 1974-75, only two outcomes would have been possible: prolonged and successful resistance by the working class (opening the door to an eventual revolution), or a bloody counter-revolution.(Birchall,1979:73; Harman,1988:365)

In fact, the outcome was a bourgeois stabilization of Portuguese capitalism, carried out by the SP over an extended period of time. After November 25th, the power of the mass movement was dismantled bit by bit, rather than through a frontal attack. Only after the elections of April 1976 put the SP in power did the government turn directly on the working class. (Ali,1978:134-135) Even then, the SP delayed much of its economic offensive against the working class until February 1977. By the end of that year, "wages were...at a level close to what they had been prior to April 25, 1974. From mid-1978 and 1979...real wages were driven down even further."(FI,1980:109) The SP was only able to take a gradual and piecemeal approach to undermining the revolution and stabilizing Portuguese capitalism because of massive aid from Western governments. The economic backing of the international bourgeoisie gave the SP the breathing space it required to finance a creeping strangulation of dual power throughout Portuguese society.(Cliff,1976:13)⁵⁰

The defeat of November 25th, which eliminated the radical soldiers as a factor in the revolutionary process, sapped the power of the workers' movement. Because Portuguese workers attributed many of their victories to the actions by leftist troops rather than to themselves, they exaggerated their loss. Even the best sections of the working class felt they had lost everything on November 25th."(Harman,1988:311)

The defeat of November 25th did not preclude the re-emergence of a revolutionary crisis. But the importance of the radical MFA/COPCON in the minds of most workers,

together with the weaknesses of the revolutionary left, made evaporation of the revolutionary process likely. For the revolutionary process to continue and to escalate, would have

require(d) not only a reorganization and unification of the existing left, but an expansion of the left in regions and social strata where it remain(ed) weak (sections of the northern working class, middle strata in the north and center) or hardly exist(ed) (poor peasants in the north and center).(Plotke,1976:62)

In other words, the working class had to initiate an economic offensive that could incorporate more backward sections of the working class and other oppressed classes -- a difficult but not impossible task. The revolutionary movement could still achieve workers' power but only if the working class broadened its movement, strengthened its basic class organizations and constructed something like soviets. All that required leadership and concerted action of a kind the PCP would not provide and the revolutionary left could not provide.

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To conclude, it was only possible for the SP to stabilize Portuguese capitalism because of the political weaknesses of the Portuguese left and the assistance of the world ruling class. Of course, alternative outcomes to the crisis were possible.

Although a workers' insurrection could not have succeeded in November (because of the absence of soviets and a revolutionary party), a successful general strike would have bought some more time for the vanguard of the Portuguese working class to clarify its politics. But, if a general strike had ruined the moderate MFA/SP plan to disarm and disband the radical military units, then the highly polarized situation might well have led to civil war. (In the wake of a successful general strike in defence of the radical military

units, the pro-government portion of the military would not have been strong enough to launch the kind of bloody counter-revolution that occurred in Chile.)

Needless to say, the Portuguese and European ruling class preferred to break the military power of the radical soldiers, and then proceed with a gradual program of dismantling the other gains of the workers' movement.⁵¹ A social democratic stabilization of Portuguese capitalism was a far "more effective and economical way" of defusing the situation than either a coup or a civil war -- which would necessitate a new authoritarian regime.(Birchall,1979:81) The Portuguese bourgeoisie did not want a return to an authoritarian regime, since that would block Portugal's entry into the EEC.(Birchall,1979:79) Still, if it proved necessary, a new authoritarian regime could be built by the bourgeoisie, the large landowners, and the right wing of the military. It would require the ruling classes mobilize sufficient support from "sections of the peasantry in the north, sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie, returning settlers from Angola, and the Catholic Church." But, such a regime could not resolve the fundamental contradictions of Portuguese capitalism. Moreover, a new conservative regime could only achieve power through the use of mass repression to defeat the left in a frontal assault, something that was unlikely after the string of defeats suffered by the bourgeoisie with Spínola's ill fated coup attempts. (Plotke, 1976:60-61) Besides, a direct confrontation with the Portuguese working class would have required a frontal assault on the institutions of dual power, a task made very difficult by the defeats the bourgeoisie had suffered in those realms (e.g., the employing class no longer had a presence in many major factories).

(6.7) Conclusion: Bolshevik Theory and the Revolutionary Process in Portugal

The revolutionary crisis in Portugal had the potential to end in a successful workers' revolution. The core of the capitalist state (i.e., the repressive apparatus) was so badly weakened by the fall of 1975, that it would not have provided a major obstacle to a working class revolutionary movement based in the CMs, CTs and CSs, and led by a mass revolutionary party. But, there was no attempt at a working class insurrection in Portugal, because of the strength of reformist and centrist organizations within the working class (e.g., the PCP, the SP, the MFA and the leftist groups), and because of the absence of soviets and a genuine Bolshevik-type revolutionary party.

Once again, in the Portuguese case, the subjective factor --workers' consciousness and the character and level of working class political organization -- provides the key to explaining the immediate outcome of the crisis. In that sense, the revolutionary crisis in Portugal confirms the Bolsheviks' missing party thesis. In fact, if ever there was a case in which the internal divisions within the bourgeois state made workers' revolution possible without a revolutionary party, Portugal was it. But, the Portuguese revolution stalled because centralized institutions of dual political power -- uniting workers, soldiers and residents -- did not emerge in the summer and fall of 1975. The failure for dual political power to develop, despite the various efforts to centralize the fragmented components of dual power (e.g., popular assemblies like the Setubal Committee of Struggle, the CIL, etc.), cannot be explained without reference to the politics of the parties and groupings that predominated among Portuguese workers -- the PCP, the radical MFA and the revolutionary left. None of them promoted the formation of soviet-type organizations as the basis of a

future workers' state. In that sense, the absence of a Bolshevik type revolutionary party also explains the inability of the working class to create dual political power.

The PCP was a consistent opponent of all forms of dual power. The radical MFA promoted dual power during July 1975, with its call for popular power. But, the radical officers in the MFA did nothing practical to really build the existing institutions of dual power. There were no national conferences of the CMs and CTs, and no efforts to promote dual power in the military. The other critical political force on the left, the revolutionary groups, were entrapped by the radical MFA's call for popular power (in July and August 1975), and by the PCP's call to defend the PG (in August 1975). While the reformists opposed dual power, and the centrists (in the radical MFA and the revolutionary left) viewed dual power as an end in itself, there was no revolutionary organization arguing in favour of strengthening dual power as a means to creating a workers' state.

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There were some striking similarities between the revolutionary processes in Portugal and Russia. One obvious similarity between Russia and Portugal was in the role that war played, not only as an immediate cause of the revolutionary crisis, but also as an issue which posed continuing problems for the new post-Czarist and post-Salazarist regimes. In Russia, the PG remained dedicated to continuing the war until the October insurrection. In Portugal, the war remained a major political issue until late July 1974, when the MFA declared its intention to grant the African colonies independence. After that, the war was no longer a major issue driving the revolution forward.

Like the Russian revolution, the revolutionary process in Portugal originated in an explosion of working class self-organization and self-activity that occurred after the

downfall of an authoritarian state -- one that had prohibited independent working class organization. Because of the absence of working class parties and trade unions devoted to class collaboration, the revolution from below could not easily be contained in the early stages of the crises in Russia and Portugal. And, in both cases, the reformist parties had to work long and hard to fill the political vacuum created when the old authoritarian regime fell.

The revolutionary crises in both Russia and Portugal began as efforts to democratize society and to win improved living standards. In both cases, the downfall of the old regime weakened the state sufficiently to enable the working class to launch a massive offensive; But, the resistance of the employing class to a radical redistribution of wealth and to the democratization of factory life transformed the mass movement for reforms into a movement with revolutionary potential. And, in both cases, attempted coups from the right (Kornilov in Russia, Spínola in Portugal), and the threat that all the gains won during the revolution might be undone, pushed large portions of the working class to seek an end to the economic and political power of the ruling class, once and for all.

In both the Russian and Portuguese cases, a majority of the working class moved from conditional support for the new provisional government (PG), through the conviction those governments must be pushed left, to the conclusion the PG had to be replaced by soviets (Russia) or supplemented by popular power (Portugal). The difference in the conclusions Russian and Portuguese workers reached stemmed from three factors. First, the revolutionary crisis in Portugal had not deepened to the point where the reformist parties (the SP and the PCP) had been forced to discredit themselves by association with the counter-revolution, in the way that Russian reformists did.

Second, the existence of soviets in Russia and the absence of comparable institutions in Portugal meant the option of transforming a situation of dual political power into one of workers' power through revolution, was not an immediate and practical possibility for radicalizing workers in Portugal.

Thus, for example, the failure of the Portuguese revolution to generate soviets or a centralized organization uniting the CMs, CTs and CSs, meant that in the fall of 1975, Portuguese workers had no real alternative to trying to replace the SP dominated 6th PG by a new 7th PG dominated by the left. Despite all the talk about "popular power" during the summer of 1975, Portuguese workers did not have an alternative institution to the PG, which could exercised a measure of state power, and which was identified as the embryo of a potential workers' state.

The third factor which accounts for the different conclusions drawn by Russian and Portuguese workers, is the difference in the relative strength of centrist and revolutionary organizations in each case. In Russia, the centrist argument about the possibility of institutionalizing dual power (made by the Menshevik Internationalists, some left SRs, and the right wing of the Bolsheviks) did not withstand the criticisms emanating from the revolutionaries in the Bolshevik party. In Portugal, the centrist argument (coming from the left groups and the radical MFA, and taken up by many leading militants in the CMs and CTs) was much stronger and better represented, while the revolutionary position was barely heard.

The difference in the character of the left between Russia and Portugal meant that in the former case, the political choice facing workers was more clear cut than in the latter case. While there was a plethora of leftist groups in Russia (Mensheviks, Menshevik

Internationalists, Social Revolutionaries, Left Social Revolutionaries, Bolsheviks, Anarchists, etc.), the Bolsheviks stood out from their main competitors (the SRs and the Mensheviks) by virtue of their composition (support from the vanguard of the working class), their independence from the PG and the bourgeoisie, and the clarity and distinctiveness of their political platform (i.e., soviet power).

By contrast, in Portugal, the vanguard of the working class remained divided in three separate pools: -- one in the PCP, a second distributed among the leftist groups, and the third active in the CMs and CTs, but suspicious of 'partyism'. In addition, no section of the Portuguese left ever really broke completely with Portuguese capitalism. For the first year of the revolution, the SP, the PCP and many of the small groups on the revolutionary left could all support the notion that the MFA should supervise the creation of 'socialism'. After the April 1975 elections, the left became more politically differentiated. But, when the 5th PG was faltering in August, FUR -- the coalition of the left which included the PCP and was backed by the radical MFA/COPCON -- demonstrated the lack of independence of the leftist groups from their reformist competition. In that sense the Portuguese working class was not presented with the kind of clear cut revolutionary alternatives Russian workers had. Thus, no organization in Portugal called for "All power to the CTs." The absence of a mass revolutionary party in the Portuguese case is probably the single most important difference from the Russian case.

Both Russia and Portugal were relatively backward countries when the revolutionary crises began in each country. Both countries had a large peasantry, whose political loyalties were up for grabs during the revolutionary crisis. There the similarity ends. In Russia, the working class and the Bolsheviks won the support of some sections of the peasantry, and

the neutrality of the remainder, by adopting the demands of the peasantry as part of their program. In Portugal, the working class did not really contend with the bourgeoisie for the support of the peasantry. None of the major political forces within the working class movement -- the PCP, the radical MFA and the leftist groups -- offered the northern peasantry any meaningful reforms that would give them a stake in the revolution. As a consequence, by the summer of 1975, the huge peasantry had become a bastion of the counter-revolutionary camp.

Changes in the military played a key role in both the Russian and Portuguese revolutions. In Russia the disintegration of the army denied the PG the military force it needed to check the revolution developing from below. Similarly, in Portugal, the war weariness of the junior officer corps and the troops meant that many units in the military were no longer reliable instruments of repression. In both cases, the military defeat of the old regime insured the large conscript armies would remain unreliable during the revolutionary process. But, of course, there were serious differences between the role of the military in each of these two cases.

Like the Russian case, the outcome of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal depended -- in part -- upon the development of a split within the ranks of the military, and upon the ability of revolutionaries to win the active support and/or neutrality of the troops towards the revolution. In Russia, there was a mass revolutionary party that carried out a major intervention among the troops, from early in the revolutionary process. In Portugal, there was no comparable, large scale intervention. SUV, which was initiated by members of various small revolutionary groups, proved too little and too late. Nevertheless, while the intervention by the Portuguese left in the military was far less impressive than the effort

mounted by the Bolsheviks, there were probably more soldiers prepared to actively support the revolution in Portugal than in Russia.

In both cases, the willingness of troops to actively support the revolution rather than simply remain neutral was linked to their class backgrounds, and their opportunity to rub shoulders with revolutionary workers in institutions of dual power located in the urban areas. In Russia, soviets incorporated rank and file soldiers from the beginning, making it relatively easy for revolutionaries to intervene among the soldiers. In Portugal there were no soviet-type institutions, and the links between soldiers and workers were exclusively on a local level. As a result, those units which were isolated in the northern portions of Portugal, where the revolutionary movement was very weak, were not solidly behind the revolution.

But, there was an important difference between the Russian and Portuguese cases, stemming from the peculiar role of the MFA in the 1974-75 revolution. (There was no organized anti-Czarist force in the Russian military.) The origins of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal in a coup by the MFA, had its counterpart in Russia in the role played by rank and file soldiers in the February revolution. But, in Portugal, the subsequent role of the MFA in the PG, made the military far more central to the revolutionary process than in Russia. The existence of the MFA in Portugal shaped the entire revolutionary process. In the early stages of the revolutionary crisis (i.e., during the summer and fall of 1974), the existence of the MFA discouraged Spínola from attempting a full fledged military coup, deepening the revolutionary crisis. But, in September 1974 and March 1975, the existence of the MFA inhibited the development of centralized organs of dual power, and undercut the emergence of independent organization among rank and file soldiers.

Among the most important differences between the Russian and Portuguese cases --

apart from those already mentioned above -- was the role played by neighborhood commissions in Portugal. Again, as was the case in Chile, the lack of adequate housing in urban areas was one of the main difficulties facing the Portuguese working class. As a consequence, neighborhood commissions, formed independently of factory commissions, were a critical feature of proletarian self-organization during the revolutionary process. (To the extent that housing was an issue in Russia, such issues were dealt with by the raion soviets.) Moreover, as in Chile, the neighborhood commissions were a vital way in which other oppressed strata -- the lumpen proletariat, the poorest of the self-employed, etc. -- could be drawn into the revolution.

To conclude, the Portuguese experience confirms the basic usefulness of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process.

All the characteristic features and dynamics of a revolutionary crisis, as outlined by the Bolsheviks, are evident in the Portuguese case. Furthermore, the Portuguese revolution did not involve any features or dynamics that Bolshevism cannot account for. The most unusual feature of the Portuguese revolution -- the role of the MFA -- is easily explained through an examination of the middle class nature of the junior officer corps, and of the tendency for the unstable left populism of the MFA to fragment into different political currents on the basis of the quite different experiences sections of the MFA had during the revolutionary process itself. The radical wing of the MFA was centered among COPCON officers who were forced to rub shoulders with the revolutionary core of the workers movement. The section of the MFA that supported the PCP was centered among officers

worked in the state machine, in isolation from the mass movement. Finally, MFA officers who remained in operational commands outside of the urban bastions of the revolution, and had "neither bureaucratic experience nor the civilian contacts... stayed moderate," supporting the SP.(Hammond,1988:190)

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER (6.0)

1. Despite its status as a colonial power, Portugal was itself a semi-colony, a country that was formally independent, but which was subordinate to the great powers of European capitalism (Britain in particular). That subordination was masked somewhat by the autarchic policies of Salazar.(Cliff,1975a:5; De Figueiredo,1975:36-37; Kayman,1987:1)
2. The extreme backwardness of Portuguese capitalism forced the rural working class and the poor peasantry to live in extreme poverty. See Cliff (1975a:38), Goldey (1981:47,51-52), Porto (1984:86) De Figueiredo (1975:161,183), and Fields (1976: 59-60).
3. By Trotsky's standards, Salazarism was a form of preventative Bonapartism, a state form adopted by the Portuguese ruling class to undercut the possibility of workers' revolution, but without resorting to a mass movement of the petite bourgeoisie -- a fascist movement. For Trotsky, "fascism" had a very specific meaning. It referred to a mass movement of the petite bourgeoisie, directed towards the achievement of state power, during a period of acute social and political crisis within a bourgeois democratic regime. By contrast, a Bonapartist regime was one which was rooted in the repressive arm of the state: the police, the bureaucracy and the military, rather than in a petite bourgeois mass movement. Thus, although Salazar's Portugal was certainly authoritarian and corporatist, it was not specifically fascist since -- unlike Hitler and Mussolini -- Portugal's dictator did not achieve power by mobilizing the petite bourgeoisie into a movement aimed at destroying the organizations and power of the working class, and the institutions of class collaboration between capital and labour. For Trotsky's views on fascism and Bonapartism, see his The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany (SAFG:327-328,451-458,462) and Mandel (1971:xviii-xxiii). Raby (1988) is a good example of a Marxist commentator who insists that Salazarism be interpreted as a form of fascism. (1988:4-6) However, there are also Marxists who refrain from calling the regime fascist, for example Anderson (1962a:89;) and Gallagher (1983:67-68,72-75,88-89).
4. By the time of the revolution, over 100 US firms were operating in Portugal (e.g., General Motors, Ford, General Electric, Kodak, Colgate-Palmolive, IBM, Mobil, ITT, Firestone, etc.), representing an estimated \$200 to \$250 million, and employing between 22,000 and 25,000 workers.(Baklanoff,1979:809)
5. The coincidence of Portuguese colonial interests and those of Western imperialism (which had large amounts of capital invested in Angola) meant there was widespread Western support for Salazar's regime.(Minter,1972:128-132)
6. Note, these figures are also affected by the very high rate of emigration from Portugal throughout the period after 1960, (Leeds,1984:33)
7. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, there continued to be a very high rate of emigration from Portugal. By 1970, 1/6th of the 1960 population had left, more than 1.2 million people.(Porto,1984:90; De Figueiredo, 1975:181) The emigration rate, which was traditionally very high, accelerated during the 1960s, as Portuguese workers and peasants -- especially young males -- emigrated to avoid poverty and conscription.(Da Ponte,1974:26)

8. Another measure of the relative poverty of the exploited classes in Portugal is the GNP per head in 1970-71. In Portugal it was \$527, compared with Turkey at \$350, versus \$860 for Greece and \$733 for Spain and \$1,020 for Ireland -- some of the other poor countries of Europe.(De Figueiredo,1975:182))

9. Three years military service was compulsory. Nearly 25% of the males eligible for the military were in the army, giving Portugal a massive army for the size of its population.(Porto, 1984:91)

10. In addition to the main parties discussed in the text, there were some other leftist parties in Portugal worth noting. There were three major centrist organizations -- the MES (Movement of the Socialist Left), the FSP (Popular Socialist Front) and the LUAR (League for United Revolutionary Action).(Cliff,1975a:4,19; Robinson,1987:98; Harman,1988:292) There were also a variety of Maoist organizations, including: the MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Party of the Proletariat), the FEC-ML (Communist Electoral Front of Marxist Leninists), and the UDP (Democratic Union of the People).(Robinson,1987:97; Cliff,1975a: 20; Opello,1985: 103,106-107; Harman,1988:290) Finally, there were two small Trotskyist organizations in Portugal, the International Communist League (LCI) and the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT). For further information on the revolutionary left, see Cliff (1975a), Opello (1985), Ali (1979), Robinson (1987), Harman (1988), Harris (1978), Raby (1988), Plotke (1976), Birchall (1979,1986), Frank (1975) and Mailer (1977).

11. The theoretical basis for the CP's Popular Front strategy rested on the claim that Portugal was not yet ready for socialism, because of its economic backwardness -- something evident in the economic power of the great landlords, the colonial merchants, and the foreign multinationals operating in Portugal. Cunhal followed the political logic of the Mensheviks and Stalin's Comintern to argue that because of the economic backwardness of Portugal, a workers' revolution was impossible. Although the CP's strategy did not explain which class was to have hegemony within the multi-class bloc that would bring down Salazarism and build bourgeois democracy during the first stage of the revolution, that problem was resolved in advance by eliminating the possibility the new regime might be a socialist one.

12. While the PCP was partly motivated by its fear of a Chilean-style counter-revolution, it was probably more concerned about the possibility of a left-populist revolution by the MFA and its "ultra-leftist" allies (just as the Cuban CP had been bypassed by Castro's revolution). The PCP knew it faced a major threat from the left. Just as in Cuba, a calcified CP could be entirely bypassed and replaced on the left by a more revolutionary populist movement that won control of the army and the state machine.(Schmitzer,1979:354-355)

13. The CP's strategy in Portugal was not an attempt to blindly follow the dictates of the CPSU. There is evidence to suggest the CPSU did not have a consistent view of the situation in Portugal, and that some elements of the Soviet leadership might not have been too enthusiastic about the PCP's obvious drive for power in 1975. The prospect of a CP victory in Portugal would certainly have endangered the further prospects for detente within Europe. (Macleod,1984:37; Hammond,1988:260; Mujal-Leon,1977:22-23)

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14. The bourgeoisie and the Portuguese right were all advised by their supporters outside the country to follow the lead of the SP.(Harman,1988:294)
15. For further information on the SP's international connections, and on its receipt of financial assistance from counter-revolutionary forces like the CIA, see Mailer (1977:171), Birchall (1979:78; 1986:157), Faye (1976:190,194-195).
16. Some of the members of the MFA were former university students who had been influenced by radical ideas prior to being conscripted.(Cliff,1975a:27; Ali,1978:90-91,93-94; Hammond,1988: 66; Fields,1976:72,74; Sweezy,1975a:8-9)
17. Some officers in the Navy were purged after April 1974. See Cliff (1975a:31) and Ali (1978:95).
18. The working class offensive began less than one week after the coup, on May Day, when 600,000 people demonstrated in Lisbon to celebrate the downfall of the old regime.(Mailer,1977:37-61,80-81)
19. After the coup, agitation against the war and colonialism grew rapidly within Portugal. The revolutionary left was in the forefront of that agitation, putting pressure on the PG to stop the war and open negotiations.(Ali,1978:98; Downs,1989:19)
20. Two weeks later, thousands of striking airline workers at TAP organized a series of demonstrations to protest the government repression of their strike (with firings, arrests and the use of the army to occupy their workplace), and clashed with police. (Reeve,1975:19-20,33; Lomax,1983:117; Mailer,1977:108-114)
21. Internationally, the Portuguese bourgeoisie was backed by both the World Bank and the IMF who refused credit to Portugal, to assist in the campaign to strangle the revolution.(Hammond, 1988:101; Downs,1989:21; Cliff,1975a:36)
22. Some members of the MFA may have aspired to establish a Bonapartist military dictatorship, devoted to opposition to imperialism and national economic development. But, the MFA was far too weak relative to the two main classes in Portuguese society, the bourgeoisie and the working class, to actually gain power in any permanent sense. Just to break the power of the bourgeoisie, the MFA would have been forced to mobilize the working class -- a social force it was unlikely to control. (Harman,1988:288) That is why some commentators ruled out a 'Peruvian' solution to the revolutionary crisis in Portugal. (Cliff,1975a:31; Birchall,1979:81)
23. While not quite as severe as the blockade imposed on Chile, there was concerted international action to undermine the regime in Portugal after September 1974. By the spring of 1975, the international ruling class was exerting considerable economic pressure on Portugal, refusing the government the credit it required to offset the worst effects of the recession.(Harman, 1988:293; Hammond,1988:219-220)
24. The SP's plans were actively supported by international capital, who backed up Soares "by...withholding...hundreds of millions of dollars in economic aid until the SP demands

would be met and by promising to grant that aid as soon as the demands were met."(Frank,1975:1771)

25. During the summer of 1975, there was a massive wave of terror in northern and central Portugal, where the offices of the CP, Intersindical and the revolutionary left were firebombed between 100 and 200 times. (Robinson,1987:108; Maxwell,1986a:126; Kayman,1987:150; Hammond,1988:209) For more information on the state of the counter-revolutionary right see Gallagher (1983:94).

26. A number of other factors explain the depth of the counter-revolutionary sentiment in the north (e.g., the role of the Church, opposition to the PCP's undemocratic behavior, the influence of the right wing refugees from the colonies who settled in the north, etc.).

27. The FUR platform -- which was endorsed by the PCP and six parties from the revolutionary left (PRP/BR, LCI, MES, FSP, LUAR, and the First of May Group) -- supported "the COPCON Document, popular power and the 5th PG as long as the conditions are not met for the formation of a government of revolutionary unity." In effect, the revolutionary left had decided to defend the PCP and the 5th PG.(Hammond,1988:224-225)

28. For a good description of the disposition of the military in November 1975, see Mailer (1977:307).

29. The revolutionary left was still sufficiently weak, in relation to the PCP, that they may not have been able to build a movement for a general strike "in the face of the opposition or confusion of PCP militants."(Jeffreys,1977:17)

30. Some of the key sources on the agrarian struggles include: Bermeo (1986), Hammond (1988), Mailer (1977), Cabral (1978), Goldey (1981) and Jenkins (1979). The community based struggles of the neighborhood committees, are analyzed in Downs (1980,1983,1989), Cliff (1975a), Hammond (1988), Mailer (1977) and Lewis (1984).

31. The split between white collar and blue collar workers, is discussed in Hammond's analysis of electoral returns from April 1975. His estimates suggest that white collar workers in the cities voted for the SP over the CP by a margin of at least three to one.(Hammond,1979:264)

32. In addition, the PG intervened in more than 200 medium and small firms, appointing administrators to run the firm without nationalizing it, because of economic sabotage by the employers.(Hammond,1979:423; 1988:145-146,165-166; Mailer,1977: 201)

33. The bankworkers forced the state to nationalize all the banks with a three day occupation, after the March 11th coup attempt. After the banks were reopened, with many of them under the direction of government appointed administrators (often approved of by the union), bankworkers combed bank "records for evidence of economic sabotage" by bankers.(Hammond,1988:150)

34. Ministry of labour analysis of the reason for takeovers in Lisbon gave the following

reasons: abandonment 44.3%; contract violation 15.4%; managerial incompetence 11.5%; unlawful sacking 11.5%; fraud 9.6%; bankruptcy 7.0%.(Bermeo,1983:187)

35. The next day, September 26th, radical soldiers refused to intervene as demonstrators burned down the Spanish embassy, to protest Franco's decision to execute five political prisoners. These sorts of incidents pushed the PG to establish the Military Intervention Group (AMI) as their counterpart to COPCON. (Porch,1977:215)

36. For information on other similar incidents, see Sobel (1976:119), Magarelli (1981:226), Harman (1988:303).

37. See the CRTSM documents in PTS (1975:20-25) and Mailer (1977:386-387).

38. The MFA's conception of popular power was intended as an elaborate system for the consultation and cooptation of popular organizations by the radical MFA -- modeled on "popular power" in Cuba. For a critique of Cuban 'socialism' see Binns (1983:135-144).

39. For other similar examples, see Mailer (1977:285-286,295) and Frank (1975:1776).

40. About 7% of the votes cast were spoiled ballots. In the last few days before the election, the MFA had called on Portuguese voters to spoil their ballots if they wanted to indicate support for the MFA.(Ali,1978:110; Jenkins,1975:238,242,246)

41. The vote for the SP included not only working class votes for socialism, but also petty bourgeois and bourgeois votes for the SP as the best bet to contain the threat from the PCP and the revolutionary left.(Bruneau,1986:47) To the extent that SP votes came from the petty bourgeoisie, it showed the success of the SP's anti-communist campaign.

42. The electoral returns also showed that the revolutionary left had failed to make major gains among classes that were vital to their success, like industrial workers in the north (14% voted for Carvahlo and 4% for the PCP), and white collar workers in both the north (5% voted for Carvahlo, 5% for the PCP) and the south (15% voted for Carvahlo and 2% for the PCP).(Hammond, 1985:215-217)

43. For example, see the 1974 statement by Lisnave shipyard workers in Radical America.(RA,1975:53)

44. For more on the cynical rhetoric of the SP leadership, see Birchall (1979:74,77; 1986:156), Ali (1978:114), Bruneau (1986:65-66), and Mailer (1977:389).

45. The comments that follow pertain mainly to the non-Maoist section of the revolutionary left, the centrist and Trotskyist organizations involved in FUR (Revolutionary United Front) -- groups like the Movement of Left Socialists (MES), the Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat/Revolutionary Brigades (PRP/BR), the International Communist League (LCI), the League of Union and Revolutionary Action (LUAR) and the Popular Socialist Front (FSP).

46. Amazingly, the PRP/BR claimed the Bolsheviks had led the Russian revolution with a party of 3,000, proving the existence of a mass workers' party was not necessary to make a revolution in Portugal.(PTS,1975:29)

47. For the CP view, see Woodis (1977:240-243) and Magarelli (1981:229-233).

48. During the fall, revolutionary groups like the PRP/BR discussed the need for insurrection constantly. However, the PRP/BR did not always distinguish between making propaganda about the eventual need for an insurrection, and the agitational call to undertake such an action.(Cliff,1975b:3; Hammond,1988:106)

49. The revolt by the paratroopers caught the members of groups like the PRP/BR and the MES off guard. Neither organization took any initiative in conjunction with the revolt.(Cliff,1975b:7) Moreover, since the Tancos paratroopers had just recently come under the influence of the left (mainly the CP), after having been used by the 6th PG to blow up the transmitter for Radio Renascenca, they were hardly the unit revolutionaries would have designated to lead an insurrection.

50. When the bourgeoisie was forced to adopt a less direct method of re-asserting its control over Portuguese society, there was no mass political party to the right of the SP, capable of doing the job. Luckily, the SP was closely linked (financially and politically) to the German SPD and the British Labour Party -- organizations that had already proven their loyalties many times. Thus, after the failure of Spínola's second coup, the bourgeoisie and the Portuguese right were all advised by their supporters outside the country to follow the lead of the SP. (Harman,1988:294) The CIA had a heavy presence in Portugal. They were there to back the SP, channelling funds to the Portuguese social democrats with the assistance of the Catholic Church, Western European Social Democratic parties, and the Western European trade unions. Until the formation of the 6th PG, the US also conducted economic warfare against the Portuguese revolution, making sure that credits promised to Portugal were withheld by various bodies, that trading contracts were cancelled, and so on. Their aim was to cause economic disruption that could be blamed on the revolutionary movement. In addition, the US and the West promised Portugal further economic aid if it would remain a pluralistic democracy (e.g., the EEC promised \$840 million in July 1975). In October 1975, the Western allies of the SP poured money into Portugal to assist their friends (the EEC gave \$180 million, the US \$85 million, and EFTA gave \$100 million) (Agee,1978:70-75)

51. To understand the position of the international ruling classes -- both east and west -- it is important to remember the international context of the Portuguese revolution. 1974-75 was still the era of detente. Moscow was more or less happy with the status quo in Western Europe, and unprepared to engage in serious action within the American sphere of influence. Any serious grab for power by the CP in Portugal, or any serious revolutionary movement, would have undermined detente.(Whetter,1982:141-142) At the same time, the prospects for direct American intervention were weakened by recent events. In August 1974 Nixon had resigned, and in March 1975, Saigon had fallen to the Vietcong. The weakness of the US response to Soviet initiatives was apparent in Angola, where Cuban and Soviet troops intervened on the side of the MPLA. The US was in no position to mount a serious

campaign against a revolution in Portugal. On the other hand, the West European allies of the Americans could probably be counted upon to do so.

(7.0) POLAND, 1980-81: THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY TERMINATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN A STATE CAPITALIST COUNTRY

In December 1981, the Polish security police and the army, launched a counter-revolutionary coup on behalf of the Polish Government headed by General Jaruzelski. That coup brought to an end the revolutionary process that had begun in August of 1980, with the occupation of the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. Solidarnosc, the massive working class movement that emerged from the class struggles of August and September 1980, was crushed before a genuine revolutionary current could develop within it. In this Chapter we will analyze that interrupted revolutionary process, the one that made the Polish word for solidarity -- Solidarnosc -- known worldwide.

(7.1) The Contradictions of Polish State Capitalism

In 1980, Poland was the world's 10th largest industrial power (with the world's 8th largest military budget).(Barker, 1987:169; Taras,1986:88) It was the largest of the state capitalist countries of the eastern bloc, in terms of population (36 million), land area and economic clout. Economically, Poland combined a heavy industrial base with an inadequate consumer goods sector, and backward agriculture. In that respect, Poland bore the unmistakable imprint of three and a half decades of rule by the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), in an economic and military alliance with a major imperialist power: the USSR.

Some commentators might question the applicability of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process to modern Poland, because of doubts that Poland is a society of the same type analyzed by Lenin and Trotsky. From a Marxist perspective, there are only three

possible ways of analyzing the class nature of Polish society in 1980-81. Either Poland -- like Russia and the rest of the Eastern bloc -- was (1) some form of post-capitalist society (whether socialist, as argued by the Stalinists, or a degenerated form of socialism as claimed by orthodox Trotskyists), (2) a new mode of production and a new form of class society, most often referred to as "bureaucratic collectivism," or (3) it was a bureaucratic and statist form of capitalism ("state capitalism") as suggested by various anarchists and non-orthodox Trotskyists.¹

In this dissertation, we start from the assumption that Poland was a bureaucratic state capitalist regime in 1980-81. That means we analyze the Polish economic and social crisis in 1980-81 as an instance of capitalist crisis.² The theory of state capitalism rests on two interrelated propositions. First, that the Eastern bloc regimes were driven to capital accumulation by their military and economic competition with the states and units of capital in the remainder of the world capitalist system. Second, that drive compelled the Eastern bloc ruling classes to exploit their domestic working classes, maintaining very low levels of working class consumption, and pushing their supposedly 'planned' economies into enormous bottlenecks, wasted production and severe crises. (Harman, 1990:32-36)

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After World War II, the PZPR, backed up by the Soviet military presence in Poland, acquired state power. The result was a state capitalist regime devoted to the industrialization of Poland on the Stalinist model. The new regime was a close ally of the Soviet Union, with the latter playing the role of an imperialist power. By the mid-1950s, the crude robbery that characterized economic relations between the USSR and eastern Europe after the war, was replaced by a more subtle form of exploitation based on unequal

terms of trade (e.g., for Polish coal).(Harman,1974:54-55; Gluckstein,1952:53-66; Taras,1986a:80) Nevertheless, Poland remained securely within the Soviet orbit, both economically and militarily.³

Despite the very obvious economic crisis of Poland during the 1970s and 1980s, Polish state capitalism experienced quite dynamic economic growth during 1950-55 and 1971-75 (Taras,1986: 101-102) It was during those two periods that the backward agrarian country of the 1930s was transformed into a major industrial power.

TABLE 7.1 SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS, 1946-82 (1960 = 100)

	<u>1946</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
national income	27	48	100	180	305	268	253
industrial production	13	32	100	223	461	411	402
agricultural production	35	74	93*	117	129	134	130

*Note: for agriculture, 1961-65 = 100

SOURCE: Taras (1986:108)

But, the economic expansion of the 1950s and 1970s did not mean Poland was exempt from class conflict or immune to long-term structural contradictions.⁴ On the contrary, state capitalist development in Poland led to three major economic and political crises, first in 1956-57, again in 1968-71 and finally in 1980-81.⁵ (The first two periods of crisis were general to the entire eastern bloc.) The PZPR regime was able to maintain its power in 1956-57 and 1968-71 through a judicious mixture of repression and reforms.(Harman,1990:47-48) However, after the 1968-71 crisis, the Polish and Hungarian

ruling classes abandoned the old strategy of development through economic activity restricted to the eastern bloc. To promote the economic growth they needed, the PZPR opted to integrate more fully into the western economy, by importing western capital and seeking access to western markets. (Harman,1990:48-50) In that way PZPR leaders hoped to simultaneously increase capital investment (making the transition from extensive growth to intensive growth) and working class consumption (to buy social peace).

(Harman,1983:213)

After 1970, PZPR leader Edward Gierek reoriented the entire Polish economy towards the west.(Taras,1986a:118-120) From 1971 to 1980, "the total value of credits obtained from the non-socialist countries...was a staggering \$38.6 billion."(Taras, 1986a:105-106) By 1979, Poland's net foreign debt was \$20 billion, and absorbed 92% of the country's export earnings. (Harman,1983:222-223) The massive inflow of capital resulted in the opening of many new industrial plants (e.g., the Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw, the Polski-FIAT plant in Silesia, etc.).(Harman,1990:49) Nevertheless, much of the imported capital was unwisely invested in unprofitable industries.(Taras,1986a: 105-106)

But, the Gierek boom of the early 1970s did not last, petering out soon after the world-wide recession of 1974-76. Growth in economic output and productivity fell, at the same time as western markets dried up and interest rates climbed.(Harman, 1990:49) Soon the PZPR leadership found themselves caught in a debt trap, as "the cost of paying for past borrowing began to cut off possibilities for further accumulation." By 1979-80, Poland had entered "a long period of economic stagnation, interspersed with periods of contraction."(Harman,1990:50) By the end of the decade, Gierek's economic strategy was in a shambles.

Of course, the economic crisis had an enormous impact on working class living standards. As the economic crisis grew, Gierek's capacity to buy social peace disappeared. And, having gained the leadership of the PZPR in 1970, after government efforts to crush working class protests made the continued rule of his predecessor (Wladyslaw Gomulka) impossible, Gierek could not simply resort to repression. His regime alternated between co-optation and repression, which "did not succeed either in buying anyone off or in frightening anyone into submission." Instead, that policy created "an all pervasive atmosphere of intense social crisis." (Harman, 1983:225)

Thus, the origins of the 1980-81 revolutionary crisis lie in the failure of the economic strategy of the PZPR, given the long term structural problems of state capitalist development in Poland.

* * * * *

Polish state capitalism transformed the social structure of what had been a backward capitalist country into an advanced capitalist one. To understand the class structure of Poland in 1980-81, we have to examine the state capitalist ruling class (the nomenklatura), the working class, the intelligentsia, and the peasantry.

After the war, the PZPR built a huge party and state machine, recruiting hundreds of thousands of people who would have a stake in defending the new state capitalist regime. (Harman, 1974:40-41) By the 1970s, the PZPR had about 2.5 million members, and was the party of state bureaucrats, industrial managers and military officers. (LFEE, 3#5:12; Checinski, 1984:49) Poland was governed through an enormous state bureaucracy, that was controlled by the upper echelons of the PZPR. The ruling class consisted of those top bureaucrats appointed from above by the PZPR/state elite -- the nomenklatura or, as some

workers called it, the 'red bourgeoisie'. The nomenklatura enjoyed special privileges, exclusive to their class. Not surprisingly,

the exclusive stores, country cottages, Western cars and assorted gadgets, availability of passports for travel to the West, access to hard currency at ridiculously deflated exchange rates, and the virtual immunity of this caste from investigation for wrongdoing generated feelings of animosity and relative deprivation.... When economic difficulties began to compound this animosity (in the 1970s-BM), it was simple for Polish society to conclude that the new class had embezzled the country's wealth.(Taras,1986a: 61-62)

During the Gierek boom, wage differentials rose sharply as the economic expansion benefitted the state and party bureaucracy far more than the working class. The middle echelons of the bureaucracy also benefitted, binding that portion of the state machine to the regime.(Harman,1983:239; Checinski,1984:50)

During the 1970s, the growing economic crisis in Poland produced a number of distinct factions inside the PZPR, each with a different view about how to handle the crisis. PZPR hardliners wanted to lessen the economic dependence of Poland on the West and use greater repression against dissidents. The more pragmatic element in the PZPR leadership (e.g., Gierek) stuck with the plan to integrate into the western economy and employ only light repression against dissidents. Finally, there was a more 'liberal' element in the PZPR leadership (e.g., Mieczyslaw Rakowski) who predicted social explosions, unless efforts were made to decentralize economic and political power and to co-opt the population in the process of decision making.(Curry,1984: 198-200) In 1980-81, these political differences would lead to severe divisions within the ruling class.(Harman,1990:65)

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During the 1930s, Poland's social structure reflected its economic backwardness, with 60% of the economically active population engaged in subsistence agriculture.

(Kolankiewicz, 1988:21) However, the state capitalist development of Poland changed all that. By 1980, the proportion of the workforce engaged in agriculture had fallen to 30%, with the remainder of the workforce divided between industrial workers (30%) and workers employed in the tertiary sector (40%).(Stasiak,1987: 131,142) In short, Poland in 1980 had a very large working class, with an enormous, and relatively well educated industrial proletariat at its core. Moreover, that industrial proletariat --which had been created during the massive industrialization of the economy -- was concentrated in very large workplaces. (Brenner,1982:6; Taras,1986a:126-127)

The Polish working class consisted of different strata, each with quite different working conditions and living standards. The vanguard of the working class was composed of the skilled blue collar workers whose "acute political consciousness" made them the natural leaders of Solidarnosc in 1980-81. These skilled manual workers -- like the shipyard workers in Gdansk, or the blast furnace workers in the large steel mills -- made between two and three times the average blue collar wage.(Taras, 1986a:126-127) Because of their strategic location in the large industrial enterprises that formed the core of Poland's economy, these workers had enormous industrial power. (Brenner,1982:6)

In addition to these skilled workers, there were large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers in many of the factories, as well as 'peasant workers' engaged in their "first non-agricultural employment."(Taras,1986a:126-127) By the 1970s, there was a considerable overlap between the peasantry and the working class. Many of the 3.5 million independent farmers were also people who held factory jobs. The tremendous overlap between these classes made it easier for them to act in concert during 1980-81.(Ash,1984:116,119,129; Hann,1985:168)

Another small but distinct section of the working class was composed of those highly paid workers who received special privileges (e.g., the Silesian coal miners). These workers -- who were sometimes regarded as a kind of 'labour aristocracy' -- made as much as 5 times the average blue collar wage, had much better housing than the rest of the working class, and were protected from meat shortages. But, the miners paid for their privileges with shift work and a very high accident rate.(Harman,1983:228) In 1980-81, they would rally to the Solidarnosc banner and become solid and dependable supporters of the movement.(Taras,1986a:126-127; LFEE,1977:10) Finally, the white collar section of the working class, (which fades over into the intelligentsia) largely sided with the blue collar workers during 1980-81.(Taras,1986a: 134)

The Gierek boom was a period in which working class living standards greatly improved. Real wages rose during the 1971-75 period by about 10% annually, and living standards began to rise as new consumer goods became widely available (e.g., fridges, televisions and washing machines).(Harman, 1983:217; Taras,1986a: 105) But the gains of the early 1970s came under attack when the Gierek boom evaporated. By 1981, about one third of the population was living below the state defined poverty line. (Taras,1986a:112) And, in mid-1980, the average housewife had to spend between 2 and 3 hours in food queues every day.(Ruane, 1982:12)

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In 1980, Poland was the only country in the Eastern bloc in which agricultural production was still dominated by private property, rather than by large, state-owned, collective farms. There was a large class of 3.5 million individual farmers who produced 80% of the total agricultural output, by relying heavily upon the exploitation of family

labour (not increased capital investment.) This class of peasants, remained wedded to its individually owned small plots of land.(Hann,1985:10-12; Barker, 1982:117) The persistence of private agriculture was the source of real economic and political difficulties for the ruling class. State hostility to the peasantry consistently led to low levels of investment in agriculture, low productivity, and inadequate food supplies.⁶ At the same time, the survival of the peasantry as a class helped maintain the ideological strength of the church -- thereby denying the PZPR complete political hegemony. (Hann,1985:viii,7)

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The Catholic Church -- with 20,000 priests and millions of believers -- played an important political role in Poland. (Taras,1986:144) Throughout the post-war period, the Church was the only legal institution that was completely independent of the regime, and that offered a forum -- however limited -- for criticism of the regime.(Harman, 1983:255) For most of the last two centuries, the Catholic Church in Poland has been persecuted at the same time as Poland has been occupied and oppressed. Support for the Church was virtually synonymous with Polish nationalism.(Taras,1986a:144; Bromke, 1973:159; Harman,1983:256)

Despite being a symbol of Polish resistance to oppression, the Church was fiercely committed to social peace, fearing any sort of class struggle might threaten its own survival. Church leaders lived in fear the regime might become so isolated that it would crush the only institution it did not already control, or that the working class might become so confident of its own this-worldly power that it would abandon its subservience to the clergy. Thus, the Church hierarchy was the most consistent opponent of social polarization and confrontation. Church leaders had a well established policy of "co-operat(ing) with the

regime at moments of extreme social crisis," assisting in the restabilization of the PZPR's rule in exchange for more freedom for itself.(Harman,1983:256) Over the years, the Catholic hierarchy began to see themselves as a 'loyal opposition' to the PZPR -- one which facilitated mild dissent, but at the same time worked strenuously to undercut any serious mobilization against the regime.(Harman,1983:257) Thus, Catholicism, like Polish nationalism, played an ambiguous role in Poland, helping to create the political space within which a workers' movement could start, but then limiting how far the movement could go.(WCFL, 1985:51)

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The intelligentsia was a critical group in advanced capitalist Poland. Part of the intelligentsia was closely tied to the regime, playing an important role in administering the party and state.(Taras,1986a:133) Another part of the Polish intelligentsia -- those in the academic and cultural community --included a minority of dissidents, opponents of the regime. Those dissidents could be divided into three distinct elements: first, those liberal and reform intellectuals who belonged to or operated on the periphery of the PZPR; second, Catholic intellectuals operating on the intellectual and political periphery of the Church (e.g., intellectuals linked to various human rights organizations) and, third, some social democrats, organizing without the benefit of an organic relationship to either of the two main institutions in Polish society.(Curry, 1984:192-202; LFEE,3#4:10-13) The most important example of this social democratic element, was the small grouping of social

democrats in the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR)* -- who sought to develop an organic connection with the working class.

From its formation in 1976 until its dissolution in September 1981, KOR played a key role in shaping the opposition to the regime. Unlike the other dissident intellectuals, the members of KOR saw the working class as the group with the potential power to force the regime to reform.(Curry,1984:193) KOR began as a committee of intellectuals dedicated to assisting workers victimized after the 1976 strikes. Although its central membership was quite small, KOR was an extremely active group with many hundreds of supporters and collaborators -- people who collected and distributed information and funds.(Lipski,1982:80; Harman,1983:225) One of the main activities undertaken by KOR was the publications of books and periodicals -- the most important being the newspaper for worker militants, Robotnik (The Worker).⁷ Most of KOR's members were social democrats who favored the creation of a bourgeois democratic Poland, that was independent of the USSR.(Lipski,1982:79,87) But, an overwhelming fear of Soviet military intervention meant KOR opposed anything but peaceful and gradual methods of struggle.(Kuron,1979:12; Michnik,1979:11) KOR believed it was possible to win reforms from the PZPR, arguing that to do so required the formation of organizations independent of the state (e.g., independent trade unions).(LFEE,2#6:11-14) Indeed, KOR believed autonomous social

* In 1977, KOR broadened its concerns, and changed its name to the Social Self-Defence Committee, or KSS "KOR". For the sake of brevity we will refer to that organization by the acronym KOR.

movements were vital to both to win reforms and to limit the social explosion they believed was imminent.(Kuron,1979:12-13) Kuron, and other leaders of KOR insisted that the opposition movement had to "proceed in the direction of the repair of the (Polish-BM) system" rather than undertake any fundamental or revolutionary change.(Kuron,1979:13-14)

Between 1976 and 1980, KOR played a "vital role" in preparing the conditions for the future revolt by the working class. "Simply by breaking the state's censorship monopoly and providing news of workers' struggles, it helped overcome the isolation between workers in different centers."(Barker,1986:13) Some KOR members participated along with militant workers in the formation of the underground newspaper Robotnik (The Worker), which then spawned several regional newspapers, such as Robotnik Wybrzeza (Coastal Worker) in the Baltic. As the influence and readership of the newspapers grew, KOR influenced workers began to move beyond the loose association required to publish and distribute their papers to better organized groups dedicated to establishing "free trade unions".(Barker,1986:14)

* * * * *

The Polish working class has a record of struggle second to none other in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since the Warsaw uprising of 1944, Poles have mobilized to fight the tyranny of their rulers again and again.

In 1970, the regime tried to impose price increases on the working class, provoking mass strikes, demonstrations, and running street battles with the army and the police. Those protests, which were concentrated on the Baltic coast, resulted in hundreds of deaths. As the movement spread, the PZPR leadership repeated a maneuver from 1956. The PZPR leader, Gomulka, was removed and replaced by Gierek. That sufficed to stop the strikes

from spreading, but it did not end the conflict on the Baltic coast. For several months, Gierek and other PZPR leaders negotiated with the striking workers, co-opting part of the protest, and eventually rescinding the price hikes.(Harman, 1983:215-217)

In June 1976, Gierek's regime announced 39% increases for the price of food (69% for meat), a move which immediately provoked strikes and riots -- particularly within the largest factories and among the highest paid workers. (Unlike 1970, most workers did not take to the streets in demonstrations and riots.) Fearing a repetition of 1970, and the loss of his leadership, Gierek immediately rescinded the price hikes. Rather than confronting the working class directly, his regime tried to break the opposition with arrests, beatings and firings after the fact. The repression that followed was designed to root the dissidents out of the large factories.(Barker,1986:11-12; MacDonald,1977a:9-10; 1977b:3; Taras,1986b:106)

After 1976, the attitude of the ruling PZPR towards the dissident movement was ambivalent. On the one hand, dissidents were subject to constant harassment and repression by the state. (Barker,1986:15; Checinski,1984:51) Yet, the PZPR tolerated the existence of some organized dissent.(LFEE,1#5:21; Brenner, 1982:6; Harman,1983:225-226) For example, KOR and the various workers' opposition groupings that spun off from it, were harassed, but not totally suppressed by the authorities. By 1980, Poland "had ceased to be totalitarian in all but its ideology."

The reality was a sort of crude pluralism, an undefined contract under which the Communist authorities retained political power as long as they did not violate the fundamental interests of the Catholic Church, the private peasantry and the working class. It had in fact been true for many years that faced with determined and organized challenge from one or more of these three great blocks of opinion, the regime would have to give in or risk insurrection and civil war.(Ascherson, 1987:198)

* * * * *

Prior to the rise of Solidarnosc in September 1980, there were no class-wide, independent organizations among Polish workers. The official trade union movement was an arm of the party/state machine, and had very little credibility within the working class.(Pravda,1986:135; LFEE,3#5:12)⁸ Thus, there was an enormous political vacuum which KOR stepped into during the late 1970s.

KOR was enormously successful in establishing links with militant workers with its bi-weekly newspaper Robotnik.(LFEE,3#5: 12) The 10-20,000 copies of Robotnik distributed to militants in the major industrial plants by its supporters, insured that worker militants kept in contact with each other, and with the economic and political issues being debated among workers.(Raina, 1981:436; LFEE,3#5:12) It served as a medium for worker militants to make contact with one another, to exchange information about their experience, to organize in the fight for immediate economic demands, and to protect themselves from victimization and harassment.(Green, 1977c:17) Robotnik also enabled workers to co-ordinate their actions, and to develop alternative channels of communication, independently of the regime and the official trade unions. Many of the worker militants grouped around Robotnik would play a key role in the 1980 strikes and in Solidarnosc. (Barker,1986:14)

In 1978, encouraged by KOR and the publication of Robotnik, groups of radical workers first began to organize committees to fight for the formation of free trade unions, the most important one being located on the Baltic coast.(Green,1978b:20; LFEE, 2#3:22) In December 1979, Robotnik published a "Charter of Workers' Rights," endorsed by more than 100 key working class militants from around the country -- most of them associated with KOR, Robotnik and the movement for free trade unions.⁹ The Charter represented a

commitment by working class militants to adopt similar tactics and demands in a coordinated struggle to expand working class rights and organization.(LFEE,3#4:7)

KOR was vital to the development of a conscious vanguard of militant workers prepared to take the initiative and lead the revolt in 1980. Before July 1980, KOR had performed two vital tasks: first, it helped to organize militant workers into a network; second, KOR promoted open discussion on strategy and tactics for the struggle against the regime.(WCFI,1985:52) In short, in the conditions of state capitalist Poland, KOR, Robotnik, and the workers' committees they spawned, substituted for a vanguard party.

(7.2) The Polish Left and Strategies for Changing Polish State Capitalism

The revolutionary process in Poland was shaped by the strategies of a number of anti-regime and 'leftist' political currents. In this section we analyze the political strategies followed by four political currents that influenced the struggle for major changes in Polish society during 1980-81: (1) the horizontalist movement of rank and file PZPR members that campaigned for the democratization of the party during 1980-81; (2) the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc, best exemplified by Lech Walesa and the Catholic intellectuals that acted as his advisors; (3) the intellectual dissidents in KOR and the social democratic element in the Solidarnosc leadership they were aligned with during 1980-81; and (4) the most radical element in Solidarnosc, the Lublin Group, that had a centrist strategy for change, but was still moving leftward when martial law was imposed.

FIGURE 7.1 MAIN POLITICAL GROUPINGS AND CURRENTS ON THE POLISH LEFT DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS

Horizontalist Movement (of the PZPR)

LEADER: Zbigniew Iwanow, leader Torun region of Solidarnosc

SUPPORTERS: tens of thousands of rank and file PZPR members

POLITICS: reformist

GOAL: a radical democratization of the PZPR, and the introduction of reforms to Polish socialism

Moderate Current of Solidarnosc

LEADER: Lech Walesa, national leader of Solidarnosc

SUPPORTERS: many national leaders of Solidarnosc, Catholic Church, a majority of rank and file workers

POLITICS: moderate/reformist

GOAL: the elevation of the Solidarnosc leadership to a position as permanent arbiters between capital and labour; the institutionalization of class collaboration

KOR and the Centrist Current in Solidarnosc

LEADER: Jacek Kuron, other members of KOR

SUPPORTERS: members of Solidarnosc leadership, rank and file members of the union

POLITICS: Left social democrats, centrists, associated with centrist current of NETWORK

GOAL: institutionalized dual power, a 'self-limiting revolution,' leading to the coexistence of an autonomous civil society and PZPR state

The Lublin Group, and the Radical Current in Solidarnosc

LEADERS: Zbigniew Kowalewski, Jadwiga Staniszkis, Andrezej Slowik, etc.

SUPPORTERS: leftwing workers in various regions of Solidarnosc

POLITICS: Leftward moving centrists

GOALS: workers' self-management of the economy, institutionalized dual power, attack on the power of the state

* * * * *

The growing economic and social crisis in Poland led to the split of the PZPR into a number of distinct factions during the 1970s -- groups we referred to as hardliners,

pragmatists and liberals. After the birth of Solidarnosc, a fourth faction emerged in the PZPR. The 'horizontalist' movement (so named because it was based on direct links between rank and file party members in many workplace and university cells, without the mediation of the party hierarchy) advocated a radical democratization of the PZPR as a prelude to reforming Polish society.

The horizontalist movement of PZPR members was led by Zbigniew Iwanow, a PZPR member who also happened to be the leader of the Torun region within Solidarnosc. That movement consisted of tens of thousands of PZPR members in university and factory branches of the PZPR, from 17 of Poland's 49 regions.(Barker, 1986:81) The horizontalists were critical opponents of the policies of the regime and outspoken advocates of reform. Many of them were also members of Solidarnosc.(MacDonald,1977b:3) They wanted to democratize the PZPR by mobilizing the rank and file members to win control of the party away from the PZPR apparatus. Then, the new party could undertake a massive reform of Poland in conformity with the needs and desires of the working class.

(Ascherson,1982:201-203)

The 'horizontalists'...looked to institutional changes within the party as a solution to political problems, rather than developing their own independent programmes for change. It was notable that they did not call for an end to the party's political monopoly. They hoped for a link between the workers' movement and their renewal movement inside the party.(Barker,1986:81)

The horizontalists were sincere in their desire to reform the party. They were far from realistic in believing that they could seize control of the party from below to undertake a radical transformation of Polish society. They put all their energy into preparing for a July 1981 PZPR party congress, and then largely disappeared after their failure to make a dent in the proceedings.

* * * * *

Within Solidarnosc, there were at least three distinct strategies on offer to the working class during 1981: the moderate strategy of Lech Walesa (supported by other moderate leaders and the Catholic intellectuals who served as Walesa's advisers), the social democratic/centrist strategy of some of the leading figures in KOR (e.g., Jacek Kuron), and the radical or centrist strategy of the left wing of Solidarnosc, the Lublin Group. We will examine each in turn.

The moderates in the leadership of Solidarnosc -- best typified by Walesa and his Catholic advisers -- sought to use the existence of Solidarnosc to win reforms in the structure of Polish society through a "temporary accommodation" with the regime. At no time did the moderates ever contemplate the possibility of overturning the regime. They may have supported the mass struggle to form Solidarnosc, but they consistently opposed any struggle that would challenge the 'leading role of the party'. In fact, the moderate leaders of Solidarnosc "longed for the party to play the role of 'partner'...to join with them in a collaborative enterprise to renew the institutions of Polish society."(Barker,1986:90)

Once Solidarnosc was formed, Walesa and his moderates became consistent opponents of all acts of spontaneous working class militancy. They saw every strike and protest not initiated and strictly controlled by the national leadership of Solidarnosc as a threat to their control over the mass movement, and as something that weakened their ability to negotiate a partnership with the regime. While the moderates made their distaste for the regime clear, they argued that compromise with the PZPR was the only way to avoid Soviet intervention. Thus, the moderates favored the use of just enough pressure to convince the PZPR that they should share power with the union leaders (and perhaps the

church). As a result, Walesa and company had a paternalistic and instrumental attitude towards the working class, treating their radicalism as unrealistic and the movement as something to be manipulated for its own good.(Brenner,1982:9)

In reality, of course, no tripartite agreement to share power between the church the union and the PZPR was possible, unless the moderates in the Solidarnosc leadership were prepared to serve as a reliable instrument of the PZPR against the working class. (Brenner,1982:10) Although the regime proved time and again its willingness to join a partnership with the Solidarnosc moderates, there were real limits on how much force Walesa and his allies could use to push the government to make concessions., and still retain control of the movement.

Until March 1981, the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc had the initiative, both within the union and the country. However, after backing down from a major confrontation with the regime in March, the moderates in Solidarnosc lost that initiative. After March, their strategy was a negative one, involving a campaign against working class militancy, in order to prove the value of the union to the regime. But, that effort to prove themselves to the regime was made very difficult by the continuing radicalization of the working class.

In acting as a fire brigade intent on extinguishing every blaze of militancy, the moderate leaders of Solidarnosc were ably assisted by the Church, and by its representative within the ranks of the Solidarnosc leadership -- the Catholic intellectuals who acted as advisors to Walesa.(Bingen,1984:221,224) The rise of Solidarnosc meant the Church no longer enjoyed the unique position of being the only major institution, not controlled by the regime.(Bingen,1984:221) Furthermore, the new union developed so quickly, that Church leaders scarcely had time to qualify their sermons calling for an end to the strike

action before the new union was formed.(Bingen,1984:218-219; Barker,1986:25; Persky,1981:101,121-122; Ruane,1982:24) In those circumstances, the church had absolutely no hope of controlling the millions of radicalizing workers who comprised Solidarnosc. But it could seek to influence the general direction of the new union by infiltrating it at its highest levels, and reinforcing the position of the moderate leaders. And that is just what it did, surrounding Walesa and other moderate leaders of the union with a bevy of Catholic intellectuals that could provide expert advice and act as a moderating influence on the movement.(Bingen, 1984:219) Throughout the revolutionary crisis, these Catholic intellectuals played a moderating role, always seeking an accommodation with the regime, and always counselling against militancy and confrontation.¹⁰

* * * * *

After the formation of Solidarnosc, and even after the formal dissolution of KOR itself (in September 1981), its members acted as a brains trust for some of the more militant worker leaders of Solidarnosc. As KOR members became key union functionaries and advisors, they formed a centrist current acting in competition with the more moderate Catholic advisors surrounding Walesa.¹¹ For the first seven months after the creation of Solidarnosc, KOR pursued the same strategy it had developed prior to August 1980 -- viewing Solidarnosc as the autonomous mass movement that had the power to win major structural reforms from the regime. At the same time, Kuron and others regarded Solidarnosc as a mass movement that could prevent social conflict from escalating to the point where the political power of the PZPR seemed endangered to its Soviet allies.¹² (KOR believed that as long as Solidarnosc did not develop a revolutionary strategy, and the PZPR was not taken over by 'liberal' elements, KOR believed the Soviets would not

invade and the Polish government would not use mass repression.(Zuzowski, 1988:172-173)

During the first portion of the revolutionary crisis, the differences between Walesa and the social democrats were hardly discernible. They only really became apparent after the moderates' strategy of trying to extract reforms from the regime by seeking a partnership with the PZPR had clearly failed. Once it was clear that Walesa's strategy of combining negotiations with empty threats of strike action would not suffice to secure reforms, and that the moderates were in danger of losing control over the mass movement, the social democrats set off in a new direction. KOR and elements of the union leadership associated with it developed a new centrist strategy. They abandoned the goal of seeking reforms through negotiations with the regime, calling for a 'self-limiting revolution.' Instead of merely fighting for workers' rights and interests, they sought to 'free civil society' from the Polish state.

The aim was not to change the actual structure of governmental power in Poland, but to remove as many social functions as possible from the trammels of the state, rendering them independent of 'politics'. Thus, information and the media, education, even the economy should be conducted without state intervention.(Barker, 1986:92)

The tactical conclusion was that while Solidarnosc sought to get control of civil society from the regime, the governmental power of the PZPR should not be challenged.

(Barker,1986:92) This left reformist vision of the PZPR government and the Polish nation (in control of civil society) coexisting, without challenging the power of each other, was essentially centrist, though it had an element of syndicalism to it.

KOR leaders like Kuron shared something in common with Walesa and his followers -- the recognition that Solidarnosc must limit itself for fear of a Soviet invasion.

Where they differed from the moderates was in their disbelief that it was possible to talk the PZPR into reforms, and their desire to go beyond some kind of partnership with the regime.

Instead, they aimed for a long period of dual power, which they thought the Soviet Union could accept as long as Solidarity did not directly challenge the Polish CP's political hegemony or the USSR's national interests. They proposed that Solidarity follow a strategy of enveloping the regime, by taking de facto power in the economy and other social institutions, but not the state. They hoped to slowly strangle to death the bureaucracy by cutting it off from its roots in society. (Brenner, 1982:10)

To pursue that strategy, Kuron and his associates argued for the introduction of a self-managed economy with control of each enterprise vested in the hands of a management elected by the workforce, within a market system. That position was formally adopted at the Solidarnosc congress in September 1981. Thus, KOR naively convinced themselves that it would be possible "to 'detach' ...the operation of the economy from the control of the state...without directly challenging the state authorities." Somehow Kuron and the others ignored the fact that it was the "control over the organization of the production and allocation of the surplus (that-BM) constituted the substance of the bureaucracy's power." (Brenner, 1982:11) KOR's centrist strategy was absolutely refuted by events.

* * * * *

The most radical strategy adopted by any substantial section of Solidarnosc was the strategy favored by some of the regional leaders associated with the 'Lublin Group.' That current, which was centered in Lublin and Lodz, but had supporters throughout the country, developed in September 1981.

Their strategy involved reliance upon the radical tactic of an 'active strike' (i.e., a strike in which the workforce occupies their workplace, assumes full control over

production, and continues to work, distributing the product themselves) to establish workers' control over the entire Polish economy. The Lublin Group (LG) radicals agreed on the need for workers' control of the factories and distribution, recognizing that the seizure of control over the economy would require some kind of political confrontation with the PZPR. (That is why they called for the formation of a workers' militia to protect workers as they carried out the active strikes that would give them control over the economy.) Where they differed was on the nature of that political confrontation, and the political form the workers movement should adopt.

Some elements of the LG favored the formation of a political party. Others believed it would be possible for the union to organize free elections or a referendum on the political power of the PZPR. Another group wanted to restructure the Polish parliament (the Sejm) to incorporate a new lower house, composed of freely elected delegates who could exercise control over the economy.(Brenner,1982:12-13) Finally, another current -- around figures like Zbigniew Kowalewski, a leading member of the Lodz region of Solidarnosc -- viewed workers' control over the factories and the economy as a short-term measure on the way to deposing the state. (Kowalewski,1982a,1982b,1982c,1985,1986b) But, despite this willingness to challenge the political power of the PZPR in some way, none of these "radical elements...made clear how power actually was to be transferred to such governing bodies from the bureaucracy. That is they never developed a strategy for taking power."(Brenner,1982:12-13)

What made the LG more radical than KOR and the centrists, was their leftward evolution towards the idea of challenging the PZPR's state power, their desire to create a workers' militia to defend the movement for workers' self-management in the factories and

the economy, and their more practical commitment to action. (The Solidarnosc leadership in Lodz actually set a date to launch an active strike in their region, hoping their initiative would inspire the remainder of the Polish working class to take similar action. Their plan was aborted by the imposition of martial law.) Unlike KOR, the most radical section of the LG did not believe Solidarnosc could co-exist with the PZPR state for an extended period of time. People like Kowalewski rejected the attempt to institutionalize dual power, so Solidarnosc could carry out a slow strangulation of the regime. They argued -- though not always consistently -- that Polish workers would have to confront the power of the state in the short term. And, they favored the creation of some kind of new government based on the working class. Furthermore, they believed that result should be brought about through the collective action of the mass of the working class (hence the discussion about an active strike). Despite all of this, none of the radicals

had thought through plans to deal with the ultimate questions of power in Polish society -- above all, what to do about the brute fact of the state's monopoly of force. The rank and file of Solidarity was gradually eroding the bureaucracy's domination. Yet no one appears to have asked what was to be done should a confrontation become unavoidable as a result...no one, that is, except the ...(PZPR-BM) bureaucracy itself. (Brenner,1982:13)

(7.3) The Overall Process of the Polish Revolution

The overall process of the Polish revolution -- from the PZPR's announcement of the price hikes on July 1, 1980 to the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981 -- can best be understood in terms of the changing balance of class power and initiative, between the regime and the working class. In this section, we will examine that changing balance of class forces as well as the dynamics of the revolutionary process.

FIGURE 7.2 KEY EVENTS AND MAIN PERIODS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN POLAND

<u>Key Events</u>	<u>Main Periods</u>	<u>Balance of Power</u>
	prior to July 1980	<u>NON-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION</u>
PZPR announces price increases (July 1, 1980)	<u>[1] (July 1 - Aug. 16, 1980)</u>	working class launches fragmented strikes to defend its living standards from price hikes
First inter-factory strike committee (MKS) formed at Lenin Shipyard, Gdansk (Aug. 17, 1980)	<u>[2] (Aug. 17 - Sept. 21, 1980)</u>	working class shifts from defensive strikes to offensive action, from economic to political demands; ruling class splits over appropriate response, goes onto defensive, makes economic and political concessions to buy time
Gdansk agreement signed between MKS and PZPR (Aug 31, 1980)	<u>[3] (Aug. 31, 1980 - March 30, 1981)</u>	<u>PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION;</u>
		sustained working class offensive on local and regional level; national offensive muted by Solidarnosc leadership; divided ruling class on the defensive, avoiding major confrontation, but resisting Solidarnosc on local and regional level; military prepares for martial law
Threatened general strike over Bydgoszcz incident cancelled (Mar. 30, 1981)	<u>[4] (April 1 - October 7, 1981)</u>	important defeat for Solidarnosc; Solidarnosc no longer clearly on offensive; an unstable situation of

dual powerlessness, a stalemate;
both sides turn inward debating
strategies; ruling class remains
divided, military continues
preparations for martial law;
working class begins shift to
creating self-management over the
economy

Solidarnosc Congress ends without
viable political direction (Oct. 7, 1981)

[5] (Oct 8 - Dec. 12, 1981)

Solidarnosc divided, fragmenting;
no clear offensive except for
Lublin Group; majority of working
class retreating from class struggle;
ruling class preparations for
military coup

Martial Law Declared (Dec. 13, 1981)

[6] (Dec. 13...) PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION ENDED

Sustained ruling class offensive;
Solidarnosc driven underground;
revolutionary crisis terminated,
counter-revolution begins

* * * * *

By June 1980, Poland was a tinderbox waiting to catch fire, with social tensions rising due to the economic crisis, and with the vanguard of the working class increasingly.(Barker,1986:16-17) The immediate cause of the strike wave which created Solidarnosc and initiated the revolutionary crisis, was a round of price increases on meat announced by the government on July 1st.(Ruane,1982:1-2; Potel,1982:34) To avoid major social confrontation, the PZPR made immediate concessions to workers who went on strike (i.e. the skilled workers in the large plants) for wage increases, leaving the least confident

and less organized sections of the working class to carry the burden of the price increases.(Barker, 1986:17; Hahn,1987:1; Harman,1983: 226; Ruane,1982:10-11; Weschler,1982:169) But, the PZPR's strategy -- to settle with vanguard workers and victimize the rest of the working class -- backfired. Once the government had established the precedent of making concessions to strikes, it had no obvious way of stopping the strike wave, without repression. (Ruane,1982: 8; Simon,1985:22-23; Barker,1986:17-18; Potel,1982:34-35; Harman, 1983:226)

As workers' confidence in their ability to win concessions increased, "their appetites for change grew and their demands broadened."(Barker,1986:17) That was evident in Lublin during mid-July, where strikers first made political demands (e.g., freedom of the press), and where the city was closed down by a general strike involving 300,000 workers. The regime negotiated an economic settlement without giving into any political demands.(Barker,1986:17-19; Persky,1981:12; Potel,1982:36-37; Simon,1985:24; Weschler,1982:169-170)

During July, both the working class and the regime were responding differently than in past confrontations. Vanguard workers were better prepared than they had been in 1970 or 1976, having debated their strategy and tactics in advance. Meanwhile, the ruling class had decided not to use repression, because of past experience. As a result, the strikes of July 1980 broke the pattern of previous actions.

Up until July 1980 there were two models of workers' protest in Poland: the violent strikes, with demands for wage rises, which turn into street demonstrations and clashes with the militia; or strikes which 'don't look like strikes' -- in other words, strikes which affect only one or two sections in a plant, generally concerned with the allocation of bonuses, or against production schedules that harmed the workers' interests.(KOR cited in Potel,1982:38)

Unlike the past, strikers were staying inside the factories rather than confronting the police in the streets. Furthermore, the strikes -- which were occurring simultaneously all over the country -- were led by workers fully informed about what was going on elsewhere in the working class movement.(Raina,1981:458) Successful strikes on the scale of what happened in July, were bound to generate political demands and more permanent forms of working class self-organization.(Potel,1982:38) For example, an important feature of the July strikes was the election of strike committees that remained active after the strike.(Potel,1982:38-39; Raina,1981:444)

By early August, at least 150 major workplaces across the country had experienced strikes.(Barker,1986:19) Although the vanguard of the Polish working class had mounted an impressive defensive battle against the price increases, it remained sectional and uncoordinated. But, the events in Lublin showed the potential for the movement to become coordinated, to pass from the defensive to the offensive, and to move beyond economic demands to political ones.

The strike wave escalated in a new and important way with the occupation of the massive Lenin shipyard in Gdansk on August 14.(Persky,1981:4,21) That strike led to the formation of the first inter-factory strike committee (MKS) and eventually to the formation of Solidarnosc. In that sense, it marked a crucial turning point in the struggle, the point at which the working class moved from defensive action onto the offensive, and from economic strikes to political ones.

The strike at the Lenin shipyard began as a protest against the July price hikes and the August 7 firing of a workplace militant from the shipyard.(Persky,1982:74; Barker,1986:20; MacDonald,1981:90) The initiative was taken by supporters and members

of the Coastal Free Trade Unions group in the Gdansk area including Lech Walesa. When the strike began, Walesa and the other Robotnik Wybrzeza activists were elected to the shipyard strike committee. The demands made by the strike committee quickly grew to include a variety of other demands, most importantly, the right to form free, independent trade unions. (Potel,1981:46; Raina,1981:461; Ascherson,1981:147-148)

By the following day, the strike had spread from the Lenin shipyard to other shipyards and large workplaces in the Gdansk region, with the strike committees in each workplace maintaining contact.(Barker,1986:21) On the third day of the strike a critical turning point was reached when management at the Lenin shipyard tried to settle the strike, conceding pay increases, the reinstatement of victimized militants, and a guarantee of no reprisals against the strikers.(Persky,1981:73-74,91; Potel,1982: 129) But, strikers from other smaller workplaces convinced the Gdansk strike committee to continue the strike in solidarity with them. The shipyard workers, and representatives from 20 other workplaces formed a new body, the Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS), to coordinate their demands, conduct negotiations and organize the common strike action.(Persky,1981: 75-80; Ash,1985: 41; Raina,1981:467; Potel,1982:50-51)

With the formation of the MKS, the strike had entered a new phase. Instead of being a defensive action by skilled workers, it had become an offensive general strike by all the workers of the Gdansk region, for political demands -- a strike that would grow until it encompassed a huge portion of the Polish working class. (Potel,1982:51) A new list of 21 economic and political demands was formulated and presented to the Polish government, the centerpiece being the demand for the right to form independent trade unions.(MacDonald,1981b:34-35)¹³

As news of the formation of the MKS spread throughout the Gdansk region, additional workplaces formed strike committees and affiliated. By August 19, four days after the MKS had been formed, it had grown from the 22 originally affiliated factories to more than 250 affiliations. And, as word of the strike spread to Szczecin, an MKS was established there, centered in the Warski shipyards. By the time the strike was one week old, the Gdansk and region MKS represented between about 370 strike committees and somewhere between 200,000 and 400,000 workers, while the Szczecin MKS represented between about 130 workplaces. (Barker, 1986:24; Persky, 1981:101; Lipski, 1985:421) The regime tried to break the movement by seeking a settlement with individual workplaces. But, that plan failed when the MKS decided all negotiations would be centralized in the MKS. Meanwhile, the number of strike committees affiliated to the Gdansk MKS continued to grow, while the MKS got its first indications of support from workers in Krakow and Silesia. (Persky, 1981:91-96; Ash, 1985:48-49; Potel, 1982:130-131; Barker, 1986:23)

The strikes took the form of factory occupations, with each workplace strike committee sending two delegates to the MKS located in the Lenin shipyard. As the strike spread and became a regional general strike, the MKS asserted day to day control over life in the area, becoming a soviet-type institution.

On August 22, one week after the strike in the Lenin shipyard had begun, the regime agreed in principle to negotiate with the three MKS committees in Gdansk, Szczecin and Wroclaw. (Ash, 1985:50) On Sunday August 24, the PZPR leadership met and debated what to do. Hardliners warned against conceding the right to form independent trade, something that "would give birth to a situation of dual power." (cited in Persky, 1981: 27-128; Raina, 1981:472-473) The more liberal element pushed for the PZPR to make

concessions on all the strikers' demands except the one for free and independent trade unions. Instead, they suggested co-opting the movement by promising to allow new elections to a reformed version of the existing trade unions.(Ruane,1982:21,25; Raina,1981:474,523-524; Persky,1981:113-115; Hahn,1987:7-9)

By August 26, the nation-wide strike movement was gathering such momentum that Walesa urged other workers to refrain from striking, to avoid a bloody confrontation with the regime. But, when the regime's rhetoric turned confrontational, Walesa issued an ultimatum to the regime: if there was no settlement within three or four days, the Gdansk MKS would call for a national general strike. That meant the PZPR had a stark choice: they could either buy time by making concessions, or they could face a nation-wide general strike knowing that if they were unable to repress it, the Soviets might well invade. (Raina, 1981:543,550-551) On August 29th, the politburo followed the hardliners and opted for repression. But defence minister Jaruzelski and security chief Kania vetoed the decision, "saying that they could not vouch for the loyalty of their forces." (Persky,1981:129; Raina,1981:477; Potel,1982:173)

Kania and Jaruzelski were deterred from trying to crush the movement by the ascending character of the strike movement. With workers in more than 4,000 workplaces around the country involved, and with MKS committees assuming ever greater control within certain regions, the government was incapable of crushing the movement on such short notice. On the eve of a nation wide general strike, the PZPR opted to make concessions on all 21 of the MKS demands.(Barker,1986:24,29; Persky,1981:129; Ash,1985:58; Potel,1982:172; Ascherson,1981:163)

The PZPR conceded the right to free and independent trade unions, along with a host of other very substantial reforms; in return the leaders of the Gdansk MKS agreed the new unions would respect the constitution and the PZPR's alliance with the USSR, and refrain from challenging the leading role of the Party in governing the country.

(Raina,1981:551;564; Potel,1982:159) Several features of the agreement -- including the political conditions the MKS accepted -- provoked a fierce debate among the strikers. However, in the end, those concessions to the regime were accepted.(Persky,1981:132; Potel,1982:166-171; Ascherson, 1981:164-166) The Gdansk and Szczecin agreements contained a very impressive program of reforms.¹⁴ But, the government would never respect those agreements, provoking further confrontations in the revolutionary crisis that had developed.

* * * * *

The Gdansk accord marked a sharp shift in the balance of class power, the beginning of a period during which the regime would remain demoralized, internally split (between hardliners and those who wanted to co-opt the movement) and on the defensive. After the Gdansk settlement, Gierek was pushed out of the leadership in favor of Stanislaw Kania -- one of the politburo members who had opposed the use of repression in August.(Michta, 1990:80-83)

The Gdansk accord was intended to buy time for the regime to devise a new strategy. But, the victory by the workers in Gdansk Szczecin and Silesia, which only applied to workers in those regions, touched off a massive strike wave as millions of others fought for the same rights. On September 15th, the regime agreed to apply the Gdansk accord to all workers.(Ash,1985:74; Weschler, 1982:176) But, in the meantime,

millions of additional workers had organized strike committees and MKSs, strengthening the whole movement.(Barker,1986:30,37; Ash,1985:76) On September 17, the representatives of 35 MKSs met in Gdansk to establish the independent, self-governing trade union named Solidarnosc, led by a national coordinating committee (KKP). The new union represented in excess of 3 million workers, most of them industrial workers who had been forced to fight for their new rights.(Barker,1986:38; Ash,1985:75) Later, almost every section of the Polish working class would join Solidarnosc, which had 6 million members in early October and 10 million by the end of the year.(Barker,1986:38)

By mid-November some clear patterns had begun to emerge. Just as the economic strikes of July had led to the political struggle of August, the political victory in September fed back into hundreds of struggles over local grievances.(Harman,1983: 230) Not only were Polish workers joining Solidarnosc, they were also fighting to extract even greater concessions from local authorities (e.g., campaigns to fire corrupt local officials). (Simon,1985:34-35; Ascherson,1987:200) Naturally, the many local and regional victories that resulted only encouraged workers to confront the national regime further to get implementation of the Gdansk accord. In the seven months between September 1 and April 1, there were at least five major incidents in which Solidarnosc, or a substantial portion of the workers' movement, squared off against the regime. Over that 7 month period, the intensity of the confrontations increased, as Polish society became more and more polarized between two camps and as the struggle became more and more politicized.

The first of those incidents came in early October, when the national leadership of Solidarnosc called for a one hour strike by sections of the working class, to force the regime to settle local demands and to respect the Gdansk accord (e.g., to grant Solidarnosc

access to the mass media). Predictably, the union's efforts to limit the strike movement failed, as hundreds of thousands of workers not designated to strike did so.(Barker, 1986:41; Ash,1985:79-80; Harman,1983:229; Simon,1985:36-37)

The second incident arose when the Polish courts rewrote the draft statutes of Solidarnosc (submitted for purposes of registering the union) to formally recognize the leading role of the party, and respect Poland's international alliances. That pushed the KKP to threaten a general strike for November 12, if the court decision was not reversed.(Ascherson,1987:209) As the deadline for strike action approached, there was mass enthusiasm for a general strike, with rank and file workers, local factory committees and regional committees making extensive preparations. At the last moment, the regime backed down, reinforcing the idea that collective militancy worked.(Barker,1986:42; Ash,1985:81-85)

Solidarity's success at the national level was matched by a continuing ferment in the regions, where dozens of local struggles each had the potential to flare up into national battles. For example, in the province of Szestochowa, Solidarnosc offices were raided by the police who confiscated all the printing equipment -- on the orders of the provincial governor. Solidarnosc strike action forced the regime to remove him. (Ash,1985:85; Barker,1986:42) So great was the attack on local officials, that by the end of October the regime "had been forced to replace one-third of district secretaries and prefects." (Harman,1983:230; Barker,1986:42-44; Ash,1985:91-92; Simon,1985: 37) These local political confrontations were combined with a huge wave of economic strikes -- all of which encouraged workers to make new demands for reform (e.g., limit the privileges of the police, open the private hospitals for the elite to the masses, etc.).(Harman,1983:230)

The next national crisis, the third incident (the 'Narozniak affair') during the September to March period, erupted in Warsaw. On November 20, the police arrested two union members for publishing a secret government document. In response workers at the Ursus tractor factory and the Huta Warszawa steel works went on strike, and the Warsaw regional committee of Solidarnosc called for a regional general strike unless the regime released the two and agreed to a host of other demands (e.g., the immediate implementation of radical cuts in the security police budget).(Ash,1985:93) Within days, 20 factories in Warsaw had been occupied and had voted for a general strike.(Barker,1986:43; Ash,1985:90-91,93; Simon,1985:38) The national leaders of Solidarnosc condemned the strike, and worked frantically to get an agreement before a general strike could take place. The two arrested activists were released, and then Walesa and Jacek Kuron swung into action to defuse the strike movement.(Barker,1986:43; Ash,1985:91-93)

This typical incident illustrates a number of key things: the spontaneous militancy of the working class, the local and regional dimension of the class struggle, and the role of the Solidarnosc leadership in containing and limiting militancy. This incident also showed the tenuous grip moderates like Walesa had on the rank and file.(Ash,1985:93) Solidarnosc may have been intended by its moderate leaders to be nothing more than a trade union. But the resistance of the PZPR to implementing the Gdansk accord was turning the union into a mass movement that was fighting for the democratization of Poland. Slowly but surely, Solidarnosc was being transformed from a mere trade union back into something much closer to what the Gdansk MKS had been initially.

By the end of November, Poland had endured three months of escalating confrontation between the new union and the ruling class. Inside the PZPR, even the more

liberal party leaders were beginning to despair of the possibility of ever taming the movement.(Ascherson,1987:202) The inability of Kania to co-opt Solidarnosc, "the growing disarray of the party's rank and file, Soviet pressure for action, and the consolidation of Solidarity's position in the country, (had all-BM) deepened the cleavages within the Politburo."(Michta,1990:84)

In early December there was an invasion scare, as the western press ran countless stories about Soviet and Warsaw Pact troop movements on Polish borders. A Soviet invasion seemed imminent. PZPR officials warned of the threat posed to Poland by the 'anti-socialist' disturbances, and asserted the right of the Party to call on its socialist neighbors for support.(Barker, 1986:47-48; Ash,1985:94-95; Harman,1983:231; Simon,1985:38) There is some evidence to suggest the Soviets were contemplating an invasion, but were dissuaded by General Jaruzelski with a promise that the Polish army would crush Solidarnosc if Kania's efforts to co-opt the movement failed.(Michta,1990:93)

By mid-December, the invasion scare was over.(Barker,1986: 47-48) But, the incident pushed the Solidarnosc leadership into talks with the PZPR about a 'national accord' to prevent an invasion.(Ascherson,1987:205)

Walesa talked openly about the need to "surrender the strike weapon and negotiate a return to economic security and social peace."(cited in Simon,1985:38; Ash,1985:100-103) However, Walesa was prevented from reaching an agreement with the regime by the militancy of rank and file workers. Meanwhile, within the PZPR, the party hardliners and the Soviets limited Kania's room to manoeuvre as he looked for a way to neutralize Solidarnosc without force.(Ash,1985:102-103)

The fourth of the five national incidents that occurred during this September to March period occurred in January, over implementation of a clause from the Gdansk accord that committed the government to accepting work-free Saturdays beginning in January 1981. The regime announced it was unilaterally retracting the concession, and would give only two work-free Saturdays per month. Solidarnosc responded by telling workers to stay home anyway -- a decision respected by 70-90% of the workforce. (Barker,1986:48-49) Further, the Solidarnosc leadership called for a one hour general strike on February 3. Before the strike deadline was reached, the PZPR and the union reached a compromise -- three work-free Saturdays per month. Even though the PZPR ignored the other outstanding union demands, Solidarnosc leaders cancelled the February 3 strike.(Barker,1986:48-49; Ash,1985:135-137) Working class militants protested the deal, but to no avail. (Barker,1986:49; Ash,1985:140-141) The dispute over work-free Saturdays showed yet again that the regime had no intention of living up to the Gdansk accord.(Ash,1985:136)

During January and early February, the pressures towards national confrontations continued to be fed by local and regional battles, "as national and local struggles interacted."(Harman, 1983:231; Barker,1986:49,51; Ash,1985:141-142; Harman,1983:232; Simon, 1985:39-40) Everywhere, Polish workers were using their new found power to purge corrupt officials and to undermine the privileges of the bureaucracy. Wherever a major conflict flared, Walesa appeared to defuse the situation.

In mid-February, the Defence Minister General Jaruzelski also assumed the post of Prime Minister. Because Jaruzelski was a soldier rather than a party bureaucrat, his appointment was welcomed by many nationalist Poles, including Walesa. Jaruzelski used his new position to impose some discipline on the badly factionalized ruling class, while

proceeding with his secret plans to impose martial law.(Micha,1990:95-96) Publicly, the General appealed for a 90 day moratorium on strikes. The Solidarnosc leadership obliged, calling for an end to strike action.(Micha,1990:98) But, the class struggle could not be contained. If Walesa had difficulties controlling Solidarnosc members, Jaruzelski and Kania also had severe difficulties controlling "the tens of thousands of police chiefs, party functionaries and industrial managers who felt under threat." Some of these middle and lower echelon party members "began to take things into their own hands" to combat the union.(Harman, 1983:234; Ash,1985:149-151) It was one of these initiatives by PZPR hardliners that led to the 'Bydgoszcz incident.'

The fifth national incident in the September to March period began on March 19, when several prominent Solidarnosc activists were beaten by police for participating in a sit-in organized by the farmers union, Rural Solidarnosc. The regional committee in Bydgoszcz responded immediately with a two hour warning strike (in which 500,000 workers participated) and a demand the persons responsible for the beatings be brought to justice. (Barker,1986: 51-52; Ash,1985:151-152; Harman,1983:234) The regime replied by defending its right to use force.(Harman, 1983:234)

The Solidarnosc national leadership (KKP) held an emergency meeting and after a bitter debate called a national, 4 hour warning strike for March 27, and an unlimited general strike for March 31, unless the government accepted their demands (which included punishment of those responsible for the beating, official recognition of Rural Solidarnosc, and guaranteed access to the media for Solidarnosc, etc.).(Barker,1986:52; Ash,1985: 153-155; Harman,1983:234-235)

Once again, the two sides prepared to test the resolve of their opponents. The 4 hour strike on March 27 was solid, with an estimated 13 million participants. (Zarembka,1982:274) Even the one million PZPR members in Solidarnosc defied the government and joined the strike.(Barker,1986:52; Ash,1985:157; Harman,1983: 235; Persky,1981:209-210) As tensions mounted, Solidarnosc moderates and the Church desperately sought some kind of compromise. Meanwhile, Polish workers made elaborate preparations for an unlimited general strike. All the regional committees of the union were moved into large factories, while the national leadership moved into the Lenin Shipyard. Workers stockpiled food and bedding in the workplaces, and arranged security for the workplace occupations. In many factories, weapons were prepared to repulse troops or police, in case martial law was imposed or a Soviet invasion occurred.(Ash,1985:156,159; Barker,1986:52-54)¹⁵

Once again, PZPR hardliners insisted the government use troops against the union, prompting Jaruzelski to threaten he would resign before taking such action. The General understood his army could not be sent against Solidarnosc at the height of its power. The troops in the conscript army might not prove reliable if they had to fire on workers.(Harman,1983:235; Michta,1990:100-107)¹⁶ At the last minute, the strike was cancelled by Walesa after the regime agreed to punish those responsible for the beating at Bydgoszcz, to recognize Rural Solidarnosc, and to allow Solidarnosc to publish a weekly newspaper. The union's many other demands were dropped.(Barker, 1986:53-55; Ash,1985:159-160; Harman,1983:235-236)

Once again, the acceptance of a vague compromise by Walesa and the moderate elements of the Solidarnosc leadership, led to a major battle inside the union. Delegates to

the KKP were angry about the decision, and the fact that it was made by Walesa without consulting them. The decision also provoked a storm of protest from more radical elements in the union.(Barker,1986:53-55; Ash,1985:160-163)

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The aborted general strike in March illustrates the predicament of both the Solidarnosc leadership and the regime: while the union leadership was totally unwilling to press home their advantage over the regime, the PZPR was still unable to take the action necessary to repress the union.(Harman,1983:244) Because Solidarnosc had been on the offensive, and because it had the initiative in the class struggle before Bydgoszcz, the March events have to be understood as a self-inflicted political defeat in "a serious trial of strength" with the regime.(Barker,1986: 69) After Bydgoszcz, Solidarnosc was weakened, because the members could no longer understand the strategy being pursued by their leaders.(Harman,1983:243-244) Fortunately, the regime was still so internally divided that it was in "no position...to gain from its significant victory."(Barker,1986:69)

The preparations for the March 31 general strike marked the highpoint of working class participation in Solidarnosc. The seven months from August to March had been a period of steady growth in the size, organization and influence of the union. But, after the aborted general strike, confidence in the union's ability to change Polish society declined steadily.(Barker,1986: 54-55) In the minds of many workers, Solidarnosc was the embodiment of their class power. They believed the union would force the regime to make concessions on a wide variety of economic, political and social issues. But, the cancellation of the March 31 general strike showed otherwise.

Since August, the regime had resisted Solidarnosc every step of the way, conceding nothing unless threatened by a general strike. Clearly, the regime was not willing to be partners in class collaboration with the moderate leaders of the union. (Harman,1983:236) The PZPR had always opposed Solidarnosc, and had only conceded promises of reform as a last resort. The top party leaders always intended to break the power of Solidarnosc -- through peaceful means (e.g., co-optation and corruption) if they could, with force if they had to. The only reason the regime had failed to repress the union by March, was the continuing strength of Solidarnosc, and the continuing weakness of the regime -- an unfavorable balance of power for a decisive confrontation.(Harman,1983:236; Brenner,1982:13) Between September and March, the PZPR could obstruct Solidarnosc, harass working class activists, and plot for the future. But it could not directly confront the union. Party leaders bided their time waiting for an opportunity to crush Solidarnosc. (Barker,1986:79-80)

The PZPR had tried the old methods of regaining control over the working class: switching party leaders and trying to channel the protests into party/state structures (e.g., with the August offers of new trade union elections), but neither device stemmed the tide of revolt.(Barker,1986:39) Try as they might, the PZPR bureaucrats could not co-opt Solidarnosc in order to subvert it from within. The union remained steadfastly independent, threatening the privileges of all the functionaries who made their living in the service of the state and/or the party. (Barker,1986:39) While the regime might have been able to coexist with a tame and bureaucratic trade union (i.e., like those that existed in western Europe), it could not tolerate the continued existence of a Solidarnosc.(Barker, 1986:40) The PZPR leaders dreamed of repressing Solidarnosc; but they could not agree on how and

when to do so.

Those disagreements within the PZPR leadership, coupled with the radicalization of party members who also belonged to Solidarnosc, contributed to a sense of panic in the middle echelons of the party. Large numbers of party officials were removed from office because of mass protests. The cadres of the PZPR knew their privileges were being threatened. Most of them responded by taking a hardline. Others, especially in the lowest layers of the nomenklatura, sought to cultivate good relations with Solidarnosc. As a result, the party apparatus was in considerable disarray.(Barker,1986:77)

But the PZPR leaders were not the only ones intent on avoiding a test of strength in March. The moderate leadership of Solidarnosc were just as anxious to avoid a major confrontation -- though not for tactical reasons like the PZPR leaders. Four times Solidarnosc had threatened the regime with a general strike -- during the registration crisis, the Narozniak affair, over work-free Saturdays and after the Bydgoszcz incident -- and four times Solidarnosc had backed down without having the regime deliver on most of the union's demands. Each time there had been a palpable demoralization on the part of the millions of workers who had learned that real progress only came from using their collective strength.

Under the leadership of moderates like Walesa, Solidarnosc might threaten the regime with an unlimited general strike, but it would not use this weapon. And, since experience had demonstrated that nothing less than such action could force the regime to compromise with the union, both the moderates and the union were left without a strategy to win reforms after March 1981. As long as the moderates set the direction for the union, Solidarnosc could only play the negative role of obstructing the regime, it had no positive

strategy for convincing the regime to collaborate.(Barker,1986:88)

After the political defeat suffered by the union in March 1981, Polish workers were demoralized and confused. For several months the union's members remained largely demobilized. "There were few local strikes, attendance at meetings declined, and activists reported widespread confusion and dismay among the rank and file."(Barker,1986:54-55) That demobilization of the movement helped to fragment what had been a remarkably centralized movement. When the working class mobilized again, during the summer, the movement was fragmented rather than centrally directed, and focused on immediate economic issues rather than national political ones.

After the aborted general strike of March 31, the more radical elements in Solidarnosc realized that their movement could no longer be regarded as simply a trade union, attempting to negotiate reforms with the regime.(Barker,1986:40-41) Since the regime would not reform, Solidarnosc had to become something other than just a 'trade union', or become completely irrelevant. The radicals were forced to rethink their assumptions. While Walesa and the moderates had sought to institutionalize class collaboration with the union as the intermediary between the regime and the working class, radical workers in Solidarnosc had pursued a different goal. They followed an implicitly syndicalist/centrist view, believing the union should "build itself as a countervailing power to the regime, pushing workers' demands, while being careful not to do anything that could lead to the overthrow of the regime."¹⁷ But, after Bydgoszcz, "the strategy shared by almost all the union's activists at the time of its foundation no longer fit...the situation in which" they found themselves.(Harman,1983:245)

Although long term stability in the relationship between Solidarnosc and the PZPR regime was impossible, the Bydgoszcz incident revealed the existence of a temporary stalemate -- a situation in which the regime was impotent while moderate led Solidarnosc "was always reminding itself of its own self-denying ordinances." (Barker, 1986:89) Little wonder the situation of dual power at the end of March 1981 seemed more like dual powerlessness.

After Bydgoszcz, both the PZPR and Solidarnosc recognized the existence of a stalemate and turned inward to deal with the crises in their respective camps, debating strategy and leadership. (Those internal debates shaped the whole period from April through to early October.) But,

the mutual paralysis of the regime and the union could not last forever. It was...an unstable equilibrium, with the strength of one force necessarily tending to erode the strength of the other. (Harman, 1983:261)

After March 1981, Solidarnosc had clearly lost the initiative, but the PZPR had not yet gained it. The question was, after both sides debated strategy, which one would seize the initiative first, and resolve the impasse by imposing its solution to the crisis.

* * * * *

From April through to early October (the end of the Solidarnosc Congress), the two main classes prepared themselves for further battle. During that six month period, there would be no national confrontations like those of the previous period. Both sides were preoccupied with their own internal battles.

There were two issues of importance for the 9th Party Congress of the PZPR in July: the leadership's problems with its restive working class members (especially those in the horizontalist movement), and the ongoing factional battle within the leadership. The

horizontalists, who wanted to democratize the party as a prelude to reforming the state, had campaigned for an early party Congress and secret elections for the delegates.

(Harman,1983:241) But, very few members of the horizontalist movement were elected as delegates to the 9th Congress. They could not convince workers outside the party that joining the horizontalist movement (and the PZPR) was worthwhile, and that reforming the PZPR was possible.(Ash,1985:98-99,171-174; Ruane, 1982:145; Harman,1983:241)¹⁸

The other important issue for the PZPR was the continuing debate among the factions of the party leadership. The hardliners, moderates, 'liberals' and the military men all shared the same fundamental goal: the continued domination of the PZPR over Polish society. Where they differed was over the tactical question of how best to secure that domination. The hardliners always favored direct repression. In their exuberance to smash the working class, they were guilty of under-estimating their opponents, and over-estimating the capacities of the military.

By the summer of 1981, the strategy of co-optation, favored by the moderates and the 'liberals', had been completely rejected.

(Ash,1985:201) Jaruzelski and the military stood somewhere in between, favoring repression, but recognizing Solidarnosc could not be crushed until the balance of class forces was better.

When the 9th PZPR Congress was held in July, it changed nothing. The PZPR did not adopt any new policies, it was not taken over by reformers, and the new Politburo remained a mixture of hardliners, moderates, 'liberals,' and generals. As a result, in the aftermath of the Congress more than half a million members quit the PZPR.

(Barker,1986:84; Weydenthal,1983a:49)

Despite the fragmentation and paralysis of the PZPR, the ruling class had other critical pillars of support. Party leaders still controlled at least 80% of industry, dominated the state bureaucracy, and controlled the army (300,000 men) and the state security police (100,000 men).(Harman,1983:262) Ultimately, the ruling class strategy for defeating Solidarnosc would emerge from the portion of the party/state machine least affected by Solidarnosc -- the military. After the July 1981 PZPR Congress, "the centre of the government system shifted away from the party and towards the army."(Barker,1986:85)

After Bydgoszcz, the most pressing problem facing Polish workers was the economic crisis. During 1981, national income fell by 13% and industrial production by 11%. Wage increases were nullified by the increase in the cost of living. Meanwhile, meat production dropped by 20-25% from 1980 levels.(Mason,1985:165) By the summer of 1981, much of Polish industry was operating at 50% of capacity because of shortages of energy, raw materials, equipment and parts. Shortages also afflicted consumers, with meat, many kinds of food, soap, toilet paper, children's shoes and many other basic necessities in very short supply. The amount of time workers spent in queues soared.(Barker,1986:104-105; Harman,1983:244; Mason,1985:166) By December 1981, levels of working class consumption had fallen by about 33% in less than three years.(Brenner,1982:7) The economic crisis, which predated the rise of Solidarnosc, was being compounded by the political stalemate between the two main classes.(Barker,1986:88)

Before the spring of 1981, Solidarnosc had steadfastly refused to accept any responsibility for the economic crisis -- whether at the national or workplace level. Once it became clear the union could not force the regime to accept reforms, and that the PZPR would not solve the economy's problems on their own, the union had to concern itself with

the economic crisis or become irrelevant. During the spring and summer of 1981, the economic situation set the agenda for Solidarnosc in two ways. First, a movement for workers' self-management in the workplace arose within Solidarnosc. Second, the economic crisis forced workers back into collective action during the summer.

Prior to the spring of 1981, Polish workers expressed no interest in controlling production or managing the workplace, because of past experience. (Workers' councils created in 1956-57 became tools of management and the regime in the absence of workers' political power.) But, in the spring, Solidarnosc members from some of the largest plants in the country formed a group called Network to devise a strategy for workers' self-management and economic reform.¹⁹ On July 8, Network held a national conference with delegates from over 1,000 workplaces. They adopted a proposal for an economic system in which workers' councils in each plant would appoint the director of the enterprise and participate in management of the firm, all enterprises to compete on a market basis.²⁰ The Network group was far from realistic in suggesting this new economic order would be established by laws passed in the PZPR dominated parliament -- the Sejm. (Barker, 1986:96-99; Norr, 1987)

The Network proposals, which did not find much favor with Solidarnosc moderates, were enthusiastically supported by the centrist faction in Solidarnosc (people like Jacek Kuron from KOR). Kuron had also developed a new strategy for the union, calling for a 'self-limiting revolution', in which the union would seize control of civil society, while leaving the PZPR state intact. Eliminating the bureaucracy's centralized control over the economy and clipping the wings of the nomenklatura system, fit nicely with the strategic thrust of the centrists.²¹

But, there was a second way in which the economy forced itself onto the Solidarnosc agenda. In mid-July, after three and one half months of relative social peace, economic strikes broke out along with hunger marches. The sudden upsurge occurred for two reasons: the worsening economic crisis and the regime's new offensive against Solidarnosc.(Barker,1986:104) In July, the PZPR launched a multi-pronged offensive against the working class, announcing large price hikes on basic food items (e.g., bread and butter tripled in price), cutting the meat ration by 20%, arresting some leaders of the Polish nationalist movement, reaffirming PZPR control over the media, and starting a campaign to blame the union and strikes for the economic crisis.(Barker, 1986:103,105; Ash,1985:194-198)

The government offensive pushed workers to organize strikes, demonstrations, rallies and hunger marches. For example, on August 3, workers blocked the center of Warsaw with taxis, cars, busses and trucks for 48 hours to protest against food prices and shortages. The protest concluded on August 5th with a two hour general strike of half a million people in the area.(Barker,1986: 105-106; Harman, 1983:244) The rapid escalation of the protests forced union leaders and the regime to meet for emergency talks on the economy. The government demanded union support for its economic policies, while Solidarnosc pledged support for an austerity package if the regime would take certain steps towards real "institutional reform and democratization."(Barker,1986: 106-107) The government refused to make any concessions. While the demonstrations slowed in August, economic and political strikes escalated. For example, on August 19th and 20th, there was a national strike by workers in the newspaper and printing industry to protest the government's exclusion of Solidarnosc from the media, and the closure of a Solidarnosc printing press at

Huta-Katowice.(Barker,1986:107-108; Harman, 1983:244)

The general rise in social tensions was partly in response to the PZPR's new offensive.(Barker,1986:105; Staniszki,1982: 187) The core of this new offensive was the campaign to blame Solidarnosc for the economic crisis.(Harman,1983:241) By mid-August, the union's failure to accept any practical responsibility for the state of the economy had given some credence to the regime's claim that strikes by union members were making the economic crisis worse.(Barker,1986:109)

When the KKP met in mid-August, they were unable to offer the Polish working class a viable strategy for dealing with the key problems: the growing economic crisis, the government's new ideological offensive against Solidarnosc, and the PZPR's general intransigence on reforms. All the proposals made by moderate Solidarnosc leaders for dealing with the economic crisis presupposed the impossible -- the cooperation of the regime. Meanwhile, the revival of working class militancy made top union leaders -- both moderates and centrists -- fearful of losing control over the working class.

The growing disaffection of a section of the working class, pushed the KKP to endorse the centrist/Network idea that workers should establish self-management. (Some Solidarnosc leaders also called for other political and institutional changes, like free local elections.) To reassure the regime that the union's shift towards such an openly 'political' program did not signal the beginning of a campaign to depose the government, the Solidarnosc leadership also called for an immediate end to all strikes and demonstrations, and started a campaign to convince workers to resume working every second Saturday. (Barker,1986:110-111; Ash,1985:202-204)

During September and October, the Solidarnosc Congress was held in Gdansk in two stages. From September 5th to the 10th, the delegates established the basic rules for the union. In the second stage of the convention, held between September 26th and October 7th, the delegates decided on a program for Solidarnosc. (Barker,1986:13) The Congress marks the point at which the Solidarnosc leadership finally caved into the pressure from below and redefined the trade union as a social movement.(Barker,1986: 113,115; Ash,1985:223) The Congress issued all sorts of policy decisions, motions, and communiques. Among the most important was a motion on self-management (which told the regime the union would hold a referendum on self-management if the Sejm refused to), and a letter to workers in eastern Europe and the USSR urging them to join the struggle for change. The union also rejected a proposal for a more centralized structure, which would have placed greater power in the hands of the KKP.(Barker,1986: 113-114; Ash,1985:219)

During the two weeks between sessions, the Solidarnosc leadership accepted a government deal for a new law on self-management in enterprise -- a deal which gave the regime virtually every concession it wanted (e.g., the government got the right to exclude 'key' industries from the new law). When the congress resumed, the moderates were formally condemned for deliberately violating the policy of the union.(Barker,1986:114; Simon,1985: 52) The deal was repudiated, and the congress decided to hold a referendum on the main issues.(Barker,1986:119; Ash, 1985:232-233)

During the second portion of the congress, the union formally adopted much of the centrist strategy for building a "self-managing republic." The Solidarnosc programme called for measures to curb the privileges of the bureaucracy, advocated changes to the judiciary

and the police, demanded the right for Solidarnosc to run its own TV and radio stations, and outlined some immediate measures to prevent the economic crisis from worsening.(Persky,1982:205-225)²² Although the union sought to reassure the regime they were not planning a direct and immediate bid for political power, the Solidarnosc program pointed towards the need for a gradual, but unmistakable dismantling of the PZPR's power over society. (Barker,1986:115-116) Sadly, the Solidarnosc programme did not deal with the strategic problem of how to achieve the goal of establishing workers' control over civil society. The centrists failed to deal with a key question: If the effort to seize effective control of the economy led to a major confrontation with the state, what would Solidarnosc do?

* * * * *

The final phase of the revolutionary process covers the period from the end of the Solidarnosc congress on October 7th to the December 13th declaration of martial law. During this two month period, the effective leadership of the regime (General Jaruzelski and his military) proved far more realistic about the balance of class power, and much clearer about their strategy, than the leadership of Solidarnosc. In October, the PZPR was still in no position to lead a confrontation with the union, having suffered the loss of more than half a million members since July. Those party members who remained were increasingly pessimistic, because of the leftward turn by Solidarnosc and the turmoil inside the party.(Barker,1986:122-123; Checinski,1984: 58) Because the party was in sharp decline as a cohesive force, the suppression of Solidarnosc would be planned and carried out through the military.(Barker,1986:123)

In mid-October, General Jaruzelski became the general secretary of the PZPR, transferring political power to the only segment of the state machine that remained almost completely untouched by Solidarnosc, the military -- a development Walesa and the moderates greeted with approval, because of nationalist illusions about the Polish army.(Harman,1983:265; Brenner,1982: 14) The PZPR had done everything possible to protect the military and the state security forces from political contamination by Solidarnosc. (Barker,1986:121) During the summer and fall, the number of military officers involved at the senior levels of the government grew steadily. "Gradually...the military were gathering into their hands the reins of control over key institutions, and setting up a network for running society distinct from that of the disintegrating party." (Harman,1983:265)

The PZPR policy of isolating the military from contact with Solidarnosc was only effective because the union abstained from intervening in the military and the police. Because the workers' movement had lost much of its dynamism and support by the fall of 1981, Jaruzelski could be sure the union no longer as attractive to rank and file soldiers as it had been previously. During the fall of 1981, the growing "paralysis of the union leadership" meant Solidarnosc no longer looked like the irresistible force it once appeared to be.(Harman,1983:262-263) Solidarnosc could be crushed militarily.

The date for the imposition of martial law was probably set in October. (Michta,1990:123-124)²³ But, the preparations for such action began long before that.(Barker,1986:121; MacDonald,1984: 495; Ash,1985:235-237) Nevertheless, throughout the fall, the preparations intensified. For example, in mid-October, conscripts in the military had their term of duty extended for two months. (Barker,1986:122; Raina,1985:425-426) At

the end of October, the government announced plans for a new law that would allow the regime to impose martial law on the country.(Barker,1986:122)

During October and November, the regime took a number of initiatives to test the union's reaction to state repression. In October, police arrests of Solidarnosc activists still provoked

a response with the national union calling a one hour national strike on October 28.(Weschler,1982:193-194; Harman,1983:266) But, by November, a police attack in which union members were beaten, did not provoke a major response from the KKP.(Harman, 1983:266)

However, the working class was not entirely quiescent after the Solidarnosc Congress. In mid-October, strikes continued to break out around the country, as 300,000 workers protested against food shortages and price hikes. The strikes -- in direct contravention of the KKP call for an end to strike action -- were a further indication the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc was losing its control over the working class.(Raina,1985:422,425; Barker,1986:124) When the KKP called for the one hour general strike on October 28, under enormous pressure from below, it did so hoping the action might dissipate some of that pressure.

The strike was enormously successful, with an estimated 90% of the workforce participating.(Raina,1985:430-431; Barker,1986: 124-125; Ash,1985:251) But, the mood in the working class was nothing like it had been during the four hour warning strike in March of 1981.²⁴ The union's prevarication over the economy, plus the PZPR's propaganda campaign blaming Solidarnosc for the economic crisis, had taken their toll. Many workers were no longer convinced the union had a practical strategy to deal with the deteriorating

situation. Thus, there was far less enthusiasm for the union displayed during strike. The persistent efforts of the KKP to demobilize the working class were beginning to have an effect.(Barker,1986:125,150) In late October the KKP was under such pressure, that it formally endorsed a militant tactic proposed by the radical current within the self-management movement -- the Lublin Group. These radicals called for 'active strikes', workplace occupations in which the workers would seize control over the production and distribution of their product. But, the KKP's endorsement of this tactic allowed the moderates to cover their left flank. They did not promote active strikes.

(Kowalewski,1982a:234)

In early November, Walesa joined government initiated talks with Archbishop Glemp and General Jaruzelski, to discuss the possibility of establishing a joint Council for National Reconciliation which would be securely controlled by the PZPR.

(Barker,1986:126; Ash,1985:243) Those talks -- which were a smokescreen for the preparations for martial law -- could not and did not succeed. But, they did give the regime another platform from which to denounce the irresponsibility of the union.(Barker, 1986:126; Harman,1983:265; Michta,1990:166)

Meanwhile, the strikes continued. There were at least 65 strikes in progress in early November. However, by the middle of the month the level of strike action was declining. By the end of November, there were only two strikes in progress throughout the entire country.(Barker,1986:126,135) It had become clear to almost everyone that local strike action could not solve national problems, and that 'economic' strikes could not solve 'political' problems.(Harman,1983:263) Large sections of the Polish working class were demobilizing. The decline in strike activity coincided with a fall in support for the

union.(Barker,1986:135) Polls showed the popularity of the union was dropping, while that of the government was climbing. While vanguard workers remained loyal supporters of the union, more backward sections of the working class were defecting.(Harman,1983:263-264) Furthermore, the solidarity that developed between workers and farmers had broken down. Members of each class were increasingly blaming the other class for the shortages and the economic problems in the country.(Mason,1985:167)

In late November the government abandoned the pretence of seeking some kind of national agreement with Solidarnosc. The regime announced that all economic reforms due to be introduced in January -- including the self-management law, but excepting another round of price increases -- would be postponed for another year.(Kowalewski,1982a:235-6) The regime also tested the union's reaction to repression again. On December 2, they used hundreds of riot police in a quasi-military operation to physically smash a strike by firefighter cadets.(Ascherson,1987: 214; Barker,1986:137) Once again, the union failed to respond with any kind of immediate protest action. Instead, Walesa and the KKP counseled moderation.(Weschler,1982:195,197; Harman, 1983:266) Only on December 12th did Solidarnosc finally call for a day of protests on December 17th.(Simon,1985:67; Wescheler, 1982:198,200)

During the last two weeks of Solidarnosc's legal existence, sections of the union began to realize the gravity of the situation called for drastic action, rather than continued talk about negotiations. At a December 3 meeting of regional and national leaders of Solidarnosc, many of the participants, including those who had been moderates in the past, indicated support for the growing radical current in the union -- the Lublin Group.(Harman,1983:267) Even Walesa was forced to admit that confrontation was

probably inevitable. Delegates talked about the inevitability of a confrontation, the need for an active strike strategy, the possibility of setting up a provisional government, and the importance of forming a workers' militia.(Barker,1986:138) The radical delegates from Lodz, people associated with the Lublin Group, played an important role in the meeting, proposing an active strike that would begin in several regions, and grow to encompass the entire country -- the whole action to be defended by a newly formed workers' militia. But, even the radicals did not know how to turn this fine talk into action. The strategy proposed by the Lublin Group -- which was a major advance over anything previously suggested -- still did not deal adequately with the problem of how to disarm and demolish the old state. How was the working class to move from a defensive military stance guarding factories, to an offensive stance capable of breaking the armed power of the state? (Harman,1983: 268-269; Kowalewski,1982a:239)

Despite the very militant talk behind closed doors, the public declaration "adopted by the meeting...did not fully reflect the radical tone of the...speeches." In fact, the meeting "issued no specific organizing call (e.g., for an active strike), and made no active preparations for a state of emergency." (Barker,1986:138; Mason,1985:192) Instead, the meeting issued a call for a day of protest on December 17, and a general strike if the regime imposed a state of emergency.(Harman,1983:267) "Faced with the question of power and an increasingly radical rank and file, the (Solidarnosc-BM) leadership hesitated and beat about the bush."(WCFI,1985:55)

During the days between the December 3 meeting, and the next meeting of the Solidarnosc leadership on December 11-12 in Gdansk, support for the idea of an active strike grew. In Lodz, the regional leaders of Solidarnosc and the workers in the 12 largest

factories decided to start an active strike on December 21, even if that strategy was rejected by the national leadership.(Harman,1983:269-270) They hoped their initiative would draw other sections of the Polish working class behind them, creating a class-wide movement. These radicals wanted to move on to the offensive in the struggle against the regime, and accumulate "sufficient forces to solve the question of political power." In the process, they hoped to force the national leadership of Solidarnosc to back the movement. (Kowalewski, 1982a:237,239) The plans of the radicals would prove too little and too late.

At the December 11-12 KKP meeting in Gdansk, the Solidarnosc leadership dramatically reversed its direction and endorsed a "position of total confrontation" with the government. The delegates decided that if the union proved unable to conclude some kind of agreement with the regime by the end of the year, they would hold a referendum on the legitimacy of the government, with a defeat for the PZPR to be viewed as support for the formation of a provisional government. The change in political position was nothing short of astonishing. For example, even centrists like Kuron -- who had always insisted on the 'self-limiting' character of the movement -- now agreed that confrontation was necessary. Furthermore, the delegates decided that if the Polish parliament passed the government's law on emergency powers, that there would be a 24 hour strike, and that if the government used those powers there would be an unlimited general strike.(Harman,1983:267; Barker,1986:141)

The Solidarity leaders were aware that a confrontation was coming, that the regime was likely to play the card of repression, but they thought it would be with 'legal' moves. Believing that the process would begin with legislative proposals in the Sejm for a 'state of emergency' (another belief carefully nurtured by the regime-BM), and not with a military coup and a 'state of war', they over-estimated their own room for manoeuvre, and were taken by surprise.(Barker,1986: 148)

Most of the KKP was arrested during the course of that meeting, when martial law was imposed.

* * * * *

The revolutionary crisis effectively ended on December 13, when General Jaruzelski imposed martial law on Poland, making all civilian authority subordinate to the military.(Barker,1986:142) Martial law was used to crush Solidarnosc and all the activities and organizations it had inspired. Military censorship was imposed on everything. All trade union and political activities were banned, as were all meetings for any purpose whatsoever. Many key industries were militarized, making it a capital offence for workers to strike. A curfew was imposed. Military courts with sweeping powers were established. Harsh sentences were decreed for various 'crimes' (e.g., damaging industrial equipment in a strike or protest meant ten years imprisonment). Thousands of people were arrested (with the estimates ranging from 6,000 to 10,000), and between 40 to 50 people were killed.(Barker,1986: 142-143,188; Mason,1985:204)

Jaruzelski was very careful in how he used the forces of repression to crush Solidarnosc.²⁵ Although the army was deployed throughout the country, any

serious confrontations with the people were kept as the special preserve of the Internal Defence Force (the WOW, 65,000 strong) and the motorized riot police (the ZOMO, between 20,000 and 25,000)....They were men selected from mainly rural backgrounds, highly trained and indoctrinated, deliberately brutalized, and specially privileged in terms of housing, health services, pensions and food supplies. When the regime had to deal with occupied factories, the army units surrounded the plant, but the WOW and ZOMO were used as the invading, beating, killing and arresting force.
(Barker,1986:143)

By keeping the army out of direct confrontations with workers, Jaruzelski minimized the chance of a revolt by rank and file soldiers.

Although the working class in at least 180 workplaces mounted some immediate resistance to the imposition of martial law -- especially vanguard workers (e.g., miners in Silesia and dockworkers in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk) -- it was uncoordinated, ineffective and short-lived. "Those that fought were soon beaten. A demoralized, disorganized, atomized working class was no match for 300,000 troops and 100,000 police." (Harman, 1983:273) The resistance was over before the beginning of the new year. (Mason, 1985:218) In all, at least 40 people were killed and 500 wounded in the resistance against the imposition of martial law. (Simon, 1985:70-73) About 33,600 of the workers who resisted the imposition of martial law through strikes were fined, while another 1700 were jailed (sentences averaged three years). Furthermore, thousands of militant workers lost their jobs (e.g., 5,000 at Katowice Steel, 1,500 at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, 3,000 at the Szczecin shipyards, etc.). (Barker, 1986: 144-145) The regime also employed other means of repression, raiding the homes of activists for incriminating information, tapping telephones, increasing prices, increasing production quotas, and so on. Furthermore, the six day week was reinstated and large enterprises were placed under the control of the military. The military regime was determined to destroy every last vestige of working class power and self-organization. (Barker, 1986:145) ²⁶

Despite all of this, the regime faced less opposition to its coup than many had expected.

There is no question that the simple element of surprise, the sudden complete black out in communications, the fierce sanctions announced for organizing or even participating in a strike, and the mass arrests of Solidarity leaders all made for exceptional difficulties in organizing a response. It still does not appear to be the case, however, that many workers were willing to strike.... Jaruzelski was able, to a degree, to rely on the de-mobilized condition of the Solidarity rank and file. The key reason why there was not more by way of a fight-back seems to be a sense of defeat had already spread quite widely among Polish workers. (Barker, 1986:144)

Still infected by Polish nationalism, workers were caught off guard by the Polish army's attack on them. While there was enormous hatred of the Soviet army, and a widespread willingness to resist a Soviet intervention in Poland, the Polish army was widely admired. That further undercut the resistance.(Mason, 1985:205-207,218)

(7.4) Forms of Organization and Activity among the Polish Underclasses

The dramatic victory by the Gdansk MKS in August 1980, created the opening for an explosion of activity and organization by the exploited and the oppressed. Having analyzed the shifting balance of class power during 1980-81, our main concern in this section is to analyze the nature of the mass organizations generated by the struggles of the underclasses, and to discuss the nature of dual power during 1980-81. A complete examination of all the forms of self-organization and struggle generated during the revolutionary process would require us to consider a number of phenomena that are not discussed here (e.g., the student movement and the struggle to assert some control over curriculum in the universities, and Rural Solidarnosc and the struggle of Polish peasants on the land). Here we concentrate on the forms of organization and struggle generated by the working class, and the failure of the working class movement to penetrate the repressive apparatus of the state.

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The most important form of organization generated by the strike action of August 1980 was the inter-factory strike committee (MKS). In Gdansk, it was formed the day that

workers in the Lenin shipyard decided they would continue their strike in solidarity with other, smaller workplaces in the region. The MKS centralized the power of the newly formed strike committees in each workplace, meeting in almost permanent session inside the Lenin shipyard. Because the MKS included two delegates from each strike committee affiliated it quickly became a huge body with hundreds and eventually thousands of delegates. Therefore, the strike was run by a much smaller praesidium of 19 leaders including people like Walesa from the Lenin Shipyard.(MacDonald, 1981:31; Raina,1981:470)

The strike committees affiliated to the MKS had a radical democratic character. And, workers elected as delegates to the MKS were recallable and subject to the control of the workforce. They were held accountable in daily meetings back in their own workplaces.(Ash,1985:47; Potel,1982:69-70) The democracy within the MKS was less than perfect. Although the delegates to the MKS were genuinely accountable and recallable, the democratic control of the MKS over its praesidium -- the leaders who supervised the negotiations with the government -- was not very strong. The main negotiations, which were conducted between the MKS praesidium and top officials from the regime, were broadcast over the loudspeaker system in the Lenin shipyard. More detailed negotiations, were conducted by sub-committees from the praesidium or by outside 'experts' (i.e., Catholic and dissident intellectuals) brought in to assist the MKS.²⁷

The Gdansk area MKS enjoyed enormous popular support throughout the coastal region. That was evident in the money collected for the strike, the donations of food and other assistance, and in the size of the crowds that gathered outside the shipyard fence each day.(Persky,1981:96; Ash,1985:45) In addition, the regional general strike allowed the

MKS to assume effective control over many aspects of life in the Gdansk region: the transit system operated under the supervision of the MKS; the sale of alcohol was suspended (at the suggestion of the MKS); the MKS took control over the supply of food, the provision of health services, the bakeries, and food shops.(Barker,1986:22-24) Some striking workers were encouraged to remain on the job by the MKS, in order to maintain essential services needed by the strikers and their families.(Raina,1981:471-472; Potel,1982:67)

Inside the Lenin shipyard, the local strike committee and the MKS ran a very impressive occupation involving between 6,000 and 10,000 people. Each day, that enormous crowd was fed by canteens run inside the shipyard. The transportation needs of the MKS were secured, when an MKS delegate commandeered the fuel tanker used by the public transit authority and brought it to the Lenin shipyard docks. Henceforth, only vehicles authorized by the MKS got gas. Striking taxi drivers put themselves at the disposal of the MKS. Throughout the Gdansk region, non-employed housewives volunteered to keep the children of women strikers. Eight days after the strike began, the daily Solidarity Strike Bulletin appeared (with a press run of 60,000) to combat government disinformation.(Persky,1981:106-107; Ash,1985:62; Raina,1981:470; Potel,1982:72-79)²⁸ At the Lenin Shipyard, the local strike committee was responsible for security. Through the extensive contacts of the MKS, the strike committee at the Lenin shipyard was able to "monitor troop movements in the region" as well as all "road, air and sea traffic in the Baltic region."(Potel,1982 :72)

A crucial feature of the strike in Gdansk was the unity of the entire workers' movement within the region, in the MKS. Although the strike was initiated and led by the

vanguard of the coastal working class -- skilled workers in large enterprises like the Lenin shipyard -- it was quickly joined by white collar workers, as well as semi-skilled and unskilled workers in smaller enterprises. The 21 demands displayed a sophisticated appreciation of the need to strengthen that class unity, by winning real gains for "the weaker, less organized sections of the working class."(Brenner,1981:9) For much of the revolutionary crisis, vanguard workers showed time and again, their willingness to sacrifice their immediate economic interests to preserve class unity.(Brenner,1981:9; 1982:6)

The MKS that arose in Gdansk was an organ of dual power and an embryonic soviet. Not only did the MKS raise political demands (e.g., abolition of special privileges for the secret police and the party apparatus, making public information about the state of the economy, the release of all political prisoners, etc.), it controlled the economy and virtually every aspect of daily life in the Gdansk region during the two week strike. By centralizing all the workplace strike committees in the region, the Gdansk MKS (like the other MKSs modeled after it in Szczecin and Jastrzebie, Silesia) had the potential to pose as a political alternative to the regime -- even if only on the regional level. Unfortunately, the Gdansk general strike was ended before the workers involved could fully appreciate the significance of what they had accomplished.(Barker,1986:27-29)

Once the Gdansk accord was signed, the MKS leaders dismantled much of the power they had acquired. The MKS ceased being a soviet-type organization, as the mass movement was channelled into the narrow confines of a 'trade union'.(Simon, 1985:29) Thus, even though the Gdansk accord was an incredible victory for the Polish working class, it was also a major step backwards. But, despite the best efforts of the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc, it would prove impossible to restrict the massive power of the

workers' movement within the narrow confines of a trade union. Throughout its entire history, the form of Solidarnosc (a trade union) and its substance (a mass revolutionary movement) would contradict each other. The leadership would seek to contain the movement within the form of a trade union, while the rank and file would spontaneously move beyond the trade union form, groping towards a form of organization adequate to the real tasks confronting them.

* * * * *

In mid-September, a conference of delegates from MKS committees that had sprung up all over Poland, formed the independent, self-governing trade union, Solidarnosc. The growth of the new union was nothing short of phenomenal. By the end of September 1980, one month after the Gdansk agreement was signed, Solidarnosc had 3 million members. One month later it had 6 million members; by the end of November it had 8 million members. At its Congress in October 1981, Solidarnosc claimed 9.4 million members out of a working class of 12.5 million, for a 75% rate of unionization.(MacDonald,1984:477) In preparation for the March 1981 general strike, the union mobilized more than 10 million workers.

The size and composition of Solidarnosc made the revolutionary process in Poland "one of the most directly and exclusively working class revolutions" in history. (Kowalewski, 1986b:79) Four features of the Polish revolution gave it an unmistakably proletarian stamp: first, the social composition of Solidarnosc was such that both the leadership and the main body of supporters and activists came from the working class; second, the main form of organization of the revolutionary movement was radical trade unionism; third, the internal process that characterized the union was a form of radical

democracy akin to that found in workers' councils; and finally, the specific form of struggle that characterized the Polish revolution was the mass political strike.

(Kowalewski,1986b:79-82) We will examine each of these points in detail.

First, there is little doubt that the industrial working class -- the vanguard of the Polish working class -- provided the leadership for the mass movement that developed during 1980-81. The skilled workers in the large industries were the ones who built the strike committees in Gdansk, Szczecin, and Silesia, formed the union in September 1980, and then led the mass movement throughout the revolutionary crisis. Those vanguard workers were more radical than the sections of the working class which joined the union later -- like white collar workers, unskilled workers, and many older workers.

(Mason,1985:108)

Throughout Solidarity's legal existence, the 3.5 million industrial workers continued to be the dominant social group in the movement, determining basic programmatic aims and methods of struggle. Their influence was expressed throughout the key large plants in each region such as Huta Katowice and the July Manifesto mine in Upper Silesia, the Lenin and Paris Commune (ship)yards in the Gdansk/Gdynia area.... The regional leaders tended to come from these plants, and the workers in each region tended to take their cue from the decisions of the workers in these plants.... In classic proletarian fashion, the workers in these plants tended to be much more stable, self-confident and disciplined...than the weaker sections of the working class....(MacDonald,1984:478)

After the industrial working class had secured the August/September victory against the regime and created Solidarnosc, other less confident sections of the working class joined the movement -- like white collar workers, semi-skilled workers and some unskilled workers. Later still, the most downtrodden sections of the class (e.g., service workers) and the quasi-independent workers (e.g., craftsmen) began to join.(Mason, 1985:105) But, Solidarnosc remained an overwhelmingly proletarian organization. While it was almost all

inclusive of the Polish working class, Solidarnosc excluded the members of other classes.²⁹ Radical elements in other classes and strata -- inspired by Solidarnosc -- formed their own independent organizations (e.g., Rural Solidarnosc for farmers).

Although blue collar industrial workers provided the bulk of the leadership of Solidarnosc, white collar workers also played a key role -- particularly those from large industrial plants. In fact, many of the activists on the regional executives were technicians or white collar workers from large plants.(MacDonald, 1984:478) And, it was white collar workers tied closely to heavy industry, who provided the impetus for the Network movement. (Norr,1987:266)

Another important feature of the composition of Solidarnosc was the fact that it incorporated more than one third of the PZPR's estimated 3 million members, including most of the PZPR members who were industrial workers. For example, in Gdansk, as many as 50% of the regional activists in Solidarnosc were also members of the PZPR. (MacDonald,1984:478; Mason,1985:106-107) Despite this huge overlap in membership, Solidarnosc remained resolutely independent from the PZPR.(WCFI,1985:52)

The second critical feature of Solidarnosc was the form of self-organization that was adopted. Solidarnosc was a trade union, rather than a political party or some other kind of organization. But, Solidarnosc was very different from a conventional trade union. Having originated out of the Gdansk, Szczecin and Jastrzebie soviets, the new union had some unusual characteristics. Unlike conventional trade unions, Solidarnosc did not divide workers according to trade or industry. Instead, it followed the logic of the class struggle, unifying all the workers in a single workplace, and all the workplaces in a particular region, under the authority of a single regional leadership. Thus, "Solidarity's structure

was...highly political, emphasizing the unity of the workers as a class, rather than their sectional diversity."(MacDonald,1984:477; Kowalewski, 1986b:81-82) In that respect, Solidarnosc was a 'trade union' built for class-wide struggle rather than mediation between capital and labour. In short, Solidarnosc was the "most advanced form of trade union organization ever seen anywhere in the world."(Kowalewski,1986b:80)

Not surprisingly, the whole course of the class struggle up until April 1981 shows that despite the best efforts of the moderate leaders of the union, Solidarnosc could not be contained within the narrow constraints of trade unionism. While legally and formally it remained nothing more than a trade union, Solidarnosc had a natural tendency to revert back to what it had started off as -- a federation of soviets.

Third, the proletarian character of the Polish revolution was evident in the radical democracy that was characteristic of the whole movement. From the very beginning, the new union had local (workplace), regional (territorial) and national levels in its structure. Solidarnosc was a federation of the regional inter-factory strike committees (MKS and later MKZ), led by a National Co-ordinating Committee (KKP) -- the latter composed of delegates from each of the 49 regions, and charged with the responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of the MKZs. (The day to day leadership of the national union came from a praesidium led by Walesa.) (Ash,1985:76) Because the new union was a federation of regional organizations, power within the union was relatively decentralized. In the beginning, the initiative was left in the hands of factory committees and regional committees, rather than the KKP. By 1981, there was almost constant friction over who would set the direction for the union, with activists at the local and regional level generally insisting on the need for greater radicalism and more control from below, while many

national leaders called for greater moderation and more centralized control at the top.(Mason,1985: 109)

The revolutionary character of the whole movement featured was evident in its embrace of radical democratic practices, including:

election of the leadership bodies by mass meetings and congresses; right of recall of leaders, the latter being responsible to the people mandating them; combining decision making and executive tasks, thus making these leadership...structures real working bodies.(Kowalewski,1986b:82)

The radical democratic practices inside the union were magnified by the decentralized power structure.(Harman,1983:248-249)

Despite all of this, Solidarnosc was not immune to the dangers of bureaucratization. For one thing, the union very rapidly developed an enormous apparatus, with a staff of about 40,000 people -- either seconded from their employers or paid directly by Solidarnosc.(Ash,1985:155)³⁰ For another thing, the tendency towards the bureaucratization of the union was accentuated by the deference of many workers to Walesa and his moderate advisers.

The deference was encouraged by the Church...by the bulk of the intelligentsia...and by the international media.... All this created problems for anyone who wanted to challenge Walesa's leadership. The challenge would be understood by experienced activists, like the regional leaders. But it would seem like an attack on the symbol of the union itself to less experienced union members. (Harman,1983:251)

Finally, the praesidium of the national union, which was dominated by moderates, regularly sought to undercut the militancy and independence of local and regional committees. The moderation of the praesidium was a constant source of friction inside the union. But, the union was too democratic, too decentralized, and too politicized to make life easy for moderates like Walesa, who longed for a future of class collaboration. They never

succeeded in arrogating the power they needed to cut a deal with the PZPR.(Harman,1983: 248-249)

And fourth, the proletarian character of the Polish revolution was unmistakable from the role that mass political strikes (and the threat of mass strikes) played throughout 1980-81. Mass strikes were "the most powerful instrument of the Polish revolution, the main lever for bringing the masses into motion." (Kowalewski,1986b:80) During the revolutionary crisis, there were several distinct waves of strikes -- one starting in July 1980 and running through to the Bydgoszcz incident in March 1981, and a second wave, starting in July 1981 and ending in mid-November of that year. Some of the strike action took the form of mass strikes (on either a regional or a national basis). But other strikes were purely local in character. At all times, the strike was the main form of struggle employed by the mass movement.

The first strike wave (July 1980-March 1981) began as a spontaneous and fragmented movement to win economic relief from increased prices. That movement led to the mass strike in the Gdansk region and the formation of Solidarnosc -- a major political victory over the regime. The strike wave then continued, uninterrupted, through September as workers formed MKSs and fought to win the equivalent of the Gdansk accord. From mid-September through to the end of March 1981, that same strike wave continued unabated, although it had been transformed by the political victory of August/September 1980. After mid-September, there was a continuous series of locally based economic (and sometimes political) strikes -- many of which threatened to grow into a centralized regional or national mass strike.

In analyzing this strike action, it is important not to exaggerate the distinction between economic and political strikes. Once the working class had won its September victory, the class struggle was characterized by a "constant interpenetration of political and economic demands," at least until March 1981.(Brenner,1981:6,9) A key turning point in the pattern of strike action was the political defeat suffered by Solidarnosc in late March 1981. In the three months following the Bydgoszcz incident, there were no strikes. Whole sections of the Polish working class retreated from the 'political' action that characterized the period between August and March (i.e., the mass political strikes), becoming far more concerned about coping with the overwhelming problems of everyday life (e.g., food shortages). With the strategy of Solidarnosc in tatters after Bydgoszcz, many Solidarnosc members stopped "attend(ing) meetings or participat(ing) in the union's affairs."(Barker,1986:89-90) Finally, in July 1981, a second strike wave began with local based economic strikes, as Polish workers began to rebuild their confidence. While those strikes could not solve the economic crisis (and in some respects made it slightly worse), they

did begin to create the indispensable political conditions to make a solution possible -- by radically enhancing the power of the working class and its potential for transforming society. Thus the strikes of the summer and fall of 1981 provided the sense of power required to confront the enormously imposing task of actually developing and implementing a plan to deal with the crisis -- by remaking Polish society.(Brenner, 1982:8)

After the political defeat in March, workers had to rebuild their capacity to fight the regime by beginning with the struggle around immediate and practical (i.e., 'economic') issues.

As the 'economic' strikes of the summer and early fall accumulated, the various currents within Solidarnosc -- the moderates, centrists and radicals -- all failed to centralize

the fragmented struggle and direct it towards a political alternative to the regime. Not surprisingly, the strike wave had to peter out eventually. The strikes continued at an impressive pace until about mid-November, when virtually all strike action ceased.

(Barker,1986:126,135) Several factors undermined the continued strike action: the government propaganda campaign against strikes, the union leadership's campaign against strike action, and the growing awareness that local or regional strikes (whether political or economic) could not solve what was a national problem. Thus, the dramatic decline in strike action in November, was "evidence of the demobilization of Solidarity's base."

(Barker,1986:135)

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When it became clear in March 1981 that the union could not win reforms merely by threatening the regime with political strikes, the focus of the class struggle shifted towards the control of the economy.(Kowalewski,1986b:83)

To understand the battle over the question of workers' self-management in the factories, it is vital to recognize there was a history of workplace based self-management bodies in Poland. In 1956-57, workers' councils arose, only to be co-opted by the regime. By the 1970s, the remnants of those old workers' councils existed as instruments of the factory directors, the party and the regime. Therefore, the idea of forming workers' councils was not popular in the fall of 1980.(Persky,1982:177; Harman,1983: 252) Polish workers knew that workers' councils that assumed some responsibility for production, while having no control over the state and the national economy, were useless. And, since everyone rejected the idea of overthrowing the state (for fear of Soviet intervention), there

seemed little point in considering workers' self-management schemes.(Potel,1982b:23-24;
Norr,1987:268)³¹

The idea that Solidarnosc should abstain from assuming any responsibility for the economy crumbled after the aborted general strike in March. Once it became clear the government would not undertake any real economic reform, and that Solidarnosc had no strategy to force it to do so, workers reconsidered the role the union should play in dealing with the economic crisis.(Potel, 1982b:24; Persky,1982:178) If the union failed to address the economic situation, in addition to proving unable to get reforms from the regime, it might lose much of its support.(Potel,1982b: 24) This was the context in which the struggle for workers' self-management --in the factories and over the economy -- emerged under the leadership of the Network group and the more radical Lublin Group (LG).

In March, workers from the 17 largest plants in the country formed the 'Network' of trade unionists dedicated to establishing self-management committees in the factories, and to reform of the national economy.(Potel,1982b:25) The initiative for Network came from the lower levels of the 'production intelligentsia' (e.g., production line engineers, white collar workers in the union), and was endorsed by some Solidarnosc functionaries and union activists after the Bydgoszcz incident. This heterogeneous coalition of forces united around the need for a strategy to deal with the economic crisis, at a time when the Solidarnosc leadership was doing nothing.(Norr,1987:268)

Network supporters wanted to eliminate the government's centralized planning of the economy in favour of a market system, and replace government appointment of enterprise management by a system in which workers' councils would appoint the management. Thus,

the state would retain the power to influence the economy only by way of taxes, tariffs, and other similar measures.(Norr, 1987:275,278) Network hoped to persuade the regime to accept this arrangement, which would effectively end the PZPR's control over the economy, so that it could be established through an act of the Polish parliament (the Sejm).(Zeluck,1986:33-34)

The Network plan was open to two interpretations, a technocratic one and a syndicalist/centrist one. For the technocrats, which included many of the founders of the Network movement, "the active participation of rank and file workers in the governance of the enterprise...got little emphasis."(Norr, 1987:275) Ignoring the traditional concerns of working class movements for control over production (e.g., overcoming the alienation of work, breaking down the division between mental and manual labour), the technocrats advocated a form of 'democratic managerialism'. In their view, it was the enterprise manager -- once appointed -- who had control over production, investment decisions and the like.(Norr,1987: 276-277) The technocrats opposed any moves to centralize the workers's councils from each factory, to have the workers assume real control over production, or to have the battle over self-management linked up to the overall question of political power.(WCFI,1985:53)

Solidarnosc activists, anxious to prove the union could still create some tangible improvements in the lives of the working class, latched onto the Network idea of workers' participation, developing a more syndicalist/centrist vision of the scheme. While they discussed the role self-management could play in stemming the economic crisis, they emphasized the idea that self-management would be a "blow against the nomenklatura system and, by extension, against the party's monopoly of power."

As the crisis sharpened... self-management's advocates found that even

audiences otherwise unmoved began to respond when they raised the once taboo question of the nomenklatura. And it was no longer simply a question of appointing qualified managers, instead of political hacks; now people were seeing self-management in a broader perspective, as a move against party rule as a whole. Even if the rulers could not be displaced altogether, there was growing sentiment that the crisis made it necessary and possible to put new limits on their power. Self-management was presented as a further step in...the reconstruction of civil society, beyond the reach of the political apparatus.(Norr,1987:283)

Not surprisingly, this syndicalist/centrist version of the drive for self-management placed much more emphasis on working class control over the enterprise.

For the first three months of its existence, the moderate dominated national leadership of Solidarnosc considered the Network group to be nothing more than a consultative body working on the question of economic reform. However, in late July, the KKP formally adopted the Network program, in recognition that the union had to do something in response to the economic crisis. (Norr,1987:284) But,

even before Solidarity formally adopted this program, workers were already putting this program into effect in piecemeal fashion. They were kicking out plant managers, demanding that many more be dismissed, and taking direct action to run production and distribution. The workers were challenging the bureaucracy's power over society....(Brenner,1982:8)

By the end of August, more than 3,000 workplaces had self-management committees, and the demand for workers' self-management had been taken up during at least one important strike, at the Polish airline LOT.(Harman,1983:252)

At the Solidarnosc Congress in September, delegates approved a militant resolution on workers' self-management, warning the regime to introduce the necessary economic reforms, or face a referendum on the issue from the union.(Norr,1987:285) But, the self-management movement, which enjoyed enormous popularity for a few short months, had already gone into decline by late summer. There had been too much talk and too little

action. For most workers, endless talk about the possibility of restructuring the economy did nothing to shorten the queues they faced every day, and nothing to increase the supply of meat. As the economy deteriorated, and workers took to the streets to protest food shortages and price hikes, they became impatient with all the talk emanating from the Network group. The demand for self-management of industry was simply "too abstract and indirect to engage for long the emotions of people exhausted and enraged by an economic crisis that was now all too immediate." (Norr, 1987: 287) Furthermore, the technocratic wing of the Network movement presented self-management as a way to rationalize industry -- complete with layoffs, price increases and greater wage differentials. For most workers, such measures were completely unacceptable. (Norr, 1987: 285)

The other major problem with the Network plan was political. Neither the technocrats, nor the centrists (like Kuron) had bothered to think through the likelihood that the regime would agree to surrender its control over the economy. And, they failed to suggest what strategy might realistically be followed to compel the regime to do so. (Norr, 1987: 287)

By the second half of the Solidarnosc Congress the Network initiative was effectively finished, even if the idea of workers' self-management still had some credibility. (Norr, 1987: 288-289)

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A portion of the self-management movement, composed of leftward moving workers, began to develop a radical alternative to the Network movement in July. Radicals in the regional leadership of Solidarnosc in Lublin and Lodz

convened a workers' self-management conference which drew representatives from 300 self-management and union bodies from 15 regions. Starting with reports on theories and experiences of worker self-management on an

international scale, this conference set up an ongoing coordinating body which became known as the "Lublin Group." (Zeluck, 1986:34)

This working group had a very different conception of workers' self-management and economic reform from that which motivated the Network movement. (Potel, 1982b:25-26; Barker, 1986:102-103, 128-141, 151) The Lublin Group (LG) shared some things in common with the centrist current in Network. For example, both believed the basic unit of the national economy should be the social enterprise, acting autonomously under the direction of the self-management committee elected from among the workforce. And, both rejected bureaucratic state control over the economy through PZPR appointment of enterprise managers. Finally, both groups wanted to harness "the initiative of the workers...to overcome the economic depression" that was plaguing Poland. (Persky, 1982: 179, 182)

But, there were at least three key areas where the Network centrists and the radicals in the LG disagreed. They could not agree on how the activities of the enterprise-level councils should be coordinated -- whether through an overall plan or the market. Nor could they agree on how to structure relations between the enterprise level self-management committees and the state. Finally, they disagreed on the tactics that should be used to install a system of economic self-management within Poland.

Within Network, the technocrats favored the complete independence of each enterprise coupled with a free market economy. The centrists wanted to combine a "flexible and decentralized form of planning with the free play of the laws of the market." (Potel, 1982b:26; Kowalewski, 1982a:231; Persky, 1982: 180-181) The centrist vision of autonomous enterprises, coordinated by an overall plan, was essentially social democratic in character. The planning would be carried out by a new chamber of the Polish parliament (the Sejm), through limited economic instruments like taxes and subsidies -- much as

bourgeois democracies with social democratic governments.(Persky,1982:180-181; Potel,1982b:27)

The Lublin Group believed the workplace councils should have the power to hire and fire the senior management, and control the general direction of the enterprise. (Barker,1986:102) Beyond the enterprise, the LG proposed that the self-management councils in each enterprise affiliate themselves to local, regional and national bodies in order to achieve a flexible system of coordination that allowed for planning from below. Although the radicals rejected the market mechanisms favored by Network -- counterposing a notion of 'economic planning from below' as an alternative to both the market and the bureaucratic direction of the economy from above -- the system proposed by the LG retained a clear market element, in so far as it envisaged direct competition between enterprises. Nationally, the LG followed Network in proposing the creation a "second chamber" parallel to the Sejm (a chamber for self-management of the economy). This second chamber would determine the general economic direction for the country, in coordination with the enterprise and regional committees. In that fashion, the LG hoped to avoid questioning the leading role of the PZPR while reforming the economy.(Potel, 1982b:27; Barker,1986:102)

The LG had quite a different approach to the state than Network. Network took it as given that the political dominance of the PZPR could not be challenged. But, the radicals in the LG believed self-management committees should be established in order to carry out the struggle for self-management of the economy and workers' control of production -- even if the state disapproved. By mid-October, the LG argued that if the

enterprise management or the regime opposed the effort to establish self-management from below, then workers had to launch 'active' strikes -- to force the regime to accept workers' self-management.(Potel, 1982b:28) Thus, for the Lublin group the workplace based committees to create self-management had to be viewed as "organs of struggle for self-management and control over production."(Kowalewski,1982a:232)

The LG was certainly far more radical than either faction of Network. Rejection of the market and of the idea that self-management had to be established with the co-operation of the regime gave this grouping potential to actually lead the working class in struggle. Although they were prepared to use mass action to impose changes on Polish society, the changes the LG envisaged stopped well short of a revolution. The assumption that workers' self-management over the economy could coincide peacefully with the continued control of the PZPR over the state machine was naive. Like the other radical currents that had emerged, the LG

remained trapped within the contradictions of the 'self-limitation' theory. They still looked to reliance upon existing institutions (the Sejm), and to mix this weak, parliamentarist body with the organized strength of 'the democracy of workers' councils.'(Barker,1986: 103)

This political project -- mixing parliament and workers' councils -- was undoubtedly centrist in character, since it envisaged the institutionalization of dual power. But, the LG was a leftward moving centrist formation, which was heterogeneous enough to have genuinely revolutionary elements in it.(Kowalewski,1982a:239)

Eventually sections of the LG did "raise the question of a fight for self-management completely outside the legislative process."(Harman,1983:254) A major step in that process was taken in mid-October, when the LG held a national conference, where discussion focused on the value of active strikes as a method for establishing workers' self-

management from below. Delegates decided that active strikes were the best way for self-management bodies to finally establish their control over production. An active strike enabled workers to continue working, while imposing their control over every aspect of production, supply and distribution.(Barker,1986: 103,128; Zeluck,1986:34) (At least some of the activists involved seem to have recognized the revolutionary implications of the tactic.(WCFI,1985:54; Barker,1986:129)) Recognizing the dangers inherent in using the active strike tactic, delegates also discussed the need to form a workers' militia -- so workers would be prepared to defend themselves.(Kowalewski,1982a:235) Finally, the conference also called upon the regional committees of the union to set up the organizations required to establish workers' control over the rationing and distribution of consumer goods, and then to extend that control to the sphere of production. (Barker,1986:128-129; Kowalewski,1982a:230-231)

By December, the LG was moving towards action. In early December, the regional leadership of Solidarnosc in Lodz (supported by the workers in the largest plants in the region) decided to launch an active strike to start on December 21, hoping their initiative would spark other regions to take similar action, and force the national union to back the movement. (Kowalewski,1982a:237)³² They saw the active strike tactic as a way to kick start the Polish working class into action. And, some elements within the LG believed an active strike could "solve the question of political power."(Kowalewski,1982a:235)

However, the radical leadership in Lodz did not have a clear cut revolutionary goal in mind, even though the logic of an escalating active strike to establish workers' self-management over the entire economy seemed to point towards revolution. The radicals in the LG were still heavily influenced by centrist notions of the self-limiting revolution. They

tried to combine revolution from below with reform from above, an active strike to seize control of the economy and a constitutional deal with the PZPR to allow the movement to create a new Solidarnosc dominated portion of the state machine. The ambiguities in the overall strategy are evident in the suggestion by some members of the LG that if the active strike proved inadequate to force the regime into concessions, then Solidarnosc should conduct a referendum in the factories on its proposed economic model.(Kowalewski, 1982a:238) This was not a formula for ending the unstable situation of dual power in favor of Polish workers. The radicals in the LG retained just enough illusions about the possibility of a centrist solution to the crisis, to prevent them from dealing seriously with the military threat from the PZPR. That is why Kowalewski, one of the leaders of the most radical element of the LG, was forced to admit that the LG

had nothing to propose on "the struggle to win over the army." Such was the feeling of power emanating from the mass movement that the most aware members fell victim to the illusion that this strength would be enough to neutralize the army, and that the problem of confrontation was not yet posed.(Kowalewski,1982:240)

Thus, the evidence suggests that during the last few weeks before martial law was imposed, "there was some kind of radicalization of attitudes going on among activists... But it lacked clarity of direction, and came too late to save the movement."(Barker,1986: 141)

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To evaluate the movement for workers' self-management in the workplace and the economy, we need to answer two question. First, how realistic was the strategy advanced by the LG? Second, how much success did they have prior to the imposition of martial law?

By December, the LG had gone through quite an evolution. From criticizing

Network, through advocating the creation of self-management from below and developing the active strike tactic, to the first glimmering that they might have to challenge the PZPR for state power. But, the LG did not manage to complete the political journey from centrism to revolution. Despite the mid-October adoption of the active strike tactic, there was still sufficient ambiguity in the LG's strategy to make it possible for workers to interpret it in two different ways. Some saw the active strike as a tactic designed only to force the regime to concede workers' self-management. Others, sensing the revolutionary implications of such a tactic, saw it as the beginning of a campaign to bring down the regime. (Barker, 1986:129)

Even more problematic was the fact that the active strike proposal remained little more than a well discussed idea. There were very few real examples of major workplaces being taken over from below through active strikes. (Barker, 1986:128; Brenner, 1982: 12; Weschler, 1982:194; WCFI, 1985:53) Indeed, as Kowalewski admits, "in most cases the workers' councils (that had been formed-BM) were not yet self-management bodies, but organs of struggle for self-management." In many cases, the workers' councils did little more than make model plans for workers' self-management on the enterprise and regional level. And, at the regional level, the bodies of self-management delegates did little more than assist the enterprise committees to get established. They certainly did "not reach the point of exercising social control over the economy." (Kowalewski, 1982a: 232-233) Thus, the tactic of the active strike "remained... at no more than the discussion stage." There was talk among the most militant sections of the working class, but precious little action. (Barker, 1986:129-130; Ash, 1985:255) Indeed, the movement for workers' self-management by the radical wing of Solidarnosc "was mostly a movement of ideas, of propaganda. Its

achievements, in terms of actual workers' experience of victories won or lost, were almost nil." (Barker,1986:130)

Thus, in the crucial period of October-November 1981, when the PZPR was making its final preparations for the declaration of martial law, the most militant wing of Solidarnosc was unable to do much more than talk about the need to take action. (Kowalewski, 1982a:230-240; Barker,1986:129; Touraine,1983:183; Ash,1985: 255) In fairness to the radicals in the LG, we must acknowledge that they faced a difficult situation. In the first place, they faced a great deal of opposition from the moderates. (Kowalewski, 1982a) Secondly, while the LG supporters had been radicalizing through their discussions about self-management, much of the working class pressure that had given rise to the movement in the spring and summer had dissipated. "Given the scale of the crisis and the general disorganization of the economy, there was often little left (of industry-BM) to manage at the local level." (Barker,1986:130) Little wonder that when Solidarnosc published a report (in early December) on the progress made in the struggle to establish self-management, it reported that nationwide, only 20% of all Polish workplaces had elected self-management committees.(Harman,1983:253)

There is a sharp contrast between the strike movement in 1980 that founded the union and the 1981 self-management movement. For in 1980, both the speed with which the movement was generalized, and its significant successes in practical workers' control in Gdansk and Szczecin, were due to the greater effectiveness of the propaganda of action and practical organization. In 1981, by contrast, when self-management ideas were not yoked into many practical struggles, they spread slowly and hesitantly. (Barker,1986:130)

Despite all of this, the LG was the most radical current in Solidarnosc during the crucial period of the fall of 1981. It was also the grouping with the best chance to

overcome both the demobilization of the membership and the artificial distinction between 'economic' and 'political' issues, but it was slow to develop and still prone to waver between ideas of parliamentarism and direct workers' democracy, and between negotiation and social revolution.(Barker,1986:151)

The radical wing of the self-management movement "had the potential to carry the whole of the working class forward, but in practice it did not deliver the goods."

(Harman,1983:253) There are several reasons for the overall weakness of the self-management movement. First, the initial drive towards self-management was spearheaded by Network -- a group whose fascination with the market led them to advocate factory closures and wage cuts. Second, the whole notion of self-management was further discredited by the wildly unrealistic suggestion the regime would voluntarily comply with the Network proposal. Third, the advocates of self-management did not try to build support for their movement by linking up "with the wave of local strikes during the late summer." Network remained "a movement of activists" rather than "a movement of the masses."(Harman,1983: 253) Finally, when the working class militants in the LG tried to grapple with the strategic questions confronting them, they did so without the benefit of a serious Marxist analysis of the situation.

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Before we conclude this discussion of the main forms of organization and struggle adopted by the working class during the revolutionary crisis, it is important to consider the impact of the revolution on the repressive wing of the state machine -- the military and the police. In 1981, the Polish army had 207,000 troops, more than 75% of them conscripts. For that reason it was not as politically reliable as the state security forces, which consisted of volunteers. (The latter was composed of the Internal Defence Force (the 65,000 strong

WOW) and the motorized riot police (the 25,000 member ZOMO).)(Barker,1986:140,143)"

Considering the size and dynamism of Solidarnosc, it had a very small impact on the military and the police. The leadership of both Solidarnosc and the PZPR worked hard to keep the repressive apparatus and the working class movement separate -- the union because it did not want to challenge the state's authority, and the regime because it needed to protect its army and police from being 'contaminated'. Jaruzelski wanted to keep the army and the state security police out of the fray -- vetoing calls from PZPR leaders for mass repression in August 1980 and March 1981 -- until there was a high probability of success. The General recognized the military could only be successfully used to repress Solidarnosc if the working class movement had lost its dynamism and was on the defensive.

Despite the efforts to keep Solidarnosc and the repressive core of the state machine separate, there were several incidents that suggested rank and file soldiers or police identified with the union. For example, as early as the Gdansk strike, there were indications the workers' movement was having an impact on the military.

A number of units (in the Gdansk region-BM) had received the MKS bulletin, and on the Sunday (Aug.31-BM) a group of soldiers came to the Lenin shipyard to inform the workers that a number of their comrades were starting a hunger strike in support of them....In other towns manifestations of discontent were also reported among the militia. At Lublin, for example, certain militiamen refused to go to Gdansk as reinforcements.
(Potel,1982:173)

In another incident in the spring of 1981, policeman organized a sit-in at a Warsaw police station, demanding the right to join the union. Solidarnosc refused to intervene. As a result, 500 pro-union activists were fired. The union's abstention from the struggle allowed the regime to reimpose discipline on the police and make an example of the dissidents.

But, that did not have to happen. The union could very easily have gone "on the offensive to split the forces of the state...if, for instance, there had been a massive demonstration to the police station occupied by those demanding a police union."(Harman, 1983:262; Barker,1986:140,187; Ash,1985:237; Weydenthal,1983a:20)

And, in October 1981, some soldiers protested against the extension of their terms of service, declaring their unwillingness to fight against the working class and appealing to Solidarnosc for assistance. The union refrained from organizing any kind of campaign on their behalf.)(Barker,1986:140; Ash,1985: 248) Thus, Solidarnosc missed several "practical opportunities to divide the state's repressive forces, and so to weaken Jaruzelski's options for staging a coup."(Barker,1986: 141)

There is further evidence that the military had serious problems with new conscripts (including junior officers) during 1980-81. Apparently the conscripts entered the military "still hot with the passions of 1980 and with a load of slogans and opinions." (Malacher,1984:134) Official military publications document the difficulties the high command had indoctrinating its new conscripts during the revolutionary crisis. (Malacher,1985: 148) So dubious was the loyalty and reliability of the conscript army, that when the regime did impose martial law, it made sure never to use soldiers in a direct confrontation with workers. Soldiers were only used to back up the state security police. (Malacher,1984:161)

Unfortunately, although Solidarnosc had many opportunities to undermine the reliability of the repressive arm of the state, it steadfastly refused to do so. The strategies favored by all three wings of Solidarnosc -- moderates (e.g., Walesa), centrists (e.g., Kuron) and radicals (e.g., the LG) -- failed to address the crucial problem of how "to

undermine the state's repressive forces...by political means." (Barker,1986:148) The failure by all three currents within the union to try and break the hold of the generals and party officials over rank file soldiers and policemen, was rooted in a refusal to recognize that a major confrontation with the state was inevitable. None of the main currents in Solidarnosc took the threat of repression from the Polish state as seriously as they did the possibility of a Soviet invasion.(Barker,1986:148; Harman,1983:262)

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If the impact of Solidarnosc on the military and the police was kept to a minimum, the same could not be said of its impact on other exploited and oppressed classes and strata in Polish society. Unlike many other revolutionary crises, which were detonated by the actions of oppressed or exploited classes other than the working class (e.g., students in France 1968, the MFA in Portugal in 1974, etc.), the crisis in Poland arose because of the actions of the working class. Furthermore, throughout the period from August 1980 to December 1981, it was the industrial working class which provided the leadership for the movement as a whole, not the members of any other class. Other classes and strata (e.g., peasants and students) were inspired and radicalized by the working class, copying its forms of organization and its tactics.(WCFI,1985:52) Thus, the peasants formed a Rural Solidarnosc, while other petty bourgeois strata (e.g., independent taxi-drivers and artisans) also organized.(Kowalewski,1986b:79-80) Likewise, sections of the intelligentsia (e.g., Catholic intellectuals, academics) and students made demands of their own, trying to ride on the coattails of Solidarnosc to seek redress from the regime that had oppressed them in the past. During 1980-81, many organizations affiliated to Solidarnosc or cooperated with it in some way (e.g., Rural Solidarnosc, the Independent Student Union, etc.).

(Mason,1985:110; Taras,1986a:139-140)

To conclude, the massive working class movement in Poland demonstrated -- in a way that no previous revolutionary crisis had -- the ability of the working class to lead all the other exploited and oppressed classes within capitalist society.

(7.5) Working Class Consciousness and Political Organization Within the Polish Working Class

All the evidence suggests the majority of Polish workers did not develop a fully revolutionary consciousness during 1980-81. In fact, even the most radical elements of the vanguard of the working class -- the industrial workers who actively supported the Lublin Group (LG) -- failed to develop a consistently revolutionary analysis of their situation, and the strategy and tactics necessary to achieve workers' power. The LG was heavily influenced by centrist notions about the need for a self-limiting movement. In this section, we examine some of the indications that the consciousness of Polish workers moved left, and the factors that shaped working class consciousness during the revolutionary crisis.

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There are many unmistakable signs that workers' consciousness shifted leftwards during the revolutionary crisis of 1980-81. The first, and most obvious indicator of the changes in working class consciousness was the sheer size of Solidarnosc. Just as important was the number of workers it could mobilize for national strikes, especially prior to March 1981. Moreover, there was enormous enthusiasm displayed by workers as they prepared for

each national confrontation with the government. And, there was great disappointment and bitterness each time the Solidarnosc leadership backed down rather than confront the regime -- culminating in the wave of disenchantment that weakened the union after the Bydgoszcz incident. The mood of disappointment and frustration when the union backed away from a fight, began with the Gdansk agreement. Rank and file workers "showed their determination and independence by rejecting their leadership's agreement to compromise with the authorities on the issue of freeing political prisoners." (Brenner,1982:7)

Prophetically, many striking workers in Gdansk were disappointed when the strike ended, as if the working class might never get the upper hand and mount such an offensive again.(Ascherson,1981:173) That was the first indication of the enormous militancy that would later prompt Kuron to write that

When any conflict arises between Solidarity and the government, no matter over what question, we (i.e., the national leadership of Solidarnosc-BM) always get tremendous support. On the other hand, any understanding, however favorable to the union it may be, arouses dissatisfaction or -- to use a better word -- disappointment among the people. (cited in Harman,1983:231)

In other words, during the fall of 1980, there was popular support for any kind of struggle against the regime. In fact, the "the movement's mass base was consistently ahead of the leadership."(Brenner,1982:6)

A second indicator of the radicalization of workers' consciousness was the number of local struggles workers launched to impose greater egalitarianism and justice on Polish society. Throughout the entire revolutionary crisis, there were numerous local and regional initiatives by Polish workers that demonstrated a deeply held commitment to egalitarian ideals and a fierce opposition to "social differences, privilege, waste and corruption." On many occasions workers used strike action to eliminate the abuses of party and state

officials and of workplace managers. Whatever the specific target of their complaints, and whatever the remedy they sought (everything from the opening of facilities reserved for state and party officials to the firing of corrupt officials), Polish workers fought to bring ostensibly "public property... firmly under public control and for resources to be allocated according to efficient work and according to need."(MacDonald,1984:479)

A third indicator of the radicalism of Polish workers was evident in the support for radicals within Solidarnosc. For example, in the elections for president of the union held at the Solidarnosc Congress, the three radical candidates (Jan Rulewski, Andrejz Gwiazda, and Marian Jurczyk) running against the moderate incumbent (Lech Walesa), polled a combined 45% of the total vote. Even though the radicals did not capture the presidency, they did predominate during the second half of the congress.(Harman,1983: 250; Ruane,1982:245-246; Ash,1985:213-214,218-219) However, a better gauge of the strength of the radical current was provided by a poll done in Wroclaw in May 1981. When Solidarnosc members were asked their opinion about the direction of the union's policy, 70% of the membership said they had no complaints, while 18% said they thought the union was too compliant towards the government.(Barker,1986:93) The latter group represented the radical current within Solidarnosc, the vanguard that had the potential to lead the rest of the working class.

The level of support for the active strike strategy of the Lublin group, in those regions where the radicals had been able to promote it systematically, provides us with a fourth indicator of the radicalization of working class consciousness. During November 1981, when the Solidarnosc regional leadership in some areas were preparing to launch active strikes against the regime, the propaganda issued by the Lublin Group had a major

in.pact on workers' consciousness in a few regions. For example, in Lodz -- one of the regions where the Lublin Group was strong, and had campaigned for the active strikes -- 65% of Solidarnosc members favored the strategy of an active strike, at a time when workers elsewhere were retreating from support for strike action.(Barker, 1986:136-137)

Thus, there is plenty of evidence to suggest working class consciousness was altered during 1980-81, as workers radicalized on a mass scale. Three conclusions seem obvious from our analysis to this point. First, the mass of the working class became radicalized during 1980-81, shifting from compliant to trade union consciousness. That is evident from the ability of Solidarnosc to mobilize virtually the entire working class for confrontations with the state (e.g., March 1981), and from the enthusiasm workers showed for militant action -- whether against the national government, or its local representatives. Until at least March 1981, a majority of the working class was prepared to take very militant action in order to win reforms. The second conclusion is that after Bydgoszcz the militancy and class consciousness among some sections of the Polish working class receded. Third, the vanguard of the working class, who remained ready to take militant action against the state throughout the entire revolutionary crisis, began to re-evaluate their goal of a radical reform of Polish society the fall of 1981. Under the pressure of events, sections of the vanguard were abandoning the idea Polish state capitalism could be reformed, moving spontaneously towards revolutionary ideas.

* * * * *

In order to really understand the changes that occurred in working class consciousness, we have to examine the factors that shaped that consciousness during 1980-81, including: the experience of mass struggle (e.g., the victory over the regime in August

1980, the defeat after the Bydgoszcz incident, etc.); the previously existing sets of ideas (e.g., Catholicism, Polish nationalism, etc.); the variety of political currents within Solidarnosc, and the absence of any kind of revolutionary party. We will examine each of these factors in turn.

The experience of the August 1980 victory by workers striking against the PZPR regime had an immediate and massive impact on working class consciousness. Polls showed Polish workers became very optimistic about the prospect for an immediate improvement in their standard of living, after the Gdansk agreement. Moreover, 80% of the population believed the government would at least partly honor the accord. (Mason, 1985:94,97) Serious reforms seemed to be on the way. (Polish workers did not understand what had happened in August. They did not see the MKS in Gdansk as an embryonic workers' government, a political power that -- in alliance with the other regional strike committees springing up -- could replace the regime. (Barker, 1986:27-28) For that reason, they failed to recognize that the victory of August 1980 was tarnished by the reduction of the Gdansk soviet to the status of a trade union.)

The Gdansk victory affected vanguard workers differently from less conscious sections of the working class. During August and September, the consciousness of vanguard workers was dominated by several political ideas. The key one was that Polish workers must be permitted to create completely independent and self-governing trade union. Only if their union was completely independent from the regime, could they be sure it would remain a reliable instrument of the workers. (MacDonald, 1984:479-480) Furthermore, Polish workers wanted their union to be "accorded full national status and dignity on a par with all other institutions in the country." Every time the regime showed by its actions that it

did not recognize Solidarnosc as the legitimate representative of the working class, it provoked mass opposition. (MacDonald,1984:480)

A second political idea that was common among vanguard workers was that Solidarnosc should be the means by which the working class majority could exercise some measure of control over the PZPR regime. They wanted the union to exercise a "negative power of veto over decisions that the government took which the workers considered to be against their interests." But, at the same time, vanguard workers opposed allowing the union to accept any responsibility for the economy -- whether at the enterprise or national level -- because they could not get real control over the state.(MacDonald,1984:480) (No one suggested revolution as a serious possibility.)

A third idea common to the more class conscious Polish workers was a somewhat equivocal attitude towards the involvement of their union in politics. On the one hand, many Polish workers fiercely resisted the idea that Solidarnosc should become a political party, because 'politics' was generally associated with the PZPR. On the other hand, the expectations Polish workers had of their new organization went well beyond those placed on mere trade unions. They wanted Solidarnosc to do far more than police the regime's adherence to the Gdansk agreement.(Harman,1983:238) In fact, Polish workers treated Solidarnosc like something more akin to a soviet than a trade union or a political party.

In face of the...non-representative character of the political system, the all embracing structure of Solidarity around elected regional assemblies reinforced a vision of the movement as something little short of being an alternative system of national state authority.(MacDonald,1984:480-481)

Finally, a fourth political idea that was common among the vanguard of the working class at the birth of Solidarnosc, was the need to refrain from those actions that might

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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

provoke a Soviet invasion. This idea -- the 'self-limiting' ordinance that was to remain a constant element in working class consciousness throughout the revolutionary crisis -- was all pervasive, and virtually unquestionable.

The obvious inconsistency in these views -- treating Solidarnosc as a soviet, and yet expecting it not to challenge the PZPR for political power -- speaks volumes about the contradictory consciousness of vanguard workers between September 1980 and March 1981. The consciousness exhibited by vanguard workers during this period was a cross between syndicalism and centrism. They "believed the union should aim to build itself as a countervailing power to the regime, pushing workers' demands (the syndicalist component-BM), while being careful not to do anything that could lead to the overthrow of the regime (the centrist component-BM)." (Harman, 1983:245) Thus, working class militants were prepared to limit their activity to an extremely radical and militant form of trade unionism, ignoring the larger question of state power, because of the fear of Soviet intervention.

The working class victory of August/September 1980 did not only affect vanguard workers. Before August 1980, many less confident workers displayed a compliant form of consciousness, being politically passive. The depoliticized character of much of the working class had its root in the experience of both state repression (during the 1970 and 1976 crises) and economic expansion during the early part of the decade. (Kolankiewicz, 1977:113-114; Wiatr, 1984:234-235) But the massive strikes of August-September, the political victory in Gdansk, and the experience of forming free independent trade unions changed all that. The mass of workers who had previously been skeptical about the possibility of changing society from below, began to change their views of themselves, their class, and the unchangeable character of the world they inhabited.

Those changes were evident in the widespread enthusiasm for the general strike called for November 12th. In those regions which had not experienced widespread strike action during August and September, workers "were now raring to show their mettle in an all out strike."(Barker,1986:42) In other words, regions that did not have a heavy concentration of skilled workers had -- by November -- become sufficiently organized and inspired to favor collective action against the regime. In just a few short months, the vanguard of the working class had managed to build a union which not only incorporated the majority of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, but which could command their loyalty and enthusiasm as well. As the influence of Solidarnosc grew, the pessimism, cynicism and social isolation of the backward sections of the working class disappeared. The social basis of compliant consciousness had been undermined.

Solidarity's rise had brought millions of people into open political life for the first time and the consciousness of these newly awakened masses was extremely difficult for the Solidarity leadership...to handle. ...This consciousness was expressed in vast numbers of specific grievances.... These masses yearned for a swift, total solution to all their problems.
(MacDonald,1984:493)

The enthusiasm and militancy of all segments of the working class was evident in the many militant actions initiated by workers at the local and regional level.(Barker, 1986:87)

The seemingly unstoppable offensive by a united working class was halted by the Bydgoszcz incident. That defeat had an enormous impact on the consciousness of all sections of the working class. Under the pressure of defeat, the unevenness in working class consciousness became apparent, as did the incompatibility between different political currents found within the union.

After Walesa cancelled the general strike, the union divided between a radical minority who criticized the decision by the moderate leadership, and a majority which

acquiesced. As mentioned above, an opinion poll taken in May 1981 indicated that 18% of Solidarnosc members thought the union was too compliant towards the government. Another poll, taken in April, showed that 11% of the population wanted Solidarnosc to "take over full responsibility for the fate of the nation and the state." (Harman, 1983:281) Thus, the portion of the Solidarnosc membership that was still radicalizing after the Bydgoszcz incident, was probably between 10% and 20% -- a substantial minority. It was the level of organization, confidence and political clarity among this militant minority that would determine the outcome of the revolutionary crisis. Out of a fear of Soviet intervention, they had refrained from advocating the overthrow of the state. But, faced with the persistent unwillingness of the regime to honor the Gdansk accord, these vanguard workers could not simply back down from confrontation the way the moderates had in March 1981. Even though they were stuck between the impotent reformism of Walesa, and the revolutionary impulse they felt, but rejected as utopian, they were actively searching for some kind of third strategy. After Bydgoszcz, the vanguard of the working class would rethink and rework the implicit syndicalism they had adopted in the fall of 1980, taking up the call for self-management, adopting the centrist strategy of the 'self-limiting revolution,' and then later turning towards the Lublin Group.

Vanguard workers were still debating strategy in July, when large numbers of Polish workers moved into action once again -- spurred on by food shortages and other immediate 'economic' problems. But, the more politicized vanguard workers, the ones who had adopted the centrist ideas about workers' self-management, did not plunge into the movement of strikes and demonstrations, seeking to "generalize them and link them together." (Barker, 1986:150-151) The decline in the level of support for the union among

more backward sections of the working class, originates in the period of July and August. For many of these workers, the union's inaction in the face of the worsening economic crisis, and the regime's new price hikes bred despair and pessimism. Meanwhile, the PZPR's offensive (which included its campaign to blame the economic crisis on Solidarnosc) just encouraged vanguard workers to search for a 'political' strategy to solve the crisis.(Harman,1983:241)

The early stages of this split in the direction in which working class consciousness was developing, were evident in the comments of some leading figures in Solidarnosc. In August, Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik -- both leading figures in KOR who were also steadfast opponents of any attempt at revolution -- noted a shift in working class consciousness towards support for the idea of overturning the existing system. (Barker,1986:108; Weschler, 1982:85; Potel,1982a:xiv) On the other hand, other Solidarnosc leaders (e.g., Zbigniew Bujak) noted the growing disaffection of many members with the union, and the growing desire for a "strong government" -- regardless of its political complexion -- to really deal with the economic situation.(Barker,1986:109) By November, the split first evident during the summer months had grown enormously, splitting the Polish working class in two. More backward sections of the working class were retreating from active involvement in the union into a preoccupation with day to day survival -- suggesting they no longer believed that Solidarnosc had a real and practical strategy for dealing with the crisis in Poland. By October, the number of unobtainable consumer goods was very large and the queues for the goods still available were very long. Thirteen months after the birth of Solidarnosc, it took "immense effort to get sufficient food to keep body and soul together." As a result, Poles resorted to barter, hoarding, black market activities and petty

corruption. (Barker,1986:132-133) In the midst of such "desperation and bitterness," it was inevitable that some of the less conscious sections of the working class would be confused about the reasons for the shortages, and be influenced by the government argument that Solidarnosc and its strike actions were to blame, or that farmers were to blame.(Barker,1986:132-133; Mason,1985:169,183; Hann,1985:122)

The regime's plan of blaming Solidarnosc for the economic crisis was quite successful. Because neither the moderate leaders nor the radicals within Solidarnosc had a clear and realistic strategy to transform Polish society, and because they could not explain the political importance of strikes as part of a larger strategy to achieve power, large portions of the population began to attach some blame to the union "for the crisis and the conflict."(Mason,1985:183) In an October 1981 poll of Solidarnosc members, the inroads made by the regime were clear. More than 58% of the members attributed some blame to Solidarnosc for the ongoing conflict between the union and the government.(Mason, 1985:183-184)

At the end of 1981...the population was still strongly supportive of Solidarity and its policies. The government, and especially the party, were broadly distrusted. But people showed a growing tendency to fault both sides for Poland's continuing difficulties, and growing sentiment for a conciliatory and compromising position by both Solidarity and the authorities.(Mason,1985:199)

Opinion polls from the fall of 1981 show there was enormous "popular fatigue with the growing economic difficulties and... declining confidence that either Solidarity or the regime could quickly cope with the problems."(Mason,1985:170,172) In the fall of 1981, shortages of food, consumer goods and the raw materials needed to keep production going "continued to be the most pressing and immediate concern for most people." However, many workers also believed that the economic problems could not be resolved until the

political battles ceased. Increasingly "the supply situation (i.e., the shortages-BM) came to be viewed more as a result of political difficulties rather than the cause of Poland's problems."(Mason,1985:171) In other words, the government propaganda was having a major impact in the face of the confusion and lack of direction in the ranks of Solidarnosc. The regime had managed to convince some workers that Solidarnosc was partially responsible for the state of the economy, even though the union did not control either production or distribution, and had been created as a response to the economic crisis.

In the face of the worsening economic situation, and the continuing inability of either the regime or the union to solve the crisis, many workers were retreating from 'politics.' Some accepted the regime's propaganda, while others were less influenced. But, increasingly large sections of the working class did not follow the union with any real enthusiasm. By October and November 1981, Solidarnosc was fragmenting.

(Barker,1986:133)

While compliant consciousness was growing among the least conscious sections of the working class, the turn towards politics among vanguard workers was gaining steam. Some workers were attracted to the idea of forming political parties and running in free elections -- an idea pushed by Jacek Kuron and others from KOR.(Ash,1985:216) But, the most important manifestation of the turn towards politics among vanguard workers was the growth of the Lublin Group.(Barker,1986:127-130)

The growing split between vanguard workers who were looking for a long-term political solution to the crisis, and more backward workers who wanted an immediate solution to their economic problems was a major problem for the workers' movement. Unfortunately, as vanguard workers looked for a political solution to the crisis, they often

did so without taking into account the continuing economic needs and demands of the majority of the working class.(Barker,1986:133) Thus, the regime was increasingly able to play each section of the working class off the other.(Barker,1986:151) The failure by vanguard workers to offer any practical direction in how to deal with the worsening economic situation, fed into fears (carefully cultivated by the regime) that Solidarnosc militants had some kind of death wish.

Polls done in the fall of 1981 graphically show the growing division among workers. After Jaruzelski and Walesa had both campaigned for an end to all strike activity, popular support for strikes dropped precipitously. While 90% of the population had supported strike action in August 1980, by December 1981 47.7% of the population opposed further strikes. Many Polish workers had been won to the view that strike action would only worsen the economic crisis, while accomplishing nothing.(Mason,1985:173) When asked what the union should do if the regime outlawed strikes, only 44% of union members thought Solidarnosc should take strike action to counter the government. Furthermore, only 45% of the members said that if the union called for workplace occupations they would participate. (Staniszkis,1984:327) By November, the radicals, who still hoped to mobilize the entire working class against the regime through active strikes, had an uphill battle against them.

Of course, these poll results do not 'prove' anything conclusively, since working class consciousness is dynamic rather than static. But, the polls conducted in Poland during the fall of 1981 indicate that "a growing majority in Poland apparently favored 'compromise' in Solidarity's relations with the regime."(Barker,1986:135)³⁴ Poles continued to support any measures that might further democratize the regime (e.g., by providing

further access to the media for Solidarnosc) and to reject all measures that would limit freedom or increase the level of state repression.(Mason,1985:180) But, they were badly divided on what should be done about economic questions. Thus, growing numbers of Poles supported measures like a ban on strikes and a suspension of work-free Saturdays "as a means of assuring more stability and improvement in the economy."(Mason,1985:174-175,179)³⁵

If government propaganda succeeded in convincing many Polish workers that Solidarnosc was partly to blame for the economic crisis, government actions -- particularly the meetings Jaruzelski organized to discuss national reconciliation with Archbishop Glemp and Lech Walesa -- helped to convince Poles that a peaceful resolution to the crisis was likely. Throughout the fall, the proportion of the Polish population who thought there could be a peaceful resolution to the crisis grew (from 53% in mid-September to 69% in mid-November), while the portion of the population who believed the crisis could only be resolved through a test of strength and the use of force, shrank (from 40% in mid-September to 19% two months later).(Mason,1985:185-186,193) Thus, the talks initiated by the government had the desired effect. The fact that just weeks before the imposition of martial law, only 19% of the population believed the crisis would be resolved through the use of force, shows how unrealistic most Polish workers had become about the situation they were in.(Mason, 1985:186)

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To understand working class consciousness during the revolutionary crisis of 1980-81, we need to take account of more than just the experience workers had of the class struggle during that period of time. The stock of ideas which pre-existed the revolutionary

crisis (e.g., Catholicism, nationalism and Stalinism) played a role in helping Polish workers to explain their new experience in 1980-81. But, it is "hardly astonishing that Polish workers were influenced by all kinds of non-revolutionary ideas.(Brenner,1986:2) While it is not easy to unravel the different strands of thought evident in working class consciousness prior to July 1980, we will comment on four sets of ideas: the lessons of past class struggles, Polish nationalism, Catholicism, and Stalinism.

We can begin by considering some of the main practical lessons that workers had learned from past experience in the class struggle (especially in 1956 and 1970) -- ideas which had become common wisdom among vanguard workers. Those practical lessons -- kept alive and popularized by militants associated with Robotnik -- were all part of the common wisdom in 1980-81. Four strategic lessons stand out in particular. First, reforms can be won through mass action against the state, just as they were in 1956 and 1970. On both those occasions, Polish workers learned they had the power to halt party policies they rejected and to force a leadership change on the regime. Second, Polish workers learned that regardless of what promises were made by reform elements of the PZPR, they could never be trusted. Polish workers had learned from bitter experience that to retain the reforms they had won, they had to avoid being coopted by the state -- hence the insistence on free and independent trade unions.(Bunce,1989:180) Both in 1956 and 1970, Polish workers had launched heroic struggles to halt the anti-working class policies of the PZPR leadership, only to have those same policies foisted upon them several years later by the 'reform' leaders who had hoisted themselves into power on the backs of Polish workers. (Harman,1983:219)

Third, Polish workers had learned from 1956, 1970 and 1976 that street protests, riots, and confrontations with the police were far less effective as tactics than workplace occupations. Because the vanguard of the working class had the opportunity to discuss this issue at length in the years before July 1980, the working class was able to avoid the pitfalls of the past. Finally, Polish workers learned through observation of the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia that there were limits beyond which protest should not go if a Soviet invasion was to be avoided.

Polish nationalism was a second set of ideas which had a major impact on the Polish working class. For most of the last two centuries, Poland has been a conquered and oppressed nation. Living under foreign domination, Polish workers have faced powerful pressures to identify with their nation rather than their class.(Harman,1983:260) The legacy of working class nationalism was ambiguous, just like Polish nationalism itself. Throughout the twentieth century, Polish nationalism has combined progressive elements (like the desire for greater freedom) as well as reactionary ones (like anti-semitism). In 1980-81, both elements of Polish nationalism lived on.(MacDonald,1984:483)

For the most part, nationalist organizations did not play a significant role within Solidarnosc.(MacDonald,1984:483) But, the 'common sense' version of Polish nationalism did play a role in shaping workers' consciousness. Nationalism encouraged Polish workers to distinguish between the 'honest' and 'patriotic' elements of the regime (e.g., the Polish army) and the 'dishonest' and 'treacherous' elements, who were viewed as little more than instruments of the USSR (e.g., the leadership of the PZPR). Nationalism encouraged Poles to trust elements of the Polish ruling class that should not have been trusted (e.g., the generals).(Michta,1990:67-71) Most Polish workers failed to recognize that their struggle

was primarily a class struggle against an indigenous Polish ruling class -- albeit one which had strong ties to the Soviet ruling class.(Harman,1983:250) Polish nationalism prevented the working class from understanding that the officer corps was a part of a distinct Polish ruling class, and that as such, it might eventually act on behalf of the local ruling class to crush Solidarnosc.(Barker,1986:148; Touraine, 1983:182)

Catholicism was another set of ideas that had an ambiguous impact on the working class. The existence of the Catholic Church helped to create the political space within which Solidarnosc could germinate, because it was the "only institution in Polish society not fully controlled by the regime."(Harman,1983:255) But, during the revolutionary crisis, the Church worked ceaselessly to limit how far the movement could go. As we suggested above, Church leaders had a well established policy of co-operat(ing) with the regime in times of social unrest. Thus, the Catholic hierarchy acted as a 'loyal opposition' to the PZPR -- gaining support from the population for providing a forum for dissent, while seeking favors from the regime for making sure dissent did not get out of hand. (Harman,1983:256-257) This tidy arrangement between the church and the PZPR was upset by the development of Solidarnosc.

Solidarnosc was not a creation of the Church, nor was it controlled by the Church. In fact, the Church opposed the strikes of July and August 1980, without success. And, throughout the entire revolutionary period, the Church tried to curb working class militancy in a fashion that could only benefit the opponents of militancy: the regime and the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc.(Harman,1983: 255) Not surprisingly, throughout 1980-81 the same workers who accepted Catholicism consistently rejected, ignored or opposed the "political leadership of the church." Thus, whenever "the political interests of the

workers' movement... conflict(ed) with the orders of the (Church-BM) hierarchy, the workers...ignored the hierarchy."(Brenner,1981:9)

If the role of nationalist and Catholic ideas was somewhat ambiguous, the same cannot be said about the influence of Stalinism. The Stalinist version of 'Marxism' that served as the official ideology of the state capitalist ruling class, and which every Polish worker was constantly exposed to, had a wholly negative influence on workers' consciousness in 1980-81. Polish workers, who did not always distinguish between Marxism and the Stalinist perversion of it, were naturally suspicious of the political tradition which they needed to learn about -- the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.(Barker,1986:151-152) (Despite the hatred workers expressed towards the PZPR, that does not mean that Solidarnosc or a majority of Polish workers were hostile to genuine socialism. In fact, as an organization, Solidarnosc never formally took a position on its attitude towards socialism. (Mason,1985:113-114; Ash,1985:225-227))

Since the real marxist tradition had so few champions in Poland, and no organizational expression, Polish workers were not likely to rely on the ideas of the Bolsheviks to explain their new experiences of 1980-81.(MacDonald,1984:481)* Nevertheless, there were some Marxists active within the ranks of Solidarnosc. For example, in Szczecin the regional branch of Solidarnosc helped to publish an occasional newspaper called Jednosc (with a print run of 100,000), that published Solidarnosc communiques, news reports, feature articles, theoretical articles, poetry and letters.(MacDonald,1981d:21,25) Some of the articles which appeared in Jednosc were clearly written by Marxists, who argued that what existed in Poland was not genuine socialism, but that Solidarnosc was objectively socialist and would eventually uproot the

system that exploited them.(Barker,1986:92-93; LFEE,vol.4#4-6:27-31) Unfortunately, there is no evidence these ideas ever went beyond the printed page to become embodied in a political organization.(Barker, 1986:93,151)

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Having discussed the contribution of experience and ideas to the development of working class consciousness in 1980-81, it is time to consider the role of political organizations in shaping working class consciousness throughout the revolutionary crisis.

Throughout the revolutionary crisis a variety of radical currents developed within the Polish working class -- organized groupings that were considered by others and themselves to be more radical than the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc. Here we will consider four.

The first radical current worth mentioning was the horizontalist movement in the PZPR. Although the horizontalists were sincere in their desire to reform the party, and create a better form of 'socialism', they had little impact on the working class movement. From August 1980, the hopes of most Polish workers were tied to the rise of Solidarnosc - - an organization whose very existence was predicated on the idea that workers could only really pursue their class interests if they remained completely independent from the PZPR. Most Solidarnosc members hated the PZPR. Therefore, the whole political project undertaken by the horizontalists -- which presupposed massive support from the working class -- was faulty.

The horizontalist movement was composed of workers who radicalized because of the rise of Solidarnosc, but who had -- for some reason or another -- failed to understand something the majority of Polish workers took for granted: the PZPR could not be reformed.(Barker,1986:81) The moment of truth for the horizontalists came at the 9th Party

Congress in July 1981. Predictably, the horizontalists were peripheral to the proceedings. Very few of their members became delegates, and none won positions of any prominence in the party leadership. Furthermore, their ideas were not adopted by the party or any of its leaders.(Weydenthal,1983a:49) The horizontalist movement was a miserable failure, and one which had little impact on workers' consciousness.³⁷

The second radical current we need to consider is the loose grouping of delegates to the Solidarnosc Congress that were called the 'fundamentalists' (which included well known radicals like Jan Rulewski, the chairman of the Bydgoszcz region and the supporters of the Lublin Group). Although they did not create any permanent organization the Congress fundamentalists help us to understand the developing ideas of the most radical wing in Solidarnosc.(Barker,1986:93,185; Ash,1985:217)

The fundamentalists were opponents of the Solidarnosc program proposed by the centrists in the trade union leadership (during the Congress, both centrists and moderates were referred to as 'pragmatists'). Unlike the moderates and centrists, the radicals viewed Polish society in essentially Marxist terms, denouncing the party apparatus as a ruling class, and implying that confrontation with the regime was more appropriate than efforts at conciliation.(Kostecki,1984:136) However, despite the Marxist character of their analysis, the radicals did not conclude that revolution was the way forward. On the contrary, showing the continuing influence of reformist and centrist ideas, they concluded that "Solidarity does not struggle for power for itself, nor to become a political party."(Ash,1985:217) Although they lost the fight on the program, three radical candidates stood against Walesa for the presidency of Solidarnosc, polling 45% of the vote combined.(Barker,1986:118-119)

Although the differences between the pragmatists (moderates and centrists) and the fundamentalists (radicals) were significant, it is vital to recognize just how conditional the 'reformism' of many of the pragmatists was, and how inconsistent and confused the radicalism of many of the fundamentalists was.

The debate between 'pragmatists' and 'fundamentalists' cannot be reduced to one between 'reform' and 'revolution'. Many 'pragmatists' were reformist not so much from attachment and commitment to existing political institutions as from disbelief in the Polish capacity to defeat the Russians; hence their reformism was less self-satisfied than that of contemporary western social-democratic and communist parties, more anguished and uncertain. On the other hand, the radicalism of the 'fundamentalists' was not explicitly and practically revolutionary. In practice, 'moderation' and 'radicalism' were intertwined, complex and partly incoherent. The divisions were not between defined tendencies, with different programmes, but between broad currents of feeling and attitude about an area that remained problematic for all. (Barker, 1986: 118)

Thus, most of the delegates -- moderates and radicals included -- had the potential to become to shift further left if offered a sensible revolutionary alternative.

The third of the radical currents we need to consider consisted of the workers and intellectuals associated with KOR. During the revolutionary crisis, the members of KOR (which was formally disbanded in September 1981) participated in Solidarnosc at all levels. Leading figures, like Jacek Kuron helped to shape the strategy of Solidarnosc by acting as part of the brains trust for the national leadership. Kuron was the principle theorist of the centrist strategy of the 'self-limiting revolution' -- the attempt to institutionalize dual power, while avoiding any confrontations that might threaten the power of the state or provoke a Soviet intervention. Kuron's strategy, which envisaged a free civil society coexisting side by side with the PZPR state, was embodied in the centrist current of Network. Those ideas also formed the basis of the Solidarnosc program. As such, KOR's

ideas in general, and Kuron's in particular, had a major impact on the consciousness of vanguard workers. They reinforced the notion that it was suicidal to challenge the state power of the PZPR, but that the Polish ruling class would tolerate the loss of their economic power to the working class, if it was done peacefully.

However, after Network had collapsed in the fall of 1981, Kuron was under pressure from radicals like the Lublin Group, who advocated an active strike strategy. In response, Kuron formed a new political organization (called the Clubs of the Self-Managing Republic) yoking his centrism to a decision to call for free elections and to challenge the PZPR electorally. His new found willingness to confront the state -- even if only electorally -- was a tacit admission that the centrists were powerless in the face of PZPR resistance to change.(WCFI,1985:55) Unwilling to adopt a revolutionary strategy, Kuron opted for electoralism -- a move supported by some sections of Solidarnosc. (Barker,1986:127; Ash,1985:257-258) However, in December 1981, Kuron was forced to admit that challenging the power of the state with force was indeed the only way forward.(Harman,1983:267; Barker,1986:138)

Finally, the fourth and final of the radical currents we will discuss here is the Lublin Group (LG). Since we have already discussed the origins, strategy and activity of the LG, all that remains here is to comment on the impact of the LG on the development of working class consciousness.

The most important contribution the LG made to further the radicalization of working class consciousness was their propaganda campaign in favor of the active strike tactic. However, the political weaknesses of the LG were also evident in that propaganda. As we mentioned above, the LG did not resolve the ambiguity inherent in their strategy --

the uncertainty about whether their goal was institutionalized dual power or a challenge to the state. In addition, the LG failed to recognize the most important precedent for their tactic of the active strike: the experience of some workplaces in Gdansk during August 1980.(Barker,1986:128-129)

Unfortunately, the LG's propaganda campaign was not enough to counter the pessimism and despair in the workers' movement by the fall of 1981. Polish workers needed practical experience that demonstrated there was an alternative strategy to that pushed by the reformists and the centrists. For the workers' movement to go on the offensive again, required a strategy that clearly linked the struggle around immediate economic needs to the long term goal of creating workers' power. The LG was incapable of developing such a strategy. The political confusion in the ranks of the LG, as they shifted leftward in the fall of 1981, would hardly have inspired confidence in the face of the task that lay ahead of them. That helps to explain the irresolute behaviour behind some of the fine words coming from LG leaders.

Kowalewski, one of the leaders of the LG in Lodz, illustrates the problem. He combined a very clear rejection of the 'self-limiting revolution' strategy, with equivocation about LG's strategy. His writings show that he wavered between centrism and workers' revolution without being able to fully resolve the problem.(Kowalewski,1982a; 1982b; 1982c; 1986b) Not surprisingly, he and other leaders of the LG were unable to deal with pressing political problems -- like the need to undermine the repressive arm of the state.(Zeluck,1986:33)

Nevertheless, in the last few weeks of the revolutionary crisis, the LG did begin to seriously debate the question of state power.(USFI,1985:51) But, posing the question did

not mean they had the political and intellectual tools to resolve it. Although the LG groped their way towards a reasonably accurate analysis of the general balance of class forces, that did not automatically generate for them the strategy and tactics they required to actually move the working class struggle forward.

The LG had the potential -- at least in principle -- to initiate and lead the kind of movement that might have shifted the balance of class power back in favour of the working class. The tactic of the active strike could have mobilized the vanguard of the working class and won the more backward layer of workers back to class action. The LG was the only political current capable of "overcom(ing) both the demobilization of the membership and the artificial distinction between 'economic' and 'political' issues." But, that did not happen. The LG was "slow to develop and still prone to waver(ing) between ideas of parliamentarism and direct workers' democracy, and between negotiation and social revolution." Furthermore, the LG never proved the validity of their ideas to Polish workers, in practice.(Barker,1986:136-137,151)

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The final factor which determined the way in which working class consciousness developed in 1980-81 was the absence of a Bolshevik-type revolutionary party. Because of the absence of such an organization, vanguard workers who moved spontaneously towards revolutionary conclusions (e.g., those in the LG), found themselves without the theoretical tools and political skills they needed to develop a clear and unequivocal strategy, and then act on it. Strategically, the LG equivocated on whether an escalating campaign of active strikes meant a revolutionary confrontation with the state. Tactically, they oriented towards convincing the Solidarnosc leadership to adopt their strategy, instead of orienting towards

proving their ideas in practice for rank and file workers.

Building a Bolshevik-type party in Poland would have been possible during the period after 1976 -- a fact demonstrated by the accomplishments of KOR during that period. However, even if the process of building such a party had not been started until after August 1980, considerable progress could have been made prior to the fall of 1981. As mentioned above, an April 1981 poll showed that 11% of the population wanted Solidarnosc to take power.(Harman,1983:281) In other words, there was a sizeable and natural constituency for the revolutionary argument. Unfortunately, those workers were not organized into a separate organization to clarify their revolutionary ideas, develop the necessary strategy and tactics for a workers' revolution, and to transform those ideas into a material reality. Throughout 1980-81, there were no organized revolutionaries to make the case for a revolutionary resolution to the crisis.(Harman,1983:281; Barker,1986:152-153)

So, how do we explain the failure for a revolutionary socialist party to develop in Poland during the revolutionary crisis of 1980-81? Three points need to be made. First, it is vital to remember that in both the previous crises in state capitalist Poland, in 1956-57 and 1968-70, the workers movement was far more influenced by Marxist ideas than in 1980-81. Leading figures in the opposition to the regime

talked in terms of some sort of alternative 'socialist' model of society to the Stalinist one. ...In the Polish 'October' of 1956, the supporters of both the new Gomulka government and of the 'left' opposition to it, centered around the publication Po Prostu, stood for 'reformed communism'. Even as late as 1968 the most radical opponents of neo-Stalinism in Poland...talked in terms of genuine socialism as opposed to the fake socialism of the ruling order.(Harman,1990:68)

By the 1970s, however, that had changed. Revolutionary Marxists like Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, authors of the famous book Open Letter to the Party (1965), had

abandoned their revolutionary views. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Polish state's massive use of force against strikers in 1970, and long terms in prison transformed them from revolutionary Marxists into leading centrists in 1980-81. (Barker,1986:16,171) State repression helped to insure that when the revolutionary crisis developed in 1980, there was no organization that embodied the strategy and analysis of the Open Letter.

Second, during 1980-81, "the Polish workers' movement found only small echoes in the countries around its borders."(Barker, 1986:154) No comparable movement developed in any of the other east bloc countries. That made it all the more difficult for those radicalizing workers who wanted to smash the Polish state, to argue the Polish working class could defy the USSR and have a fighting chance of surviving.

The third reason why a Bolshevik type party did not emerge in Poland was the international weakness of Bolshevism. No matter where we look on the globe, "the bearers of an alternative socialist politics (to the 'socialism' of the PZPR-BM) are too few in number" to appear as a viable political alternative to the reformist tradition.(Barker,1986:154) It is reformism -- whether in its social democratic or Stalinist form -- that prevails throughout the workers' movement in western Europe and around the globe. Therefore, for most of the world working class, the very meaning of the word socialism has been determined by the reformist left rather than by the revolutionary left. For Polish workers, it could hardly be different. When they looked outside Poland for theories and ideas they could use to analyze their own situation, they did not see a significant revolutionary left. (Barker,1986:156-157) Thus, the failure for a revolutionary party to emerge in Poland can partly be explained by reference to the international

weakness of the revolutionary left.

(7.6) The Immediate Outcome of the Revolutionary Process: the Success of Martial Law

The short-term outcome to the revolutionary crisis in Poland -- the suppression of Solidarnosc through the imposition of martial law by the Polish military -- was entirely predictable, given the absence of a revolutionary party. The sheer inability of the Solidarnosc centrists and radicals to understand the limited options available to them by the fall of 1981 (i.e., revolution or counter-revolution), made it impossible for them to understand the actual balance of class forces. During the summer and fall of 1981, there were lots of warning signals indicating the regime was preparing to impose martial law on the country. (Zuzowski, 1988: 174-175)³⁸ Nevertheless, the radicals were not prepared for martial law. Their early illusions about the possibility of institutionalizing dual power blinded them to the reality they were facing.

But that does not mean the regime's success in imposing martial law was inevitable. For example, had the Lublin Group (LG) launched an active strike in November, before martial law could be imposed, it might well have triggered a national movement and undercut Jaruzelski's plans. (Trying to impose martial law on a highly mobilized working class engaged in a campaign of active strikes would have been difficult for the regime.) Unfortunately, the LG planned to begin its active strike campaign on December 20th.

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One alternative outcome that was extremely unlikely, was the one favored by moderates like Walesa: the achievement of an historic compromise between Solidarnosc and the PZPR. Although the moderate leaders of Solidarnosc wanted to cut a deal with the PZPR, the Polish ruling class was never convinced the Solidarnosc moderates actually had control over the workers' movement -- something that was a precondition for even contemplating such a deal. Besides, PZPR leaders "understood that the union's membership were too bitter and too confident to swallow the (economic-BM) cost" of any deal made between them and Solidarnosc.(Harman,1990:69) They knew that such a deal would simply buy time before another confrontation. Thus, by the fall of 1981, PZPR leaders like Jaruzelski knew something Solidarnosc leaders did not: there were only two real options left in Poland, revolution or counter-revolution.

Another reason why the PZPR leadership was unlikely to agree to a deal with Solidarnosc was fear of an invasion by the Warsaw Pact countries. Given the precedents, men like Kania and Jaruzelski could not believe Moscow would tolerate any attempt to 'share power' with the working class. There could be little doubt in the minds of PZPR leaders, that a deal with Solidarnosc would trigger an invasion and end the career of any party leader involved in the affair.

Why did the Soviets refrain from invading Poland throughout 1980-81? That is a critical question, since the need to avoid a Soviet invasion was invoked by moderates and centrists within Poland as their main excuse for dismissing the revolutionary option. Certainly, the political stability of Poland was vital to the USSR. But, there are several points that need to be made by revolutionary critics of such "geo-political fatalism."(WCFI, 1985:63)

First, when the USSR and its allies invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, they did so after far less provocation than the Polish working class provided during 1980-81. There was no autonomous organization of Czech workers, engaged in mass action, as there was in Poland in 1980-81.(Harman,1983:240) In part, the difference in the Soviet response is explained by the strength of Solidarnosc by comparison with the reform movement in Czechoslovakia. The Soviets understood that a military takeover of Poland would be "a very hazardous undertaking."(Harman, 1983:240-241)

Second, the USSR had other very good reasons for wanting to avoid an invasion. The Poles were fiercely -- almost suicidally -- nationalist, with a long tradition of heroic resistance to invasions.(Harman,1983:240-241) A Warsaw Pact invasion -- involving troops from Poland's two traditional oppressors, the USSR and East Germany -- would have provoked a very spirited resistance. (Indeed, the Soviets had good reason to fear that sections of the Polish army might defect to Solidarnosc in the event of an invasion.) Furthermore, an invasion, with the inevitable resistance, would inflict massive economic damage on the country, leaving the country hopelessly bankrupt.

Third, the same contradictions of state capitalism that caused the long-term economic crisis in Poland also plagued the USSR. By 1980, the Soviet economy was already in the midst of a serious economic crisis, in addition to being bogged down in Afghanistan.(Mandel,1989; Harman,1988) The Kremlin could ill afford to get caught in a prolonged battle against Polish workers, when industrial workers inside the USSR were also getting restive.(Harman,1983:240) Naturally, the ruling classes of the USSR and eastern Europe were very concerned lest the Polish disease spread to their countries. True, the economic crisis was far more advanced in Poland than elsewhere. But, the economic crisis

was not a specifically Polish problem. Food shortages, inflation and debt problems plagued other regimes in the eastern bloc. And, in the few years immediately prior to August 1980, there had been strikes in Romania, Hungary and the USSR.(Harman,1983:239-240) Still, we must admit that the working class in the remainder of the east bloc did not follow the example of Solidarnosc in 1980-81. At the Solidarnosc Congress, Polish workers sent a clear message to workers throughout the east bloc, indicating they did not want to fight alone. Nevertheless, they were forced to, increasing the pressures they felt from the ruling classes of the entire eastern bloc.(Barker, 1986:155)

Fourth, a Soviet invasion of Poland would have set back the cause of detente even further than Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Because of the severity of the economic crisis in the USSR, the Soviet leaders had a vested interest in preserving and nurturing what little remained of detente. Within a few years of the crisis in Poland, a reform faction of the Soviet leadership -- led by Gorbachev -- would be sacrificing almost every sacred principle of Soviet foreign policy in order to deal with the domestic economic crisis.

In the end, the USSR refrained from invading Poland. Unlike the leadership of the Czechoslovakian and Hungarian Communist Parties, the PZPR leaders remained loyal to the Kremlin.(Taras, 1986a:89-90) But, the Soviets made threatening noises and gestures, which were calculated -- at the very least -- to assist the hardliners within the Polish bureaucracy.³⁹ Soviet pressure helped to undermine the possibility of "any genuine moves towards reform."(Harman,1983: 241)

Even though a Soviet invasion was not inevitable, it was still likely. There is reason to suspect that at some point the USSR and its allies would have invaded to protect their strategic interests. And, the likelihood is that the Warsaw Pact invaders would have

prevailed over Solidarnosc eventually -- despite an enormous cost. However,

there are too many unknowns in such a situation to be certain, in advance of the outcome. What would be the effect in the rest of Eastern Europe? How would the Russian working class respond to the additional burdens of holding down Poland? ...the revolutionary road (to socialism-BM) has its own risks, and its own costs. They are obvious, and we should not seek to deny or minimize them. But they do not lead, inexorably, to defeat in the manner that deliberate self-limitation did.(Barker,1986:158)

Those who claim there was some sort of reformist road to socialism are mistaken. It was the advocates of self-limitation who had their way in Poland, and their way proved disastrous. (Barker,1986:158)

Of course, a seizure of state power by the Polish working class might well have prompted a Soviet invasion.(Brenner,1982: 15) Nevertheless, several factors gave a workers' revolution a fighting chance of survival. First, a section of the Polish army could have been won to the side of a revolution -- acting as a further deterrent to a Soviet invasion. Second, with genuine workers' control of the factories and the economy, the Polish working class would be prepared to mount a real campaign of resistance against any invading force. Third, there is the inspiration effect that a successful workers' revolution in Poland might have had on the working class elsewhere in the eastern bloc.(Brenner,1982:15)

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With huge chunks of the working class demobilized and retreating from their previous militancy, the opportunity for a workers' revolution was lessening in the fall of 1981. But, any serious success in the campaign to seize control of the factories and the economy through active strikes, would have shifted the balance of power back towards the workers' movement, quite rapidly. But, to win the argument in favour of a workers'

revolution would require both the experience of victory in seizing control of the factories and the economy, and an extensive propaganda campaign about the need for revolution and the possibility of victory. (The vanguard of the Polish working class needed to engage in some serious strategic analysis.) Winning those arguments, which had never been heard in Poland, would require time -- time the Polish working class did not have.

There is no denying that Solidarnosc had the numbers necessary to contend for state power. With the vast majority of the working class within its ranks, Solidarnosc was a formidable and potentially irresistible force. However, what proved decisive to the outcome of the revolutionary crisis was not numbers, but politics and strategy. (Barker, 1986:149) In the Polish case -- as in the cases of Chile and Portugal -- the decisive weakness of the movement was the absence of sufficient political clarity, organization and determination to recognize the real balance of class forces and then take the necessary action.

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Jaruzelski's martial law regime could not solve any of the basic problems of Polish state capitalism -- something that remained obvious throughout the 1980s. Initially, the military did impose some measure of stability on the country. But, there were many things the military could not do. They could not eliminate the country's debt, make the demoralized working class work with the intensity required to dramatically boost productivity, or eliminate the underground organization of Solidarnosc. The latter point deserves some elaboration.

Martial law failed to utterly destroy the workers' movement in the way the Chilean Junta had destroyed the Chilean left in 1973. To completely eradicate Solidarnosc, would have required the kind of 'dirty coup' carried out by Pinochet. But,

there was a significant difference between martial law, Polish style, and martial law, Chilean style.... (During the suppression of Solidarnosc-BM) no summary executions of opposition leaders or unexplained 'disappearances' occurred," even though some 118 Poles were killed by the security forces from the declaration of martial law through the next four years of 'normalization'.(Taras,1986a:69)

Jaruzelski was prevented from trying a 'Chilean' style solution to the problems of the Polish ruling class not by patriotism or adherence to 'Polish values'. The general could not drown Solidarnosc forever in its own blood because of the social isolation of the regime. The Polish party/state machine lacked a social basis among classes that were hostile to Solidarnosc. (The Chilean Junta had the backing of a numbers of classes and strata.) Because all of Polish society had supported Solidarnosc and the working class (with the exception of a portion of the PZPR), Jaruzelski could not hope to keep the entire population under control indefinitely with just the support of the military, the police and the party/state bureaucracy.(Harman,1983:274) Thus, the strength of Solidarnosc, and the social isolation of the PZPR prevented the kind of bloodshed that occurred in Chile.

The survival of Solidarnosc throughout the 1980s, helped to make it impossible for the PZPR to ever fully recover from 1980-81. Solidarnosc may not have gained power during the revolutionary crisis, but its strength denied Jaruzelski any real hope of rescuing the PZPR regime in the long run.

(7.7) Conclusion: The Revolutionary Crisis in Poland and the Bolshevik Theory of the Revolutionary Process

Our analysis of the revolutionary process in Poland suggests that if there had been

some kind of substantial revolutionary current inside Solidarnosc, then the pre-revolutionary situation that existed between August 1980 and December 1981 might have developed into a genuine revolutionary situation. There were three critical turning points in the revolutionary process. The first was in late August 1980, when the Gdansk MKS threatened the regime with an unlimited general strike if its demands were not accepted. At the same time, the regime had decided not to attempt to repress the mass movement immediately. Because the revolutionary crisis had just begun, there was no prospect for the emerging pre-revolutionary situation to be immediately transformed into a revolutionary one. The working class required more experience of struggle during a revolutionary crisis before a substantial section of the vanguard could become fully revolutionary.

But, there were two other critical points at which the pre-revolutionary situation might well have developed into a genuinely revolutionary situation, if there had been some kind of revolutionary current inside Solidarnosc: at the time of the Bydgoszcz incident, or in the fall of 1981. It was the absence of a substantial revolutionary organization -- one that had patiently criticized the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc, each time it backed down from confronting the regime -- that meant the vanguard of the working class was totally unprepared to act independently when their moderate leaders abandoned the general strike planned for March 31, 1981. Furthermore, the absence of a revolutionary organization also meant that few workers learned the real lesson from the fiasco of the aborted general strike: there was no reformist option in the revolutionary crisis, making revolution the only practical alternative. The absence of a revolutionary organization doomed the vanguard of the Polish working class to eight months of experimenting with various forms of centrism (e.g., Network, 'self-managing republic,' the early strategies of

the Lublin Group) at a time when they needed to be preparing for a final confrontation with the state.

The third critical turning point in the revolutionary crisis, the one which had the most potential if a mass revolutionary organization had existed, came in the month of October 1981. When the working class swung into action again in July (with strikes and demonstrations), after the defeat in March, it began a fourth month offensive that could only lead to insurrection or mass despair. Either, the vanguard of the working class -- the workers who built and led Solidarnosc -- would prove to the rest of the working class that they did indeed have a solution to the crisis, or the working class movement would split and begin to fragment. Sadly, neither the Network initiative, the Solidarity Congress, nor the late, half-hearted turn by the Lublin Group towards the active strike tactic was sufficient to convince the mass of workers that their class had a way to resolve the impasse. That is why October and November were the months in which the mass movement began to disintegrate as whole sections of the working class retreated, rather than became the period when the ongoing crisis was transformed into a genuine revolutionary situation.

Once again, as in the spring of 1981, there was no revolutionary organization on the scene to provide an alternative revolutionary strategy to the thousands of militant workers who were forced to choose between the various forms of centrism on offer. There was no organization arguing in August what the leading militants in the Lublin Group would be learning in December: any attempt at a partial or limited revolution, any effort to institutionalize dual power, was bound to fail. The absence of such an organization that meant there was no one to draw out the logic of the movement for an active strike, point

to the obvious need for a workers' revolution, and then take the initiative before the regime could launch its counter-revolutionary attack. In short, a Bolshevik analysis of the revolutionary process in Poland suggests that it was the absence of mass revolutionary consciousness embodied in a revolutionary party that determined the short term outcome of the revolutionary crisis. The missing party thesis of the Bolsheviks is once again confirmed.

The absence of a Bolshevik style party was the major obstacle preventing the Polish working class from recognizing -- in the fall of 1981 -- the inevitability of a confrontation with the state, and the need to prepare for that confrontation. Because there was no revolutionary party, the vanguard of the working class was not really organized independently from the mass of the working class, and could not offer the workers' movement an alternative to its moderate and centrist leadership. That explains the absence of a mass revolutionary consciousness, and the retreat from participation in the class struggle, during the fall of 1981.

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We can conclude by considering whether the Polish experience necessitates any modification of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process. We can do that by comparing the Polish and Russian cases.

There were some important similarities between the revolutionary crisis in Poland and the one that occurred in Russia in 1917. The first, and most obvious similarity between the two cases lies in the way in which the two revolutionary crises began. In Russia, the crisis became more than just demonstrations and a rebellion by soldiers when the Petrograd soviet was formed. From then on, the entire working class movement had a

centralized leadership, in a body that originated in the revolutionary struggle. Similarly, from the day the Gdansk MKS was formed, the Polish strikes were transformed into a revolutionary mass movement under a centralized leadership, in an organization created out of the class struggle. Unlike many other revolutionary crises, both the Russian and Polish working class had a unified (i.e., class-wide) and centralized form of organization, unrivalled by other working class organizations, from the very beginning of the crisis.

In part, that similarity arose because of a second parallel between the two cases. Both the Russian and Polish crises arose in countries where the working class was deprived of legal, independent organizations, like trade unions and political parties. Therefore, the creation of the Petrograd soviet and of Solidarnosc at the very beginning of the revolutionary crises meant they were unrivalled as the organizations representing the whole of the working class movement. (Of course, one of the major difference between the Russian and Polish cases was the size and importance of the illegal political parties in the former, and the absence of such in the latter case.)

In both cases, dual political power arose at the beginning of the revolutionary crisis. But, in Poland, the campaign to reduce the network of MKS committees to a mere trade union, led by the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc, meant the Polish national soviet refused to play its role. Over time, Solidarnosc ceased having the character of a soviet, making it necessary for the leftward moving workers in the Lublin Group to treat the new workplace and regional councils of workers' self-management as the core institutions of a campaign to rebuild dual power. A third similarity between the two cases of revolutionary crisis lies in the relationship between the working class and the exploited members of other classes. Both crises show the enormous capacity for the working class to lead the exploited

of other classes (as well as the oppressed) in a common movement against the ruling class. In Russia, small though the working class was, it created the opening for the peasantry to revolt. Furthermore, late in the revolutionary process, and during the immediate post-October period, the Left-SRs aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks. That sort of development, was far more evident in highly developed Poland, where the industrial working class was enormous, by comparison with the other exploited classes. The fact that the farmers movement was called Rural Solidarnosc is evidence of the leadership by the working class over the other classes in Polish society.

In the Polish case, that potential for the working class movement to lead other classes extended well beyond the independent farmers. The revolutionary crisis in Poland shows something that was not evident in Russia, the leadership of the working class over the intelligentsia.(Curry, 1984) To put it bluntly, the Polish case shows that a powerful mass movement by the working class in a highly developed country, inspires the professors to follow the lead given by electricians and crane operators.

Despite these similarities, there are even greater differences between the Russian and Polish cases. We can only discuss a few of the most important ones.

The first of the major differences is that the Polish crisis, unlike the Russian one, was not triggered by some international political event. In Russia, defeat in the war, and the hunger that went along with the war effort, was the immediate cause for the demonstrations and the troop rebellions of February 1917. By contrast, in Poland, the revolutionary crisis was triggered by the economic policies of the PZPR, and its long term strategy for economic development, given the long term decline of the east bloc economies. In that sense, the Polish case demonstrates something that the Bolsheviks recognized full

well: a revolutionary crisis can be triggered by economic crisis.

A second, quite important difference, was the impact of the revolutionary crisis on the military. In Russia, the reliability of the repressive apparatus of the state was undermined from the very beginning of the revolutionary crisis, in part because the troops had been so detrimentally affected by the failing war effort. In Poland, however, the repressive apparatus of the state remained intact throughout the revolutionary crisis. Part of the difference between the two cases also stems from the presence in Russia and the absence in Poland, of a revolutionary current that sought to systematically intervene in the military and police. was affected by the revolutionary crisis of 1917, because the troops had been enormously

A third difference stems from the international circumstances in which the revolutionary crisis took place. Although Russia was still dominated by western imperialism in 1917, the continuation of World War I meant Russian workers did not feel it necessary to curb their revolutionary activity to stave off the threat of an external invasion. By contrast, in Poland, the fear of a Warsaw pact invasion prevented most workers -- including many of the most class conscious -- from considering the revolutionary option.

The fourth major difference between the crises in Russia and Poland was the experience with the class struggle in the workplace. In Russia, factory committees, and the experience of the struggle in the factories for workers' control of production, was a vital part of the creation of mass revolutionary consciousness. In Poland, there was no comparable experience. In the early stages of the revolutionary process, Polish workers refrained from seeking any control over production (whether at the factory or national level) to avoid being co-opted by the regime, and to avoid challenging the political power

of the PZPR. Therefore, the direct experience of workplaces being run under workers' control was limited to a few cases during the regional general strikes of late August 1980.

Not until the summer of 1981, did sections of the Polish working class finally assert their right to control the factories and the economy. By then, any campaign for workers' control in the factories could only succeed if it was combined with a realistic and practical strategy for also resolving the political impasse. In state capitalist Poland, where the employer for the vast majority of workers was the state, any successful campaign for workers' control at the point of production had to provide a realistic strategy for breaking the economic and political power of the state. Workers knew that even if they succeeded in seizing control of their factories from management, that unless they also had a way of breaking the power of the state over the economy as a whole, their actions would be futile.

The fifth, and for us the most important difference, was the absence of a mass revolutionary party in Poland, and the presence of one in Russia. But, that has already been extensively commented upon above. More generally, we can suggest that the absence of underground political parties in Poland prior to August 1980, and the rapid rise of Solidarnosc as an all inclusive working class movement, undercut the development of political parties in general. In that respect, the revolutionary crisis in Poland was quite different from the one in Russia. In the latter case, there was a multitude of political parties which competed for influence in the soviets. In Poland, quasi-political currents only developed within Solidarnosc slowly. But, even then, they shared so much in common -- especially the assumption that the continued political power of the state should not be questioned -- that they were hardly independent from one another. Moreover, political

currents -- like the Lublin Group -- never developed the capacity to contend for the leadership of the working class movement.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER (7.0)

1. The state capitalist analysis of Poland can be found in Barker (1982b,1986), and Harman (1977,1978,1983) The view that Poland in 1980 was socialist is outlined in Myant (1982) and Szymanski (1984b). The best sources informed by the view that Poland was a degenerated workers' state are MacDonald (1984) and USFI (1985).
2. There are several excellent analyses of the Polish economy and its contradictions from a state capitalist perspective. See Harman (1976,1977) and Barker (1982b).
3. The Soviets maintained a large military force deployed throughout eastern Europe. For example, Poland had 400 Soviet tactical aircraft and two Russian armored divisions inside Poland during the 1980-81 crisis (about 25,000 men), located at two bases, in Silesia and near Szczecin. (Taras,1986a:83)
4. As a state capitalist country, Poland's economy suffered from the same long term problems characteristic of the western capitalist economies, like the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Even though levels of investment continued to rise after the 1950s, the rate of growth continued to fall.(Barker,1982b: 111-112,130-131)
5. For an account of the previous crises, see Harman (1983), or Ascherson (1988).
6. For an analysis of the way in which the Polish state exploited the peasantry, see Barker (1982b:118).
7. KOR was centrally involved in publishing underground literature (from leaflets to complete books, and everything in between), and in organizing the flying universities. (In 1978 the PZPR estimated that more than 20,000 copies of 19 different journals were illegally published.) The KOR publishing house called NOWa published about 150 books during the four years preceding the strike in the Lenin Shipyard.(Barker,1986:15)
8. Needless to say, the absence of independent trade unions did not prevent Polish workers from resisting the exploitation imposed on them by the regime. (Pravda,1979:219-223)
9. The Charter itself deals with a variety of specific and concrete issues facing workers. But it also discussed the overall strategy workers should follow. For the text of the Charter, see (LFEE,3#4:7-8).
10. People like Tadeusz Mazowiecki -- the chief editor of the Catholic magazine Wież -- joined the workers' movement as 'experts' and advisors for the moderate leaders during the strikes in Gdansk.(Bingen,1984:220; Ascherson,1981: 156-157) These 'experts', who advised the Gdansk inter-factory strike committee during August 1980, and who later surrounded Walesa in the leadership of Solidarnosc, did everything they could to undercut the class struggle. For a detailed critique of the role of the experts in the Gdansk negotiations, from someone who was directly involved, see Staniszki (1981). Also see Barker (1986:26-280), Persky (1981:107,123-125), Ash (1985:53,58-59,62), and Ascherson (1981:156,160-161).

11. The members of KOR were able to enter the union at such high levels because many of the working class leaders of Solidarnosc had received some of their political education and training prior to August 1980, while working with KOR, or in KOR associated organizations -- like the Committee for Free and Independent Trade Unions on the Baltic Coast.

12. The members of KOR argued that the Soviets would not invade as long as the governmental power of the PZPR was not challenged and Poland did not threaten to break away from the Warsaw Pact.

They concluded therefore, that Solidarnosc had a vested interest in keeping a PZPR government.(Zuzowski,1988:172-173)

13. A series of related political demands called on the government to grant the right to strike, respect the law regarding freedom of speech, release political prisoners, reinstate workers fired for political activity, guarantee the MKS demands would be published throughout the country, and agree to publish information on the state of the economy. The remaining demands, were more economic in character, including: the imposition of controls on prices, the provision of greater supplies of meat, a raise in the minimum wage, an extension of maternity leave, a lowering of retirement age, an increase in pensions, a guarantee of work-free Saturdays, the provision of more child care facilities and improved access to housing.(MacDonald,1981:34-35)

14. The full text of both the agreements can be found in MacDonald (1981b:102-109).

15. The guidelines issued by Solidarnosc indicated that factory occupations were to lead to a working class seizure of control over the whole productive capacity of the country.(Harman,1983: 235)

16. Ironically, there is some evidence Jaruzelski had planned to impose martial law in late March or early April, and that the Bydgoszcz incident made it necessary to abort those plans. (Micha,1990:100-107)

17. The difference from classical syndicalism, was that the vanguard of the Polish working class did not want to topple the regime through a general strike, because of fear of a soviet invasion.

18. Moscow followed the fortunes of the horizontalist movement very closely, since loss of control over the PZPR by reliable pro-Soviet elements was one development that would quickly trigger an invasion.(Ruane,1982:180-181; Barker,1986:83; Ash,1985:96-98,172)

19. The Network group involved intellectuals, full-time officials of Solidarnosc and activists, far more than rank and file members of the union.(Barker,1986:102; Staniszki,1984:25)

20. The Network proposals were sufficiently loose to allow for many interpretations, some of which placed most of the emphasis on the creation of a market economy and the power of the management in each enterprise. Other interpretations made workers' control more central.(Barker,1986:97-98)

21. The strategy articulated by the Network group and by centrists like Kuron, had a syndicalist element to it. As Harman suggests, this strategy was a variant of "classic syndicalism -- the belief that workers' problems can be solved by building up strong union organization, without paying any heed to the question of state power."(1983:245) What made the strategy advocated by Kuron specifically centrist was that rather than hoping the state would fall (as classical syndicalists did), both the Network group and people like Kuron wanted the PZPR state to survive -- as insurance against a possible soviet invasion.

22. The Solidarnosc programme was supported by a clear majority of the delegates. But, the congress was split between the pragmatists -- including both the moderates (e.g., Walesa) and the centrists (e.g., Kuron) -- who supported the program, and a more radical section of the Congress, the 'fundamentalists', who opposed the program on the grounds that the continued rule of the PZPR was unacceptable.(Barker,1986:119)

23. At the end of September one hardline member of the Politburo told some party members about the formation of a Committee of National Salvation headed by Jaruzelski. He indicated that this committee would wait two months (i.e., until about the end of November) for the union's support to wane further, and then the army and police would crush the union. Furthermore, the list of people to be arrested during the December coup "included names of people who had left Poland in October."(Barker,1986:122; Ash,1985:234-236)

24. A poll of union members in Lodz indicated that while 90% supported the strike, only 57% were convinced it was necessary.
(Ash,1985:251)

25. In 1981, the Polish army had 207,000 troops, more than 75% of them conscripts (154,000). For that reason it was not as reliable as the state security forces.(Barker,1986:140)

26. The regime was so thorough that it banned the organization of queue committees which functioned as "informal associations of people waiting outside shops to buy things in short supply.... Organized by people in the queue, they made queuing easier, and ensured that sales staff treated people fairly, without favoritism. What made them unacceptable was that they were examples of autonomous popular self-organization, symbols of the Solidarnosc experience."(Barker,1986:146)

27. These experts -- who conducted their meetings on the details of the agreement in private, with the government experts -- shared a common concern with government officials: they wanted to find a compromise, that would 'save the Polish nation' from confrontation.(Simon,1985: 28,95; Staniszkis,1981; Kowalik,1983)

28. The entire contents of the strike bulletin are reproduced in MacDonald (1981).

29. Only a few members of the intelligentsia had any presence within Solidarnosc, and that at the highest levels, where they formed a kind of 'brains trust' for the various regional committees and the national committee.

30. Solidarnosc committees at all levels initiated their own publications to inform members about union and to discuss union strategy and tactics. Many factory and regional level committees issued regular bulletins, and in April Solidarnosc began publishing its own weekly newspaper Tygodnik Solidarnosc, with a circulation of about half a million. (Mason, 1985:110)

31. That does not mean Polish workers abstained from any effort to exert some control over their workplaces between September 1980 and March 1981. On the contrary. "from the very first months of Solidarity's existence, scattered groups of (workers-BM)... implemented a rough and tumble kind of self-management, by driving particular tyrannical or inept bosses out of their enterprises." (Norr, 1987:270)

32. Apparently some regional leadership in Solidarnosc (e.g., Lodz and Warsaw) did begin preparation for active strikes. And there are indications of plans and discussions in many other areas, for example Lublin, and Upper Silesia. (Kowalewski, 1982a: 235)

33. The members of the security police "were men selected from mainly rural backgrounds, highly trained and indoctrinated, deliberately brutalized, and specially privileged in terms of housing, health services, pensions and food supplies. When the regime had to deal with occupied factories, the army units surrounded the plant, but the WOW and ZOMO were used as the invading, beating, killing and arresting force." (Barker, 1986:143)

34. One of the most serious problems with polls is evident from all the research done in the fall of 1981. While polls conducted in the fall of 1981 suggested a "growing majority" of workers "favored 'compromise' in Solidarity's relations with the regime," that did not justify the conclusion that the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc was right to be conciliatory towards the regime. After all, none of the polls asked Polish workers if they favored such conciliation in the face of the regime's preparations for martial law. (Barker, 1986:135)

35. Another manifestation of the success of the government's propaganda was the willingness of workers to give up their free Saturdays in order to help pull Poland out of its economic crisis. By December 1981, 71% of coal miners and 83.3% of workers in Warsaw region industries indicated they were prepared to give up the free Saturdays they had won through strike action in August 1980 and January 1981. (Mason, 1985:194-195)

36. There was some evidence of Marxist ideas alive among Polish dissidents during the 1970s.(Horton,1978; Jankowski,1978) But, there is no evidence those Marxist currents represented anything more than a few intellectuals, isolated from the working class.

37. For a dissenting view of the importance of the horizontalists, from a Marxist perspective, see Macdonald (1984:508-509). For a critique of Macdonald's position see Barker (1986:154)

38. On at least five occasions, PZPR or Soviet leaders indicated the regime's intentions, without an appropriate reaction from the any of the currents in Solidarnosc.(Zuzowski,1988:174-175)

39. Soviet troops held exercises on Polish soil during December 1980 and March 1981.

(8.0) - CONCLUSION: EXPLAINING THE CAUSES, FEATURES, DYNAMICS AND OUTCOMES OF REVOLUTIONARY CRISES WITH THE BOLSHEVIK THEORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

In Chapter 1, we noted that although twentieth century capitalism has produced an abundance of revolutionary crises, featuring large scale clashes between the working class and the bourgeoisie, there has not been a single instance of a successful workers' revolution -- apart from 1917. That fact poses difficulties for those who advocate revolution as a legitimate means of dealing with exploitation and oppression, since it casts grave doubts on the validity of Marxism -- the premier theory of revolution. The main question posed in this dissertation is: Can Marxism, more specifically Bolshevism, provide a convincing explanation for why there has only been one successful workers' revolution in this century?

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To demonstrate that Marxism was indeed capable of accounting for the absence of successful revolutions, we took a number of steps. First, we defined the real marxist tradition, identifying Bolshevism as a major part of that tradition, while rejecting the suggestion that social democracy, Stalinism, Maoism and third world nationalism should be considered part of it. Second, we argued that since twentieth century capitalism has generated a series of revolutionary crises, featuring large scale mobilizations by the working class, the focus of our attention should be on the processes and short-term outcomes of those crises, rather than their long-term causes.

Having identified the revolutionary process as our object of study, Chapter 2 outlined the basic elements of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process. We examined the Bolshevik distinction between 'normal', pre-revolutionary and revolutionary

situations, and outlined the immediate causes, features, dynamics, and short-term outcomes of revolutionary crises. Chapter 3 analyzed the revolutionary process in Russia, the only case of a revolutionary crisis that has been resolved through a successful seizure of power by the working class.

We concluded our discussion of Bolshevik theory in Chapter 4, examining the way in which the Bolsheviks generalized from the positive case in Russia and various negative cases in western Europe, to modify their original argument (e.g., by adding the 'missing party thesis'). Evaluating the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process as it stood in 1923, we argued that in at least two crucial areas, the theory required an auxiliary argument to render it capable of explaining revolutionary phenomena. Bolshevism needs a more sophisticated theory of working class consciousness than that provided by Lenin's theory of the labour aristocracy, and Bolshevism needs to be more attentive to the centrality of the workplace struggle to transform the labour process. Chapter 4 also explained our rationale for choosing to examine the cases of Chile, Portugal and Poland, and discussed the differences in the conjuncture of 1917-1923 and 1972-82.

Finally, in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, we employed the slightly modified version of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process to examine some more recent cases of revolutionary crises -- those in Chile, Portugal and Poland. In doing so, we demonstrated that the basic arguments made by the Bolsheviks about the features and dynamics of the revolutionary process still apply today. Furthermore, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process gives us a methodological and theoretical basis to explain the absence of a revolutionary outcome to the revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland.

In each case, all of the objective pre-requisites for the crisis to be transformed into a full fledged revolutionary situation existed. There was a profound crisis in the ranks of the ruling class, a dramatic growth in the level of organization within the working class (manifest in institutions of dual power), and a growth in the level of suffering of the working class, which was directly attributable to the old regime. And yet, there was no working class revolution; there was not even an attempted insurrection. In each of the three cases, the subjective element necessary for a proletarian revolution was missing: a mass revolutionary party which embodied the revolutionary consciousness of a majority of the working class. Thus, our examination of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish cases demonstrates that the core of any Marxist explanation for the failure of those crises to end in a successful workers' revolution must focus on the absence of a mass, Bolshevik-style revolutionary party.

Therefore, there is no need for those analysts who seek to understand revolution, and who are prepared to accept revolution as a legitimate method to end oppression and exploitation, to seek refuge in alternative theoretical camps (e.g., the radical sociology of revolution). Marxism is indeed capable of explaining why the successful workers' revolution of October 1917 has not been duplicated since then.

In this concluding chapter, we compare the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish cases to develop some generalizations about the revolutionary process and some conclusions about the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process.

(8.1) - The Causes and Dynamics of the Revolutionary Process and Bolshevik Theory

The immediate causes of the revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland did not depart from the range of causes identified by the Bolsheviks as typical triggers for the onset of a revolution. In Chile, it was the clash between the aspirations of a working class enthused by the election of the Popular Unity government, and the actions of a ruling class determined to re-assert their control, that led to the October 1972 truckers' strike. In Portugal, the trigger for the revolutionary crisis was the crippling of the old repressive apparatus of the state, after the coup carried out by the Armed Forces Movement. And, in Poland, the immediate cause of the revolutionary crisis was the August 1980 victory by striking workers against the regime, in the struggle for an independent trade union.

In all three cases, the onset of a revolutionary crisis was preceded by a long period in which the working class built up its confidence and strength through strike action. In Chile, Portugal and Poland, just as in Russia prior to February 1917, there was a rising level of strike action, enabling the vanguard of the working class to prepare for a subsequent and higher level of struggle. At the same time, there was a noticeable deterioration in the ability of the existing social order to deliver a steady or improving standard of living prior to the emergence of a pre-revolutionary situation. Furthermore, in all three societies, the revolutionary crisis was preceded by a liberalization that lessened the level of state repression experienced by workers. (Barker,1987b:222) Finally, in each case, the old ruling class was increasingly split because of a growing structural crisis: in Chile it was a political and economic crisis, in Portugal a military and economic crisis, and in Poland an economic crisis. Thus, the objective conditions existed for some event to serve

as the trigger which would trip each society into a revolutionary crisis, by dramatically altering the balance of class forces, and unleashing the collective power of the working class.

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Our analysis of the experience in Chile, Portugal and Poland demonstrates the Bolsheviks were right to identify revolutionary crises as periods during which the dynamics of class struggle change dramatically. All three cases show the existence of a dynamic of class polarization that increasingly concentrated the population into revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps. Furthermore, all three cases exhibited the same pressures towards the politicization of sectional (i.e., 'economic' or local) struggles, and the tendency for sectional struggles to have a centralized impact on the overall balance of class power, as workers generalized from their immediate experience to the situation of society as a whole.

The polarization of Chilean, Portuguese and Polish society during the revolutionary crises was impossible to miss. In all three cases, intermediate classes and strata were forced to pick sides (on the basis of an assessment of the balance of class forces and the programs of the two sides) as the crisis shook the whole of society. In Chile, where the petite bourgeoisie was large, the moderate leadership in the Popular Unity proved unable to win its support against the ruling class. Therefore, large sections of the petty bourgeoisie ended up supporting the counter-revolution. In Portugal, the leadership of the workers' movement made no real effort to win the northern peasantry to the banner of the revolution insuring they would provide the footsoldiers for reaction. In Poland, where the industrial working class was much larger than in Chile or Portugal, Solidarnosc had

enormous success in winning the support of other classes and strata (students, peasants, intellectuals, etc.), at least until it began to fragment in the fall of 1981. (Most significant in that regard, is the ability of the Polish working class to win the allegiance of white collar workers and members of the intelligentsia. In our three other cases, vanguard workers proved unable to do so, weakening the strength of the revolutionary movement.) Thus, in Poland, unlike Chile and Portugal, as society polarized, the regime found itself with hardly any social base. The polarization of society affected the disposition of forces within the camps of the revolution and the counter-revolution. In all three cases, moderate elements in the camps of revolution and counter-revolution lost their room to maneuver and their influence over events as the crisis deepened. The power of the 'extremist' elements in each camp grew as the crisis moved closer to a final resolution. For example, in Chile, the Communist Party and the right wing of the Socialist Party began to lose ground after the truckers' strike in October 1972. In Poland, Walesa and his moderate allies lost support after the Bydgoszcz incident. And, in Portugal, the Communist Party and the moderate wing of the Armed Forces Movement lost support to the radical MFA, the revolutionary left and the radical elements in the workers' commissions during the summer of 1975. In each case, at the same time as the momentum was passing away from moderate reformist elements towards centrists in the camp of labour, the open counter-revolutionaries were gaining support in the camp of capital.

The polarization of society coincided with an increased politicization of the class struggle. Thus, it comes as little surprise that in all three cases, the whip of counter-revolution helped to politicize the working class movement. In Chile both the October 1972 truckers' strike and the attempted coup of June 1973 (the 'tancazo') had an enormous

impact on workers, leading to the birth, and later the revitalization of the cordones. In Portugal, Spínola's two attempts to seize power and halt the revolution (in September 1974 and March 1975) politicized workers, leading to the massive wave of enterprise takeovers in March 1975. In Poland, of course, there was the Bydgoszcz incident, an attack by part of the state on a few Solidarnosc members. That incident certainly undermined the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc, and forced some Polish workers to adopt a more radical strategy of trying to win control of their enterprises and the economy from the regime. But, in Poland, the whip of counter-revolution was not experienced in the same way. There was no attempted coup in Poland prior to December 1981. Instead, the threat of counter-revolution hung over Solidarnosc from its birth, in the form of a fear of Soviet invasion. And, that ever-present fear of counter-revolution depoliticized the movement from the very beginning. Thus, while the threat of counter-revolution pushed the Russian, Chilean and Portuguese working classes to the left, investing local and workplace struggles with new meaning and significance, it had quite a different effect in Poland.

Obviously, the politicization of the class struggle meant something quite different in each of the three cases. In state capitalist Poland, the revolutionary movement was political from the very beginning (despite the preoccupation of Polish workers with denying that fact). In Portugal, after decades of authoritarian government, the strikes that followed immediately after the fall of Caetano, in which workers demanded saneamento, had a political dimension. In both cases, as in Russia in 1917, the absence of bourgeois democracy, and the social democratic parties and trade unions associated with the existence of a bourgeois democratic state, meant there was not a large gulf between sectional struggles and class-wide struggles. Many workers easily saw the connection between 'the

boss' and the regime. By contrast, the class struggle in Chile, a bourgeois democracy, was less political prior to the counter-revolutionary initiative of October 1972. In the Chilean case, the rigid division between 'economics' and 'politics' had to be broken down through the threat of counter-revolution.

Finally, in all three cases, sectional and local struggles had a centralized impact on the balance of class forces nationally. Nowhere was that more evident than in Poland during the period between August 1980 and March 1981, when local initiatives by the working class (e.g., to get rid of particular managers or local PZPR officials) constantly threatened to escalate into national confrontations between the entire working class and the regime. Neither the government, nor the national leadership of Solidarnosc had a firm grip on their supporters, and neither side was able to limit the initiatives taken by those supporters. As a consequence, the class struggle constantly threatened to plunge the regime and the union leaders into a confrontation both sides were anxious to avoid.

In all three crises, sectional and local victories by workers (e.g., increased wage levels, a successful campaign for saneamento, etc.) did not satiate their appetite for change. On the contrary, with each local or sectional struggle that ended in victory, Chilean, Portuguese and Polish workers were more likely to generalize from their immediate experience to the possibility of transforming society as a whole. Thus, in all three cases, uncoordinated waves of strike action for wage improvements or other changes in the workplace, encouraged workers to take a more aggressive stand against the ruling class. (And, large sections of the working class rebuilt their confidence through local and workplace struggles (often around 'economic' demands), after they suffered a political defeat (e.g., in Russia after July 1917, and in Poland after March 1981).)

(8.2) - Factory Councils, Workers' Control and the Class Struggle at the Point of Production

In the Russian Revolution, the formation of soviets preceded the creation of factory committees involved in the struggle for workers' control of production. In other words, the political side of dual power arose before the economic one did. And, except for a period during July and early August when the moderate dominated soviets joined the Provisional Government in persecuting the Bolsheviks, the soviets remained the central focus of the Bolshevik struggle for power. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter 4, Trotsky argued during the 1920s, that in the more advanced capitalist countries of western Europe, the central form of dual power was more likely to be inter-factory committees, rather than soviets. In his view, social democrats the world over had learned a crucial lesson from 1917; they would never again voluntarily participate in the creation of organs of dual political power.(SAFG:38) Moreover, Trotsky argued that in a revolutionary crisis that featured strong workplace organization (i.e., factory committees) but a weak revolutionary party -- as was the case in a number of western European countries -- dual political power was liable to develop gradually, throughout the revolutionary crisis, from a basis in factory committees and inter-factory committees. (SAFG:37)

Thus, Trotsky refused to fetishize the soviet form. He argued that what is crucial in the revolutionary process is the substance of dual political power rather than the specific form it takes.(SAFG:37) When organs of dual economic power, such as a collection of

factory committees are centralized in inter-factory committees (whether locally or nationally), and begin to assume control over functions normally performed by the capitalist state (e.g., challenging the state's monopoly of the means of violence, by forming a workers' militia), then that institution is an embryonic or actual soviet.

The three cases we examined show that Trotsky was correct to anticipate the role of inter-factory committees within the revolutionary process. In Chile, the cordones, which arose out of working class resistance to the counter-revolutionary truckers' strike in October 1972, were inter-factory committees that did exercise a measure of economic and political power for a short period of time. Both in October 1972 and again, to some extent, during the summer of 1973, the cordones performed tasks normally undertaken by the Chilean state. In Portugal, the workers' commissions in some areas eventually formed inter-factory committees (sometimes organized through the popular assemblies, e.g., like the Setubal Committee of Struggle), which committed themselves to the defence of the revolution, coming close to becoming organs of dual political power. And, in Poland, the inter-factory strike committees of August and September 1980 (i.e., the regional MKS committees in Gdansk and elsewhere), that organized and ran the affected regions during the August 1980 general strikes, were embryonic soviets.

In the Polish case, the embryonic soviets emerged not from a struggle for workers' control of production, but from a political struggle, a general strike for the right to independent trade unions. When the strikes ended, and the regional inter-factory strike committees were pared down to become regional branches of the national trade union Solidarnosc, the embryonic soviets disappeared. (In the fall of 1981, the workers' self-management committees led by the radicals in the Lublin Group, aspired to become

soviets, planning to organize a workers' militia to protect their seizure of the factories and the economy through active strikes.)

Thus, Trotsky had correctly anticipated a major feature of the revolutionary process in the cases we examined. Only in one of these three cases did soviets emerge as the central manifestation of dual power (i.e., in Poland), and there it was short lived. The failure for soviets to emerge before inter-factory committees occurred despite the pre-crisis nature of the regime. It was not just in bourgeois democratic Chile that factory committees emerged before soviets; the same thing happened in Portugal. Poland was exceptional. The struggle for workers' self-management of production -- evident first in Network, and then later in the more radical Lublin Group -- developed later than in Chile or Portugal. Part of the explanation for the delay lies in the state capitalist nature of Poland. Because Polish industry was overwhelmingly owned by the state, most workers initially believed the priority was to extract nation-wide economic reforms from the government, rather than trying to exercise some control over its local representatives in management. (Only when it became clear in March 1981, that the regime would not concede serious reforms, did the struggle for workers' self-management develop.)

Thus, recent experience would suggest that while the emergence of soviet style institutions of dual power is not precluded prior to an insurrection (e.g., Poland 1980), it is more common for workplace based inter-factory committees to emerge first. Two factors seem to contribute to an early emergence of soviets or embryonic soviets: first, the absence of bourgeois democracy and the sort of trade unions and social democratic parties typical in such regimes (e.g., Russia in February 1917 and Poland in August 1980), and second, the role of generalized strike action in precipitating the revolutionary crisis (present both in

the Russian and Polish cases). General strikes (particularly offensive ones) compel workers to form centralized strike committees which must assume some responsibility for organizing life for the duration of the strike. If the strike persists long enough, embryonic soviets will emerge (e.g., Gdansk 1980). However, as the difference between the Russian and Polish cases shows, the early emergence of soviets does not guarantee their continued existence.

On the other hand, in cases of revolutionary crisis where the old regime was a bourgeois democracy with a well developed apparatus of class collaboration (e.g., Chile), or in cases where general strike action by the working class was not responsible for overthrowing the old regime (e.g. Portugal), embryonic soviets emerge out of inter-factory committees. Often, in such cases, it is the threat of counter-revolution which compels existing factory committees to centralize in order to defend the revolution (e.g., Chile in October 1972, and to a lesser extent, Portugal in September 1975).

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The struggle for workers' control of production in Chile, Portugal and Poland, played a crucial role within the revolutionary process, since it was (along with strike action) one of the principle ways in which the 'political' victories of the working class altered day-to-day life. Whether the political victory involved defeating a counter-revolutionary mobilization against a social democratic government (Chile), taking advantage of the downfall of the old state (Portugal), or extracting the right to form free trade unions from the regime (Poland), the result was the same. Workers took advantage of the situation to transform their workplaces. Probably the most dramatic initial changes involved the purging of managers associated with the old regime -- something which occurred in all three cases.

In Chile, where workers' control of production began in some plants almost two years before the September 1973 counter-revolution, the struggle to transform workplace relations was driven by more than just a desire to combat the economic sabotage of the ruling class or to strike a blow against the threat of counter-revolution. The struggle for workers' control of production was also promoted by a desire to transform the very nature of work itself (as documented in the story of the Yarur textile mill). In Portugal, the experience of workers' control and workers' self-management in the factories was of shorter duration, and often confined to the smaller plants. Finally, in Poland, because of the early end to the August 1980 general strikes, and the late emergence of a radical self-management current in the Lublin Group, there was very little direct experience of workers' self-management in the factories.

As one might expect from the Russian example, economic strikes proved important in mobilizing less conscious sections of the working class in all three cases. But, the struggle for greater control over the workplace proved important in mobilizing more backward sections of the working class as well. In both Chile and Portugal, where large numbers of small factories were taken over, the battle to maintain production against bourgeois sabotage was a vital component in the radicalization of workers who were not part of the vanguard of the class. In all of our cases, ruling class sabotage of the economy was a powerful weapon in the hands of the ruling class -- something which was clearly understood by workers in three out of our four cases. Only in Poland was the ruling class somewhat successful in blaming the revolutionary movement for the economic crisis.

The politicization of factory committees, and the emergence of inter-factory committees in both Chile and Portugal, helped to break down the division between

'economic' and 'political' struggles, and between the 'local' and the 'national' struggle. (Those divisions were much weaker in Poland, because of the nature of the regime.) The existence of inter-factory committees created the possibility for the struggle on the shop floor to be directly linked with a struggle for state power. In Russia, the political battle between reform and revolution was played out in a centralized forum -- the soviets. And, in Poland, the debate took place within Solidarnosc. But, in both Chile and Portugal, the debate about strategy was dispersed across a variety of organizations (e.g., political parties, tenants commissions, trade unions, etc.) in addition to the inter-factory committees.

To conclude, the Bolsheviks were right to insist that the key to resolving a revolutionary crisis in favour of the working class is the struggle for state power, rather than the struggle for control of production. The impressive levels of workers' control and workers' self-management achieved in both the Chilean and Portuguese cases, coupled with the failure of the revolutionary movement, shows that the central task of a revolutionary movement remains smashing the capitalist state. Although the class struggle at the point of production remains critical to the construction of socialism, there is a sense in which a successful revolution is conceivable without the immediate transformation of the labour process. On the other hand, it is absolutely impossible for a workers' revolution to succeed without the creation of a workers' state.

(8.3) - Working Class Consciousness in the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish Cases

In Chapter 4, we argued that the main weakness of the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process was evident in the attempt to explain working class consciousness

with the use of Lenin's theory of the labour aristocracy. We argued that it led the Bolsheviks to overestimate the strength of reformism during 1914-1918, to overestimate the possibility of a spontaneous proletarian revolution during 1918-1920, and then to fail to analyze the depoliticization of sections of the European working class thereafter. To remedy those difficulties, we proposed an auxiliary theory of working class consciousness, one which abandons the notion of a labour aristocracy, and which distinguishes between two types of reformist consciousness and compliant consciousness.¹ Our analysis of the revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland has illustrated the explanatory value of this auxiliary theory of working class consciousness.

* * * * *

All three cases -- Chile, Portugal and Poland -- confirm the Bolshevik's argument that a revolutionary crisis produces spontaneous and dramatic changes in working class consciousness, as the experience of struggle radicalizes people. In all three cases we saw the same kind of shifts in working class consciousness that were so evident in 1917. In each country, some workers shifted away from a conditional acceptance of the old order (conditional reformism) toward trade union consciousness, as the revolutionary crisis made the inability of the old regime to deliver reforms apparent. Indeed, our cases show that the conditional acceptance of the existing social order had already been badly eroded before the revolutionary crisis began. (For example, in Poland, the long standing economic crisis and the obvious corruption of the bureaucracy, robbed the regime of much of its legitimacy, long before the occupation of the Lenin shipyard.) The economic mismanagement of the old regime (Portugal and Poland), and the sabotage inflicted on the working class by the ruling classes (Chile, Portugal and Poland)during the revolutionary

crisis, undercut the idea that the old social order could deliver reforms. Any residual elements of conditional reformism within the working class disappeared after the ruling class launched attempted counter-revolutions (Chile and Portugal) or used repression against the working class movement (Poland).

Similarly, there was a shift from compliant consciousness towards trade union consciousness in all three cases, as non-politicized workers (especially in Chile and Portugal) were pushed into struggle for the first time, and de-politicized workers (in Chile and Poland) were re-awakened to the possibility of struggle once again. In Portugal, whole layers of the newly created industrial proletariat became active for the first time during the revolutionary crisis (e.g., the construction workers that went on strike in the fall of 1975). And in Poland, whole sections of the industrial working class which had been largely inactive after the suppression of the strikes in 1970 and 1976, moved into action in 1980-81.

Finally, in all three cases, there was a discernible and spontaneous shift from trade union consciousness towards revolutionary consciousness -- even though the achievement of a fully developed revolutionary consciousness was blocked by the absence of a mass revolutionary party. In that sense, the three cases of Chile, Portugal and Poland show the limitations of spontaneity. Despite a prolonged period of revolutionary upheaval, with all the rich experience of heightened class struggle that accompanies any revolutionary crisis, the vanguard of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish working classes never achieved a fully revolutionary consciousness. In all three cases, a sort of rough vision of a new workers' state began to emerge towards the end of the revolutionary crisis -- a vision in which there would be "popular democratic control over economic and social life." (Barker, 1987b:218) In

Chile, that vision took form around the notion that the cordones should be elevated to a position of power alongside the Popular Unity government. In Portugal, the most conscious workers argued that the neighborhood and workers' commissions, and the popular assemblies had to be given more power in conjunction with the Provisional Government dominated by the Armed Forces Movement. Finally in Poland, vanguard workers associated with the Lublin Group saw the active strike to give workers' self-management bodies effective control over the economy as the way to institutionalize dual power (and for some, also the harbinger of a future bid for political power). Thus, in all three cases, the vanguard of the working class pushed spontaneously leftwards, arriving at a centrist vision of a new social order. While seeking to expand the scope of workers' power, they stopped short of a revolutionary vision of a new social order that eliminated the old state.

The evidence from Chile, Portugal and Poland confirms the Bolshevik argument that despite the existence of a revolutionary crisis, leftward moving workers will not spontaneously develop a fully revolutionary consciousness. Even though a revolutionary crisis undermines sectionalism, it does not give workers (even vanguard workers) the ability to analyze the crisis of society as a whole. (Nor does it guarantee they will have access to the historical information they require to understand the precedents for the situation they find themselves in.) In fact, what all three cases show is that the most advanced form of consciousness to emerge spontaneously, in a revolutionary crisis where there is no mass revolutionary party, is a form of centrism -- the idea that it is possible to combine soviets and a bourgeois parliament in a permanent condition of dual power. Thus, our three cases demonstrate the accuracy of the Bolshevik argument: in the absence of a mass revolutionary party that is steeped in the Marxist tradition, even the very radical

consciousness that develops among the vanguard of the working class during a revolution, will not crystalize as revolutionary consciousness. There are several things about a revolutionary organization that permits the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness within the vanguard of the working class. First, it organizes the most class conscious workers in a way that allows for systematic discussion of the practical lessons of their experience as they participate in the class struggle during a revolutionary crisis. (For example, a revolutionary party would have driven home some of the lessons of the dual power created by the regional strike committees in Poland during August 1980.) Second, it guarantees the debate among vanguard workers about how to move the struggle forward, will be informed by a serious evaluation of the history of the workers' movement, and the lessons of past revolutionary experience. In all three cases that would have included, for example, an examination of the politics and the history of centrism -- something which simply did not happen in Chile, Portugal or Poland. (For example, a mass revolutionary party in Chile would necessarily have evaluated the role of the left Socialist Party in Chile in light of the experience with centrism in Germany during 1918-1920, the centrist tradition of the Austro-Marxists, etc.) Third, the existence of a mass revolutionary party gives the vanguard of the working class movement a centralized capacity to act in a fashion that will lead the movement forward. (The dispersal of the vanguard across a variety of political groupings was most evident in Chile and Portugal.)

Thus, the major obstacle to the emergence of a widespread revolutionary consciousness among the vanguard of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish working classes was the absence of a mass revolutionary party. In all three cases, the development of revolutionary consciousness was hindered by the absence of an organization arguing for a

vision of socialism that connected the cordones, workers' commissions, popular assemblies or workers' self-management committees with Russian soviets, as the potential basis of a new workers' state.

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According to the Bolsheviks, another critical factor in understanding changes in working class consciousness during a revolutionary crisis is the uneven level of experience and consciousness throughout the working class. The three cases of revolutionary crisis we analyzed in Part II of this dissertation, plus the Russian case, demonstrate the importance of that point. In each case, the unevenness within the working class meant that the vanguard of the workers' movement (in all three cases, skilled industrial workers in large plants, around the left Socialist Party in Chile, the Communist Party and the revolutionary left in Portugal, or Robotnik in Poland) radicalized much more quickly than more backward sections of the movement. Moreover, they radicalized in response to political developments (the electoral victory of the UP, the fall of Caetano's regime, the defeat of Gierek's regime in August 1980). Among less conscious sections of the working class, strike action to win tangible economic improvements remained the key to political awakening, with the struggle to offset the effects of economic sabotage also important.

The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process suggests that different sections of the working class, with their uneven levels of experience and consciousness interact in a very important way. While the political initiative of the vanguard of the working class sometimes shifted the balance of class forces (e.g., in Poland, with the formation of Solidarnosc, in Russia with the formation of the soviets, in Chile, with the formation of the cordones), the 'economic' initiatives taken by less conscious workers also provided the

working class movement with a valuable push forward at certain points in the revolutionary process (e.g., the strikes by backward sections of the Russian working class after the July 1917 defeat, the strikes and hunger demonstrations launched by some Polish workers in July 1981, the initiatives taken by Chilean and Portuguese workers around the housing issue). Unfortunately, in Chile, Portugal and Poland, the revolutionary party needed to integrate the different sections of the working class into a coherent movement was missing.

Of course, a revolutionary crisis is not a process in which the whole working class moves steadily and in unison to the left -- some through 'political' struggles and others through 'economic' ones. Different sections of the working class move at different speeds, and sometimes in different directions, depending on the circumstances. The most graphic example of that phenomenon is the retreat by more backward sections of the working class in Poland during the fall of 1981, at a time when the vanguard workers around the Lublin Group were shifting towards a more openly political position. Without a clear strategy, a firm leadership and the ability to deliver on its promises, Solidarnosc began to fragment. Once the initial euphoria of the August 1980 to March 1981 period had worn off, and the workers' movement encountered some serious political obstacles -- the indecision of the Solidarnosc moderates in regards to the economy, the impracticality of the Network activists, the growing economic crisis, the resolve of the regime not to grant concessions, and the government's ideological campaign against the union -- the vanguard of the working class and the remainder of the movement went in different directions. The more conscious workers began the search for explicitly political solutions, while less conscious workers retreated, accepting some of the regime's explanation for the economic crisis. (There was a similar retreat by sections of the working class in Chile, during the months

of July and August 1973.)

The Polish example -- which is reminiscent of what happened just prior to the October insurrection in Russia, when sections of the working class began to despair about the possibility of resolving the crisis -- illustrates the importance of the notion of compliant consciousness. Much of the retreat by sections of the Polish working class is attributable to despair -- a depoliticization caused by the failure of the revolution to move forward.

(8.4) - Political Organization and the Missing Party Thesis

In all three of the cases we examined in Part II of this dissertation, social democratic parties and currents -- the Socialist and Communist Parties in Portugal, the Communist Party and the right wing of the Socialist Party in Chile, Walesa and the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc -- played their traditional role of restraining the mass movement, and trying to elevate themselves to the status of permanent, and very powerful arbiters between capital and labour. There is little in their conduct that would have surprised the Bolsheviks. What is significant, is how effective they were, often without substantial resources. In Chile, the social democrats were well established long before the revolutionary crisis began. But, in both Portugal and Poland, where social democracy scarcely existed on the eve of the revolutionary crisis, social democrats were able to play a crucial role in demobilizing the revolutionary movement. In Portugal it was the Socialist Party and its allies in the moderate wing of the Armed Forces Movement that terminated the revolutionary crisis, while in Poland, Walesa and the moderate leadership of Solidarnosc retained enough control over the movement to prevent it from a major

confrontation with the state.

Both the Portuguese and Polish cases show the capacity for social democratic organizations and currents to grow during a revolutionary crisis. That is particularly true when the political vacuum that exists after the old regime is dealt a major defeat (Poland) or toppled (Portugal), is not filled from the left by a revolutionary organization. By contrast, in the case of Russia, where the Bolshevik Party was present, the reformists were simply unable to exert a similar influence over the movement.

All three cases also demonstrate the importance of centrist parties and political currents (e.g., the left Socialist Party in Chile, the radical wing of the Armed Force Movement and sections of the revolutionary left in Portugal, the Network group, the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) and the Lublin Group in Poland) to the outcome of the revolutionary process. In Chile, Portugal and Poland (as in Germany in 1918-1920), centrist organizations and political currents played an important role. The attempt to institutionalize dual power by combining workers' councils with a bourgeois parliament (or in the case of Poland, the Communist dominated parliament, the Sejm) was a crucial factor in each of our three cases.

Centrists in all three crises spoke the language of radicalism or even revolution, but refused to break with the more moderate elements in the working class movement, and refused to take a clear and unequivocal position in favor of smashing the existing state.

When it first appeared as a crucial phenomenon within a revolutionary crisis -- in Germany in 1918 -- centrism took the form of the United Social Democratic Party (USPD), a left split from the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Thus, it seemed that centrism was a phenomenon peculiar to revolutionary crises in bourgeois democracies, with large reformist

parties. But, the Portuguese and Polish cases show that such a view is mistaken. Even though, the centrist currents in both countries were never consolidated into unified political organizations, they still played an important role during the revolutionary process. The German experience also demonstrated that centrism will collapse if it is forced to compete with a strong revolutionary alternative to the left. (The bulk of the USPD's members joined the German Communist Party in 1920.)² Despite the absence of a mass revolutionary party in the three cases we examined, centrism was eventually questioned by a few leftward moving activists in the Cordillera group within the Chilean cordones (in August 1973), and by radical workers in the Lublin Group in Poland (in November-December 1981). But in both cases, the absence of a clear revolutionary alternative meant that questioning was late, tentative, and ultimately ineffective.

In Poland, leftward moving centrists came closer to developing a viable strategy for moving the struggle forward, advocating active strikes defended by a workers' militia, and organized through centralized councils of workers' self-management. But, there was still a clear gap between the revolutionary means to be employed and the reformist ends to be achieved (dual power). By contrast, in Chile, the leftward moving elements in the cordones were much weaker, and did not make as much of a break with the moderates as the left wing of the Lublin Group. But, the cordones had been a real factor in the revolutionary process, unlike the workers' self-management committees in Poland -- which had few practical accomplishments to their credit.

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There can be no doubt that the Bolsheviks' missing party thesis is confirmed as a necessary if not sufficient condition for a workers' revolution to succeed. (The existence of a revolutionary party alone, in the absence of the objective circumstances of a revolutionary crisis, cannot produce a revolutionary outcome.) If workers' revolution was

ever possible through spontaneous action alone, without a party, then Portugal and Poland would be workers' republics today. The Portuguese state was severely weakened by the revolution, and yet no attempt to finally destroy it was ever launched. In Poland, Solidarnosc embodied perhaps the largest, sustained revolutionary movement by the working class in history, and yet Jaruzelski prevailed.

The failure of the working class to achieve power in all three cases was a function, not of the strength of the old state, but of the political weaknesses of the working class movement. In Chile, Portugal and Poland, there was no revolutionary current to connect -- both in words and in deeds -- the struggle in the factory and the local community with the struggle for state power. No one campaigned for a vision of the cordones running Chilean society, the factory commissions and popular assemblies running Portuguese society, or the workers' self-management councils (or even the Solidarnosc regional committees) running Polish society. Thus, the absence of mass revolutionary parties was the decisive factor which explains the failure of the working class movement to mount a serious bid for power in Chile, Portugal or Poland.

Sizeable revolutionary parties -- composed of the vanguard workers who led the cordones in Chile, the workers' commissions and popular assemblies in Portugal, and the self-management committees in Poland -- could have played the same role in each case that the Bolsheviks did in Russia. In Chapter 3, we argued that the Bolshevik party undertook four main tasks in 1917: first, it used propaganda and agitation to patiently explain to Russian workers why they had to continue the revolution until the achievement of soviet power, in they wanted to win their immediate demands, end the threat of counter-revolution, and build a new form of society; second, it addressed the unevenness in the levels of consciousness and experience within the working class, to increase the degree of

political unity and homogeneity within that class; third, the Bolshevik Party carried out the political and technical preparations for, and then organized an insurrection, and fourth, as a result of ongoing debate and argument within the party, its leadership developed the strategy and tactics required for the party to raise the level of confidence, organization and militancy within the working class.

Vanguard workers in each of Chile, Portugal and Poland, desperately needed an organization that could perform those tasks. In all three cases, the most revolutionary elements of the working class had difficulty solving the strategic and tactical problems confronting them during the revolutionary crisis. (For example, in Poland, the left wing of the Lublin Group could not work out all the implications of the active strike tactic between mid-October and mid-December.) Furthermore, in each case, vanguard workers did not have their own independent political organization which they could use to influence the remainder of the working class. Without a party, they could not speak with a common voice to win an argument about strategy, nor could they act with a common purpose to unite the different sections of the working class. Without a vanguard party, those workers who had accomplished so much during the revolutionary crises we examined, proved impotent at the critical moment.

So, why did Bolshevik type revolutionary parties fail to emerge among the vanguard of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish working classes? The answer is that in none of those cases did sizeable revolutionary parties exist on the eve of the revolutionary crisis. In that respect, our three cases differ from Russia in 1917. Although the Bolshevik Party was not a huge organization on the eve of the revolutionary crisis, the Bolsheviks increased their membership tenfold between February and October (from about twenty thousand members

in February to about a quarter of a million members in October). Thus, over a period of eight months, during which the presence of a mass revolutionary party greatly contributed to the strength

of the working class movement, the Bolsheviks were able to grow sufficiently to lead an insurrection. A similar development might easily have taken place in either Chile, Portugal or Poland, if a substantial revolutionary party had existed at the outset of the crisis.

While the existence of a substantial revolutionary party before the onset of a revolutionary crisis cannot guarantee a revolutionary outcome (e.g., Germany 1923), it at least makes such an outcome possible. (Those few historical cases which seem to suggest the working class can achieve state power without a revolutionary party -- for example, Paris in 1871 or Hungary in 1919 -- are exceptions which prove the rule. In both cases the old regime collapsed, without the presence of experienced and substantial revolutionary parties. (In 1871, mass political parties were not yet common, while in 1919, the small and very inexperienced Hungarian Communist Party had been in existence for less than four months.)³ And, in both cases the workers' states that emerged in the political vacuums that existed were doomed from the start. Revolutionary Paris was surrounded by a counter-revolutionary force composed of both the French and German armies. In Hungary, the short-lived Soviet government had not emerged out of a revolutionary process during which the Communist Party had won the loyalty of the working class.)

The revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland were long enough for a substantial pre-crisis revolutionary organization to grow into a mass revolutionary party. But, they did not last long enough for anyone to build a revolutionary party from scratch. (The experience of several small Trotskyist organizations in both Chile and Portugal shows

that.) In Germany, during the revolutionary crisis of 1918-1923, the Communist party was built from only 2,000 members to the status of a mass organization. But, that process took several years -- a longer period of time than was available in the three cases we examined. Thus, the evidence suggests that revolutionary crises can only be resolved through a successful workers' resolution if there is a substantial revolutionary party in existence prior to the onset of the crisis. (Of course, a revolutionary party requires more than just numbers to be effective during a revolutionary crisis. It must also have a degree of political clarity and experience which cannot be acquired in the midst of the roller coaster ride that is a revolutionary crisis.)

Our three cases force us to consider an important question: why were there no sizeable parties embodying Bolshevik ideas in existence in Chile in 1970-72, in Portugal in 1974, or in Poland between 1976 and 1980? Indeed, why have Bolshevik-type parties been absent at the beginning of so many of the revolutionary crises that have occurred since the era of Lenin?

The explanation must start from a recognition of the strength of Stalinism and the extreme weakness of Bolshevism (i.e., Trotskyism) after the 1920s. The degeneration of the Russian revolution, and the rise of Stalinism meant the real Marxist tradition -- including Marx's argument about the nature of socialism and Lenin's argument about how to create socialism -- was virtually buried. The politics of Bolshevism, which remained alive only in the ranks of small Trotskyist organizations, was almost completely marginalized, cut off from the mainstream of the working class movement. (Molyneux, 1981:205-206; Callinicos, 1990) As a result, very few radical workers have consciously fought for a vision of socialism that Marx would have recognized as his own: a commune-like workers' state,

rooted in organs of radical democracy, and created through the self-emancipation of the working class. And, those workers who have fought for such a vision (usually under the banner of Trotskyism) have either not seen the need for a Bolshevik-type party (e.g., the council communists), faced very unfavorable circumstances in which to build (e.g., from the 1930s through to the 1960s), or have gone about building such a party wrongly. Most radical workers who have fought for 'socialism' since the 1920s, have done so without realizing the immediate goal they fought for (i.e., putting a Stalinist Party in power) was far different from the goal advocated by Marx. Furthermore, the many workers who joined Stalinist parties did not know that the organization they joined had nothing in common with the party that existed in Russia in 1917.

Thus, the absence of Bolshevik-type revolutionary parties at the beginning of the crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland, can be explained by considering the weakness of Bolshevism (i.e., Trotskyism) internationally, during the 1960s and 1970s. As we suggested in Chapter 1, by the 1960's the real Marxist tradition had been buried under decades of Stalinist hegemony on the left, and by the emergence of third world nationalism, Maoism and other non-Marxist political currents. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that in all three of the cases we examined, the vanguard of the working class was primarily influenced by political organizations and ideas which claimed to be 'Marxist' or 'socialist', but which were nothing of the sort: in Chile it was Guevarism and centrism; in Portugal, Guevarism and centrism were joined by Stalinism, while in Poland, it was Stalinism, social democracy and centrism.

When the Bolsheviks developed the missing party thesis to explain the failure of the spontaneous revolutionary movements in Western Europe during 1918-1920, they did so to

explain the outcome of revolutionary crises in the absence of adequate revolutionary parties. At the time, the Bolsheviks had to contend with competition from the social democrats (and to a lesser extent, centrists and syndicalists). But, to assist them in the creation of revolutionary organizations, they had the example of 1917. During the 1960s and 1970s, the objective situation confronting Marxists from the Bolshevik tradition were quite different. In the first place, the world capitalist system had been in a prolonged boom until the early 1970s. While conditions of economic and political crisis emerged after 1968, there was not a period of synchronized world revolutionary crisis comparable to 1917-1923. (The period of 1917-1923 was one of simultaneous offensive by the working class in a variety of countries.⁴) Second, social democracy was still around, acting as a major obstacle to revolutionaries inside the working class movement. Third, for most workers, Stalinism (or some variation of it) displaced Bolshevism as the major interpretation of Marxism, either discrediting the very notion of proletarian revolution, or twisting it into an unrecognizable form. Fourth, the development of a revolutionary consciousness among the vanguard of the world working class was limited by the absence of a positive example of revolutionary struggle leading to workers' power in recent history.

Today, we live in a period that is quite different from the one in which the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish revolutions occurred. Not only is the world capitalist system in a state of crisis, but that crisis has destroyed the 'socialist' pretensions of the state capitalist ruling classes throughout much of the world. Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism and other 'interpretations' of Marxism have politically collapsed, leaving a vacuum on the left, and an opportunity for the Bolshevik tradition to grow.

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There is one final point we need to make regarding the Bolsheviks' missing party thesis, and its role in explaining the outcome of revolutionary crises. It can be argued that a workers' revolution of the sort that occurred in 1917 could not happen again, because the Russian revolution was a unique event. (Or, in another version of the same argument, because the existence of the Bolshevik party in 1917 was somehow unique.)

No doubt, the Russian revolution, like every other event in human history, was -- in a certain sense -- unique. But social scientists and Marxists accept that it is possible to generalize across history. They recognize the possibility and the necessity of analyzing "what is general in the unique." (Carr, 1964:63) That is what Lenin and Trotsky did with the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process, and that is what we have done in analyzing four different cases of revolutionary crisis.

In this dissertation we have treated certain generalizations about the twentieth century as unproblematic: capitalism was plagued by objective contradictions in 1917 and it still is; periodically, those contradictions lead to revolutionary upheaval -- something that was true at the beginning of the century and remains true today. We have argued that it is possible, using Bolshevik theory as a guide, to develop more powerful generalizations about the features and dynamics of revolutionary crises that involve a mobilized working class. Our analysis shows that all four cases of revolutionary crisis that we examined exhibit similar features (e.g., organizations of dual power) and dynamics (e.g., the polarization of society). If it is legitimate to identify common properties between different cases of revolutionary crisis, it is also possible to examine a feature present in one case (e.g., the presence of a large revolutionary party in 1917), but absent in the others. And, if that feature can be shown to be critical to the outcome of the case in which it was present (as

the Bolshevik party was to the outcome of 1917), then there is good reason to believe that its absence in the other cases will also affect their outcomes. In other words, the role of the Bolshevik party in the Russian revolution suggests the absence of an analogous organization in other revolutionary crises will produce a different outcome from that which occurred in 1917.

There is no reason to believe the creation of the Bolshevik party in 1917 was a feat which can never be duplicated. Other types of parties and political organizations have been 'copied', in different objective circumstances. Thus, there are many social democratic parties, each with its own peculiarities and its own history, but all with certain common characteristics. Therefore, a Bolshevik-type party can, in principle, be duplicated outside the conditions of revolutionary Russia.

Finally, Bolshevism, as a theory capable of explaining revolutionary crises, cannot be dismissed because of the failure of workers' revolution to occur since 1917. Theories, even 'correct' ones do not make revolutions. Theories must be embraced by people and embodied in organizations to have an impact on history. Our argument here is that Bolshevik theory has not been embodied in organizations of sufficient size and experience to play a decisive role during a revolutionary crisis. Therefore, the failure for workers' revolution to occur since 1917 points to the need to investigate why Bolshevik theory has not been embraced by large numbers of workers and embodied in sizeable organizations. The answer to that question would require another dissertation.

(8.5) - Counter-Revolution and Non-Revolutionary Outcomes to Revolutionary Crises

Of the four cases of revolutionary crisis discussed in this dissertation, three ended in counter-revolution. But, the form and intensity the counter-revolution took in each case was quite different. In Chile, the revolutionary crisis ended in a bloody massacre. In Poland, Solidarnosc was smashed (although not entirely eliminated), but with a minimum of bloodshed. Finally, in Portugal -- where the revolutionary crisis evaporated after the regime disarmed revolutionary troops on November 25th -- there was very little systematic repression by comparison with Poland. What accounts for these differences?

None of the three cases we examined in detail occurred during a period of world revolutionary crisis as the Russian Revolution did. In other words, the revolutionary crises in Chile, Portugal and Poland were isolated cases, a fact which made it much easier for the international ruling class to intervene during the revolutionary process in defence of the local capitalist class.⁵ In all three cases there was much more direct intervention than there was during the revolutionary process in Russia in 1917. (The continuation of the World War made it exceptionally difficult for the world ruling class to intervene effectively in the 1917 revolution.) Neither the United States (in the case of Chile and Portugal) nor the Soviet Union (in the case of Poland) faced anything like the revolutionary wave of 1917-1923, or for that matter, the wave of 1989 in eastern Europe. Had the international ruling class faced such a wave of crisis, it would have greatly affected the situation in at least two out of our three cases.

In the case of Portugal, had the counter-revolutionary effort of the Socialist Party not been backed and financed by the United States and western European social democratic

parties, it is doubtful Soares and his allies would have had the strength to cement an alliance with the Portuguese right and then defuse the revolution. More likely, the revolutionary crisis would have moved towards civil war. In Poland, had the Soviet and eastern bloc ruling classes been faced with the kind of crisis that developed in the late 1980s, and by the sort of revolt that occurred in 1989, Solidarnosc might well have taken power. The Chilean case is somewhat different. Although the US played an important role in the sabotage of the Chilean economy under Allende, the strength of the counter-revolution did not depend on the presence of US troops (the way the Polish ruling class relied on the threat of Soviet intervention as their main prop) nor on the availability of American cash to buy their way out of the crisis (as in Portugal). The strength of the Chilean counter-revolution lies in the very successful mobilization of the substantial petty bourgeoisie by the ruling class.

Most of the difference in the form and intensity of the counter-revolution stems from the domestic balance of class power at the time the revolutionary crisis ended. In Chile, the military had enough support among some classes to do what Jaruzelski could only dream of doing. But, in Poland, the revolutionary movement remained too strong, and the regime too weak, for repression on the scale of Chile to be undertaken. Similarly, in Portugal, the weakness of the Socialist Party in November 1975 made a bloody counter-revolution unimaginable, unless Soares was prepared to initiate a civil war. The comparison between the Chilean and Polish cases serves as a reminder that it is ultimately the balance of class forces domestically and internationally, that determines the specific form and intensity of a counter-revolutionary outcome to a revolutionary crisis.

But, in all three of our cases, counter-revolution was not the only possible outcome. Even without hypothesizing what might have happened if mass revolutionary parties had existed, it is easy to imagine alternative outcomes to the bloody coup in Chile, the disarming of left wing soldiers in Portugal, and the imposition of martial law in Poland. In each case, there were short-term alternative outcomes, that might have been realized, even in the absence of revolutionary party. In Chile, any moves by the left Socialist Party or the cordones to defend dissident soldiers from their officers, would have shifted the balance of power enough to make the coup problematic. In Portugal, a general strike in support of the radical military units being disarmed and disbanded by the moderate wing of the Armed Forces Movement, might well have tipped the balance against the moderates. And, in Poland, had the Lublin Group acted on their proposal for an active strike earlier, the military would have had enormous difficulties in trying to impose martial law. None of these short-term alternative outcomes would have meant victory for the working class, but they do indicate that even with slightly better political leadership, the revolutionary process might have been prolonged.

(8.6) - Conclusion: The Theory and Practice of Proletarian Revolution

Part of the reason this project was undertaken was to re-assert the importance of the Bolshevik tradition in the analysis of revolution, at a time when the analysis of revolution is dominated by radical sociologists. After decades of neglect, the insights of the Bolsheviks continue to be ignored or treated rather superficially.

Because Bolshevik theory tells us something about the typical features and dynamics of a revolutionary crisis that features a mobilized working class, it can serve as a guide to the empirical investigation of revolutionary phenomena. But, as argued above, Bolshevism cannot be regarded as a replacement for empirical and historical investigation. The Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process is not an abstract theory intended to pre-empt the concrete analysis of revolutionary crises.

In our view, the Bolshevik theory of the revolutionary process -- supplemented by a few auxiliary theories and insights -- can provide an adequate, Marxist explanation for the failure of the Chilean, Portuguese and Polish working classes to seize power in the same way the Russian workers did in 1917. That explanation focuses on the absence of revolutionary parties in each of those cases.

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Another reason it is necessary to undertake a study like this, follows from the nature of the relationship between Marxism as a scientific research program and the class struggle. Since Marxism is the theorization of the possibility of the victory of the working class over capital, the fortunes of that theory are tied to the existence of Bolshevik type parties, and the successes of the working class. In periods when large revolutionary parties exist, and the working class is on the offensive, the Marxist and Bolshevik research program commands far more scientific attention, than in periods when the working class is on the defensive. Since the fate of Bolshevism as a theory is tied so closely to the fate of Bolshevism as a political movement, it comes as no surprise that after 1917-1923, Bolshevism attracted the greatest amount of attention during the ten years following 1968.

However, in the last decade, a period when the international working class has not been on the sort of offensive that characterized the period after 1968, revolutionary Marxism and Bolshevism have attracted far less attention.

Although the relationship between the Bolshevik theory of revolution and revolutionary activity is such that the level of practice does impose certain limits on the development of the theory, that does not mean it is impossible to write about revolution without taking taken part in one. Marxists cannot wait for an opportunity to participate in a revolutionary struggle before theorizing about the causes, processes and outcomes of revolution. It is both possible and necessary to raise theory to a higher level than that achieved by the Bolsheviks, by trying to take account of the historical experience of the working class struggle since 1917-1923. Of course, that sort of scientific endeavour is greatly enriched by direct participation in the class struggle, even if only in a 'normal' period.

Workers' revolution need not fail. But, those who seek to rid the world of exploitation and oppression need to learn at least one very important lesson from history: to begin the process of destroying capitalism, workers must be able to use the opportunity provided by a revolutionary crisis to achieve state power. And, to accomplish that they need the kind of political party Russian workers had in 1917.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 8.0

1. For more on the important phenomenon of centrism, see Loew (1978) or Hallas (1985). For the role of centrism in the German revolution, see Harman (1982), Fowkes (1984) and Morgan (1975).

2. On the Paris Commune, see Edwards (1971) and Jellinek (1937). On the Hungarian Revolution, see Tokes (1965).

3. The general task facing revolutionaries today will be made much easier if and when some working class succeeds in establishing a genuine workers' state. In 1917, information about the Russian revolution took months and even years to trickle out to Western Europe, North America and beyond. Today, with the instantaneous communications that occurs, the working class throughout the world has the capacity to learn from workers in other countries far more rapidly. Of course, national circumstances and traditions vary enormously. But, international capitalism has greatly increased the capacity of workers to learn from one another. Any workers' revolution today, would have an enormous and very receptive audience.

4. In the cases of Poland and Portugal, it would be difficult to explain the pre-crisis consciousness of the working class on the basis of the labour aristocracy argument. After all, there simply were no mass 'reformist' organizations in existence. The Salazarist and Stalinist trade unions, which were compulsory rather than voluntary, can hardly be considered reformist. Furthermore, the closest thing to a labour aristocracy to be found in these three cases -- the Polish coal miners in Silesia, and the copper miners in northern Chile -- were no less conscious than most other workers.

5. Isolated revolutionary crises, that occur in conjunctures where world revolution is not taking place, have a greater chance of being influenced by the direct intervention of a major power prior to a successful revolution. But, as we saw in 1917-1923, international intervention is more likely after the fact, in cases of revolutionary crisis that occur in the midst of a wave of revolutions. The state of the world system, the balance of power globally does affect the balance of power within any national part of the world capitalist system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography is organized on topical lines, with the following division:

- [A] - Lenin, Trotsky and the Communist International
- [B] - Marxism, Bolshevism, the Russian Revolution and Western Europe
- [C] - Chile
- [D] - Portugal
- [E] - Poland

Reference not found in one category will be found in another.

The most critical sources for the Chapters on Chile Portugal and Poland are marked with an asterix.

[A] - THE BOLSHEVIKS AND THE BOLSHEVIK THEORY OF REVOLUTION

V. I. Lenin

AR	<u>Against Revisionism</u> , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966
CW	<u>Collected Works</u> ,
SW	<u>Selected Works</u> ,
MOS	<u>Marxism on the State</u> , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972
OPC	<u>On the Paris Commune</u> , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970
SCI	<u>Speeches at Congresses of the Communist International</u> , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972

Leon Trotsky

CI	<u>The First Five Years of the Communist International</u> , volumes 1 & 2, Monad press, New York, 1972
DE	<u>Diary in Exile</u> , Atheneum, New York, 1963
HRR	<u>The History of the Russian Revolution</u> , (in three volumes), University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1957
HRR-BL	<u>The History of the Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk</u> , in <u>The Essential Trotsky</u> , George Allen & Unwin, London, 1963 [1918]
LEN	<u>Lenin</u> , Blue Ribbon Books, New York, 1925
L&T	<u>The Proletarian Revolution in Russia</u> , writings of Lenin and Trotsky edited by Louis Fraina, The Communist Press, New York, 1918 [only selections from Trotsky used here]
LTKM	"Presenting Karl Marx," in the <u>The Living Thoughts of Karl Marx</u> , ed. Leon Trotsky, Fawcett Publications, Greenwich Connecticut, 1963
LTOC	<u>Leon Trotsky on China</u> , Pathfinder, New York, 1976

LO	<u>Lessons of October</u> , New Park Publications, London, 1971 [1924]
LTS	<u>Leon Trotsky Speaks</u> , Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972
ML	<u>My Life</u> , Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1960 [1930]
NC	<u>The New Course</u> , University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1965
OF	<u>On France</u> , Monad press, New York, 1979
PR	<u>The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects</u> , Pathfinder, N.Y., 1969
RB	<u>The Revolution Betrayed</u> , Doubleday, N.Y. 1937
SAFG	<u>The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany</u> , edited by Ernest Mandel, Penguin Books, 1971
SR	<u>The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)</u> , 1973, Pathfinder, New York
SSF	<u>The Stalin School of Falsification</u> , New York, 1937
ST	<u>Stalin</u> , Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1941
TIAL	<u>The Third International After Lenin</u> , Pathfinder, N.Y., 1970
1905	<u>1905</u> , Random House, New York, 1971

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TRMTI	<u>Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International</u> , (ed.) Bertil Hessel, Ink Links, London, 1980
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