

COMMON SENSE

Journal of Edinburgh Conference of Socialist Economists



- *THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING*
- *WOMEN AND THE ZAPATISTAS*
- *THE PROPERTY FORM OF CIVILISATION*
- *THE POLITICS OF DEBT & CITIZENSHIP*
- *REVIEWS: 'THE SPECTERS OF MARX'
& 'THE CRITIQUE OF STATE FORM'*

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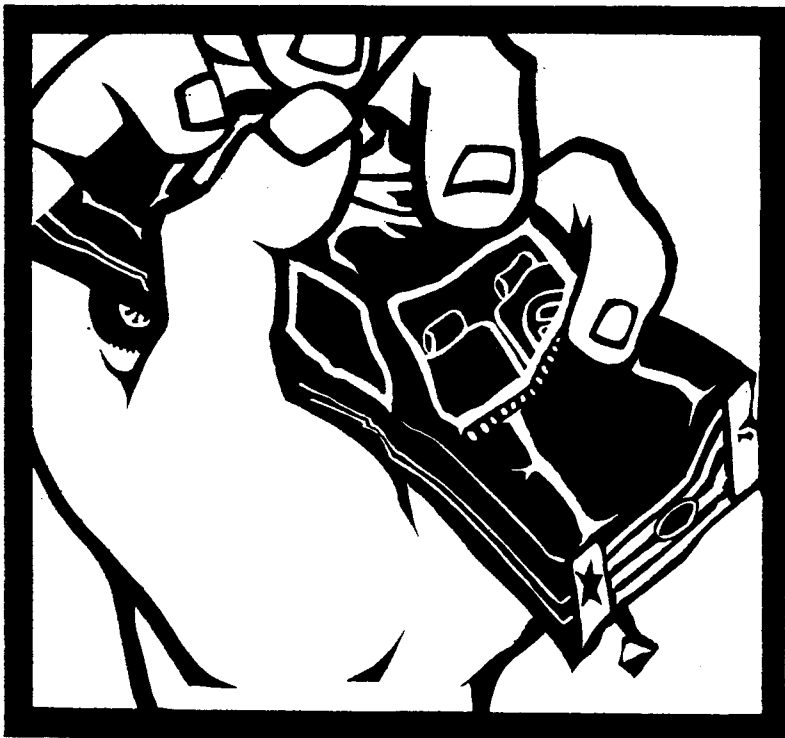
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A Letter from the Zapatistas

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IN REBELLION STATE OF CHIAPAS
COUNCIL OF THE GOVERNMENT,
San Cristobal de las Casas, 10th February, 1995

To the American People, Brothers and Sisters:

The arrogant power that reigns in Mexico, from the Government Palace, has called war amongst ourselves, the people of Mexico. Federal troops have entered zapatista territory. Persons from this country have already fallen. The war has begun once more.

Men of money and power are no longer tolerant of the YA BASTA of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (the Zapatista National Liberation Army), of the indigenous and campesinos (peasants), of those without voice and without faces.

They are trampling all civil and peaceful action of the people of Chiapas and Mexico to construct a Peace with Justice and Dignity.

The mass media throw lies at the Mexican population. They try to muddy all that is good and all that is beautiful. Dozens of military vehicles are in the jungle and other points of Chiapas now, armoured helicopters, troops; fearful informers signal out persons in the civil population for public denouncement; police have arrested and detained many in different parts of the nation.

The ones responsible for the bankruptcy of the nation, those who support the guardias blancas (white guards – the private armies of the landowners and ranchers), those who have money to pay for hired guns, those who support the one-party government of the PRI, calculate they can liquidate 500 years of indigenous and

popular resistance.

Is it too much to ask for Justice, Democracy and Liberty? Do we commit a crime for fighting for a roof, land, health, education, employment, culture, the right to information, independence and peace?

Today lead falls in our hearts. From this sorrow that overflows every hour, we receive your news and we do not feel alone. We know we have with us the best men and women of the American people, who will know how to be with us and will know how to be brave to impede fratricide in our nation. There is urgent need for international observers that testify to the events we denounce. That you promote more united and massive mobilizations to stop this horror of war.

May we awaken the people of the world to Life, for Peace with Justice and Dignity.

Amado Avendano Figueroa Governor for the Council of Government
Aide Rojas Gabriel Ramirez

Map: The Zapatista Uprising & the Chiapas Region of Mexico



The Zapatistas

John Holloway

I. Introduction

I'm here not as an expert, but just because it seems very important that someone should speak about the Zapatista rebellion. I offered to do it because I just happen to live for most of the year in what claims to be the biggest city in the world (Mexico City), and for me, as for most of the Mexican Left, the doings and sayings of the zapatistas are a daily obsession. I think it is important to talk about the zapatistas not because they are a peasant uprising in the south east of Mexico (as they are often described in the newspapers here), but because what they are saying and doing raises crucial questions about what revolutionary activity means today and because they are, in important ways, at the very core of world capitalist development.

I want to give first a brief account of the main developments of the zapatista uprising before going on to talk about why I think it is so important.

II.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation first burst upon the world on 1st of January last year, the day on which the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada came into force. "Burst upon the world" is not an exaggeration because, although they had been preparing for over ten years, nobody knew of their existence until they seized control of the city of San Cristobal de las Casas and three other towns in the state of Chiapas in the south east of Mexico.

The occupation of the towns was almost completely free of violence. The move took the authorities so completely by surprise that there was no armed resistance. The insurgents made public the Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle in which they formally declared war on the federal government and explained their struggle as being for work, land, housing, food, health, education, independence,

freedom, democracy, justice and peace. Their principal slogan was the simple ¡Ya Basta! (Enough!).

In the days that followed, however, the army attacked as the zapatistas withdrew from the towns which they had occupied, and there was heavy fighting for the next twelve days, in which about fifty zapatistas were killed. On the 12th January there was a massive demonstration in Mexico City and the government declared a unilateral ceasefire, appointed a commissioner for peace to dialogue with the zapatistas and recognised in practice the autonomy of the Lacandona Jungle occupied by the zapatistas. The zapatistas accepted the cease-fire, and in the year since then there has not been any open armed conflict.

As part of their new policy the government offered a pardon to the insurgents, to which the zapatistas replied with a letter sent by Subcomandante Marcos to the national press (or rather, to selected newspapers):

"What are we supposed to ask pardon for? What are they going to pardon us for? For not dying of hunger? For not being silent in our misery? For not having accepted humbly the gigantic historical burden of contempt and neglect? For having risen up in arms when we found all other roads blocked? For not adhering to the Penal Code of Chiapas, the most absurd and repressive that has been recorded? For having shown the rest of the country and the whole world that human dignity still lives and is to be found in its most impoverished inhabitants? For having prepared well and consciously before beginning? For having carried rifles into battle instead of bows and arrows?...

Who should ask for pardon and who should grant it? Those who, for years and years, sat at a laden table and ate their fill while death sat with us, death, so everyday, so ours that we stopped being afraid of it? Those who filled our pockets and our souls with declarations and promises? Or the dead, our dead, so mortally dead of 'natural' death, of measles, whooping cough, cholera, typhoid, tetanus, pneumonia, paludism and other gastrointestinal and pulmonary delights? Our dead, so equally dead, so democratically dead of pain because nobody was doing anything, because all the dead, our dead, just went off like that, without anybody keeping the count, without anyone saying at last the 'Enough!' that would restore meaning to those deaths, without anyone asking those dead of always, our dead, to come back and die again, but now in order to live?... Who should ask for pardon and who should grant it?"

The dialogue between the zapatistas and the Commissioner for Peace appointed by the President took place in the Cathedral of San Cristobal from the

16th of February to the beginning of March. The government made certain proposals for meeting the zapatistas' demands, and the zapatistas said that they would need to consult their supporters in all the communities of their territories; since the decision to go to war had been taken communally - by all the members of the community, including the children - the decision to make peace could only taken by the same process.

It took more than three months for the zapatistas to complete their consultation, until all the communities had discussed the matter thoroughly and resolved their doubts. It was widely expected that they would accept the government's terms, but in fact they announced in June that they were rejecting them, principally because the government's response to their demands was an attempt to buy them off with concessions to improve conditions just in Chiapas, whereas they had made clear from the beginning that their demands related to conditions in the whole country, and were demands not just for better material conditions but for freedom, democracy and justice. Nevertheless, they said that they would not take up arms immediately. In view of the impending presidential election (to be held on 21st August), they would leave space for civil (as opposed to military) action. They convened a meeting of the left, to be held in Chiapas at the beginning of August, to be known as the National Democratic Convention. In order to prepare for the Convention, they built within their own territory an amphitheatre on the side of a hill to hold six thousand participants, together with all the necessary infrastructure of toilets, cooking facilities etc, in a place which they called Aguascalientes. Six thousand delegates went to Chiapas to the Convention, sent by virtually all the organisations of the Mexican left: the first two days were held in San Cristóbal, followed by a journey to the Lacandona Jungle and a final plenary session addressed by Marcos on behalf of the zapatistas. The Convention decided that it should form itself into a permanent organisation with a presidium, and that a second convention should be held some months later.

The Convention was followed some two weeks later by the election. Many on the left (and not just on the left) believed that the 65-year hold on power of the ruling party (the PRI) could be broken, but they had underestimated the strength of the web of corruption and of material and tradition ties that maintained the PRI in power. With the help of fraud, but above all because of the way in which they are ingrained in the power structures of Mexican society, the PRI won, with about 50% of the vote, and the left party (the Revolutionary Democratic Party) came third. The election result was a major blow to the morale of many on the Left, and seemed to close the possibilities of a non-violent advance. During the months that followed there was a gradual build-up of tension in Chiapas and elsewhere. The principal focus of tension became the election, on the same day as the Presidential election, of the Governor of Chiapas: here too the PRI won, but in elections that were much more obviously fraudulent than the Presidential election. Throughout September, October and November there was a considerable intensification both of struggles of

all kinds in Chiapas (and in the neighbouring state of Tabasco) and of military activity, as the government, while saying that it wanted peace, sent more and more troops into the area and increased the number of airforce flights over the Lacandona Jungle. At the end of November, the zapatistas announced that, in view of the intensification of military activity, they would no longer observe the ceasefire and that they were again preparing for armed conflict. At the beginning of December they called a press conference at which they took their leave of the journalists. In those days it looked very much as the outbreak of civil war was imminent, at least in Chiapas, but possibly extending to the whole of Mexico. The zapatistas then called another press conference in their territory for the early hours of the 19th December. Beginning at two o'clock in the morning, they made a series of announcements as reports came in of their military action. They had broken through the army cordon, surrounded the army, seized a number of town halls and blocked roads in a large part of the state of Chiapas. All without firing a shot, and without any direct confrontation with the army! Having broken through the cordon and shown what they could do, they disappeared again. The army was unable to track them down.

The devaluation of the peso and the financial crisis that continues to rock the world's markets followed immediately. In this context, the government reiterated that it wanted peace and sent the Home Secretary to the Lacandona Jungle to talk directly to Marcos. It also proposed a political pact to the opposition parties, which included the offer of a referendum to get rid of the governors in Chiapas and Tabasco and to call new elections. At this the PRI's own supporters in these two states rose up in protest and nothing happened. At the beginning of this week the opposition announced the stepping up of civil insurgency in the two states.

III.

That is a very skeletal outline of the development of the uprising over the last year. I hope it gives a general idea of what is happening, but it certainly does not convey the power, the drama and the reality of poverty, desperation, work and dreams that lie behind the uprising.

The uprising is often described as a peasant or an Indian uprising. That is true in the sense that virtually all the members of the zapatista army are peasants and Indians: they come from five different ethnic groups, speaking five different languages. There are about eighty thousand people living in the area controlled by the zapatistas, of whom probably about fifteen thousand are actually members of the army, with a core of about three thousand fully armed with modern weapons.

It is not simply an uprising of the people of the area, however. The other element is the presence of a small group of revolutionaries who went to the jungle, probably in 1983, with the simple idea, as they put it, of changing the world. These

people certainly regarded themselves as Marxists, probably of Maoist inspiration and influenced by Che Guevara. It is through the interaction of this group with the rebellious traditions of the area that the Zapatista Army of National Liberation was founded, and their ideas of political, revolutionary action were transformed, giving rise to what they sometimes refer to as neo-zapatism.

The movement received an extremely important stimulus in 1992 from the reform of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. The protection of communal agricultural property from the market had previously been enshrined in the Constitution, as part of the legacy of the Mexican Revolution. This protection was effectively abolished by the reform of the Constitution, which was part of the government's general policy of opening Mexico as much as possible to the world market (and preparing it for membership of the NAFTA and the OECD). One of the effects of this reform was to undercut the ground from the established corporatist peasants' organisations. For many it was the step that led them to say ¡Ya basta! (Enough!). In other words, the stimulus that swelled the ranks of the zapatistas was very much part of the same movement that is driving more and more people into desperate situations all over the world.

The years before the uprising saw not only a rapid growth in the zapatista army, but also a transformation of their conception of revolution. From being simply an armed group, they developed into a number of zapatista communities, in which the communal traditions of the Indian communities were built upon and transformed. An important element of this transformation was almost certainly the transformation of gender relations. A fairly high percentage (about 30%) of the zapatista soldiers are women, and there are a number of women in leading positions. One of the laws proclaimed by the zapatistas on the 1st January 1994 was the Revolutionary Law for Women, recognising the right of women to participate in the revolutionary struggle, to occupy leadership positions, to work and receive equal wages, to decide how many children they want to have, etc. (In one interview Marcos speaks of the first revolution, of how armed conflict almost broke out about a year earlier than planned when the women in the organisation succeeded in imposing the Revolutionary Law.)

The joining of the revolutionary group and the communities also led to a transformation of language - a transformation both of the traditional language of the communities and a transformation of the language of revolution. The result is an extremely rich and fresh language that draws strongly on Indian traditions and mythology, but that breaks above all with the staleness of much of the language of the revolutionary tradition, and contributes to the sense of freshness or newness of the zapatista movement.

The communal basis of the movement is expressed in their forms of organisation. We already saw an example of that in the way in which they decided to take up arms and later to reject the terms offered by the government. This can obviously be seen as a strong form of council communism, but it is better not to

try and impose categories of the past upon revolutions of the present: it is clear that their forms of organisation involve a transformation both of traditional communal practices and of ideas developed in the world revolutionary tradition. It seems that within their organisation there are neither parties nor defined factions, and they have not formed any party organisation or tried to promote the formation of any party. In their dealings with the 'civil society', they have repeatedly addressed non-party members or made a direct appeal to party members. In terms of action they have constantly emphasised the multiplicity of organisational forms and struggles: people must struggle for revolutionary change in whatever way they can.

The communal conception of organisation is expressed in their emphasis on leading by obeying: the leaders must lead by obeying the will of the members. It is expressed also in the position of the person who is their principal spokesman: Marcos is clearly a leading (the leading?) figure in the organisation, but he is not *comandante*, but *subcomandante* and subordinate to the Clandestine Committee which is their leading body. The same sort of idea is expressed by the wearing of balaclavas or bandanas to cover their faces in public: this is obviously a measure of security, but the main point, they say, is to prevent a personality cult - Marcos could be anybody.

The communal organisation of the movement coexists with the hierarchical structure of the army itself. Yet they repeatedly emphasise that they see armed action as a last resort. It follows that their aim is their own dissolution. They have said repeatedly that they do not wish to seize power, that an army cannot possibly create a free, democratic society. In his speech to the National Democratic Convention in August, Marcos said that the zapatistas would stand back to leave room for civil political action, and that if the civil movement succeeded in bringing about change, the zapatistas would simply disappear into the jungle again, their aims achieved.

The interplay between military and civil action, between peace and war, has been absolutely central to the whole zapatista uprising. Military action is justified as having been necessary to crystallise the movement for radical change, but at the same time everyone is aware of the horrors that civil war would bring. In this, as in other things, the experience of the revolutionary movements of Central America has been extremely important. To think of an armed seizure of power in Mexico by the zapatistas is nonsensical, and even if it were feasible, it might not be desirable. The role of armed force has been rather to shatter the false image of democracy, to speak the truth. Their word, as they put it, is the word of those "who are armed with truth and fire". The two go together: it is only by being armed with fire (guns) that they have been able to get people to listen to their truth. The aim, however, is the creation of a true society, not a society based on fire. The power of the zapatista uprising cannot be understood without the peace movement that has supported it from the beginning. The peace movement reached its strongest point in the days before Christmas when the outbreak of war seemed inevitable, and it has played a

crucial role not only in shaping the zapatistas' own movements, but above all in restricting what the state, so far, has considered politically feasible.

The other thing made clear in the days before Christmas is just what repercussions an uprising like the zapatistas can have for the stability of world capitalism. I don't want to over-emphasise the point, but certainly the zapatista action of the 19th of December, as the focal point of a much wider effervescence of struggle in Mexico at the moment, was important in bringing to a head the flight of capital that led to the collapse of the peso, the subsequent upheavals on the world market and the \$50 billion credit that is currently being arranged for Mexico. The zapatistas may be in the jungle in the southeast of Mexico, but the importance of Mexico, and above all the way in which instability is now transmitted through the world by the financial markets, places them at the very core of current capitalist development.

Postscript

The above text was written for a talk to the Critique conference held in London on 4th February. Less than a week after that, on 9th February, immediately after the credit arrangement had been confirmed by the United States, orders were issued for the arrest of Marcos and a number of the other leaders of the zapatistas. The army was sent in to zapatista territory, where they occupied villages, poisoned water supplies, destroyed seeds, but failed to find any zapatistas. Both the EZLN and the inhabitants of the villages had withdrawn deeper into the mountains.

After ten days of continued military failure to find the zapatistas (although a patrol passed within a few yards of Marcos), and after massive demonstrations in Mexico City (with the slogan "we are all Marcos"), the government suspended the orders for the arrest of the zapatista leaders, replaced the governor of the state of Chiapas and proclaimed its desire to reach an agreement by dialogue - while the army continued to occupy the zapatista territory and the population stayed in the mountains, trying to survive on what food they could find rather than accept the supplies offered by the army. On 9th of April a first, preparatory meeting took place between the zapatista leaders and members of the government, in which it was decided that a formal dialogue should begin on 20th April. At the time of writing (10th April), the zapatistas continue to be surrounded by a heavily equipped army of 60,000 soldiers: the army and the government in turn are surrounded by a world of zapatistas. The army has destroyed the conference centre of Aguascalientes, but, as Marcos has pointed out, Aguascalientes is in all of us.

Development and Reproduction

Mariarosa Dalla Costa

This paper was first presented at XIII Conference of Sociology, Bielefeld, Germany, July 18-23, 1994, Section 8: Women, Development and Housework [RC 02: Economy and Society].

I. Zapata and the workers

Zapata's determined gaze and slightly stooped shoulders in the well loved photograph paraded by the "cobas" of Alfa Romeo auto workers at Arese in Milan was one of the striking journalistic images [1] of 1994, creating a bridge in real time between the Mexican revolt in January and the struggles of Europe's industrial workers and unemployed. A bridge was thrown through space and historical time to link struggles against continued 'primitive' expropriation of the land to those against the post-Fordist expropriation of labour that brings with it the progressive dismantlement of the public system of social rights and guarantees. The 'primitive' expropriation of the land that began five centuries ago with the enclosures in England and which has been continued, and is still continuing [2], in the more recent forms of colonisation and exploitation in the Third World, is now linked even photographically to the contemporary forms of expropriation and poverty creation in the advanced capitalist countries.

How to build and impose on expropriated men and women the discipline of the wage labour system (with the unwaged labour it presupposes) was the problem posed five centuries ago in initiating the process of capitalist accumulation. It is still the problem today for the continuation of this mode of production and its combined strategies of development and underdevelopment. The creation of mass poverty and scarcity together with the imposition of terror and violence, as well as the large-scale relaunching of slavery, were the basic instruments used to resolve the problem in this system's first phase.

The expropriation of free producers of all the means of production as well as the individual and collective resources and rights that contributed to guaranteeing

survival was subjected to a well-known analysis by Marx in his section on primitive accumulation (in *Capital*, Vol. I, Part 8, 1976) to which we refer you for the enclosures and all the other measures that accompanied them, notably the bloody legislation against the expropriated, the forcing down of wages by act of parliament and the ban on workers' associations. Laws for the compulsory extension of the working day, another fundamental aspect of the period, from the middle of the Fourteenth to the end of the Seventeenth century are dealt with in *Capital*, Part Three, Chapter 10, where the subject is the working day [3].

Concerning the expropriation of the land, Marx observed: "The advance made by the eighteenth century shows itself in this, that the *law itself* now becomes the *instrument by which the people's land is stolen*, although the big farmers made use of their little independent methods as well. The Parliamentary form of the robbery is that of 'Bills for Inclosure of the Commons', in other words decrees by which the landowners grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people" (Marx, 1976, p. 885). The "little independent methods" are explained in a footnote to the same passage, quoting from a report entitled *A Political Inquiry into the Consequences of Enclosing Waste Lands*: "The farmers forbid cottagers to keep any living creatures besides themselves and children, under the pretence that if they keep any beasts or poultry, they will steal from the farmers' barns for their support; they also say, keep the cottagers poor and you will keep them industrious, etc., but the real fact, I believe, is that the farmers may have the whole right of common to themselves" (Marx, 1976, p. 885, note 15).

This footnote gives a powerful picture of the step-by-step process of expropriation used to produce the misery and poverty essential in establishing the discipline of wage labour. But just as powerful an image is given to us by the isolation of people from all living beings that has characterised and still characterises the human condition in capitalist development. The human being, isolated not only with respect to his/her own species, but also with respect to nature -- that 'other' treated increasingly as a commodified thing.

Deprivation and isolation: they are in fact the two great accusations, the two great terrains of rebellion symbolised by the poster of Zapata whose watchword was *Tierra y Libertad*. The reappropriation of land was seen by the Zapatistas in 1911 as a fundamental question because it opened up the possibility of reappropriating a collective life free of misery. For even then the reappropriation of the land was pregnant with a multitude of meanings: as the reappropriation of a territory where one could express a different sense of life, of action, of social relations and of work; as a place where one could imagine and build a different future. From this viewpoint, Zapata's nine-year revolutionary epic is one of the great suppressed memories of official Mexican history.

Today's explosion of the *zapatista* rebellion shows how real the problem of the reappropriation of land remains, but also how much it has been magnified by the complex of issues raised by movements in the North and South over the

question of land. 'Land', here, does not only refer to a means of subsistence - though this would already be an excellent reason for a movement of reappropriation, since many economies based on a non-capitalist relationship with the land have guaranteed the possibility of life for millennia to a large proportion of people for whom capitalist development has offered only hunger and extinction. It refers also to land as the earth, a public space to be enjoyed without frontier; the earth as an ecosystem to be preserved because it is the source of life and, hence, of beauty and continual discovery; the earth as a material reality of which we are part, to be reaffirmed in contrast to the exaltation (especially by male intellectuals) of virtual reality.

But, returning to Marx (*Capital*, Vol.I, 1976, Part 8), the creation of misery starts and proceeds from the *fixing of a price for the land* as well as the land's expropriation. Pricing the land is in fact the solution used for colonies where the aspirant capitalist is unable to find a sufficient number of waged workers. When the settlers arrive at their destination, they find a 'free' land where they can settle and work independently. "We have seen that the *expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production*. The essence of a free colony, on the contrary, consists in this, that the bulk of the soil is still public property, every settler on it can therefore turn part of it into his private property and his individual means of production, without preventing later settlers from performing the same operation. This is the secret both of the prosperity of the colonies and of their cancerous affliction - their resistance to the *establishment of capital*" (1976, p. 934). In this context, we can leave to one side the obvious criticism that the 'public' land freely settled by the settlers belonged, in fact, to the natives. Marx continues: "There (in the colonies) the capitalist regime constantly comes up against the obstacle presented by the producer who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself instead of the capitalist. The *contradiction between these two diametrically opposed economic systems has its practical manifestation here in the struggle between them*. Where the capitalist has behind him the power of the mother country, he tries to use force to clear out of the way the *modes of production and appropriation which rest on the personal labour of the independent producer*" (1976, p. 931). Wakefield, the economist Marx quotes in this context, proclaims aloud the *antagonism between the two modes of production*: "To this end he demonstrates that the development of the social productivity of labour, cooperation, division of labour, application of machinery on a large scale, and so on, are impossible without the expropriation of the workers and the corresponding *transformation of their means of production into capital*" (1976, p. 932).

Wakefield's theory of colonisation tries to solve the problem of ensuring an adequate supply of labour for the capitalist's needs by what he calls 'systematic colonisation', which as Marx notes England tried to enforce for a time by Act of Parliament. Of Wakefield's theory, Marx adds (1976, p. 938): "If men were willing

to turn the whole of the land from public into private property at one blow, this would certainly destroy the root of the evil, but it would also destroy - the *colony*. The trick is to kill two birds with one stone. Let the government set *an artificial price on the virgin soil, a price independent of the law of supply and demand*, a price that compels the immigrant to work for a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land and turn himself into an independent farmer. The *fund* resulting from the sale of land at a price relatively *prohibitory* for the wage-labourers, this *fund of money* extorted from the *wages of labour* by a violation of the sacred law of supply and demand, is to be applied by the government in proportion to its growth, to the importation of paupers from Europe into the colonies, so as to keep the *wage-labour market* full for the capitalists." Marx also pointed out that the *land price laid down by the state* must be 'sufficient', which quoting from Wakefield (1833, vol. II, p. 192) he explains means that "it must be high enough 'to prevent the labourers from becoming independent landowners until others had followed to take their place'."

The reference to the setting of a price on the virgin soil is more than just a reminder of a past problem and its analysis in Marx's *Capital*. Today, putting a price to the land and expropriation by illegality, pseudo-legality and violence are issues on the agenda throughout those parts of the Third World where capitalist expansion is currently seeking to break economies and societies based on a different relationship with the land; types of economy which have guaranteed subsistence from time immemorial and which, by the same token, resist wage-labour's discipline and the isolation, hunger and death that usually accompany its imposition. Silvia Federici (1993) and George Caffentzis (1993) underline the cruciality of fixing a price on the land in the policies directed to 'develop' the African continent. In their studies of Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria in particular, they insist on the importance of this measure from the point of view of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other investors, but they also stress how this procedure became a terrain of struggle and resistance for the population.

Obviously, today, there are many other policies and measures creating hunger and poverty, from the lowering of the export price of agricultural products, which ruins Third World farmers, to those policies that, internationally, have characterised the period of the so-called debt crisis. But this has been dealt with in a recent collection of papers (Dalla Costa M. and Dalla Costa G.F., eds., 1993) and is dealt with extensively by the Midnight Notes Collective (1992).

In this article, the focus is on the two *major operations* of expropriating the land and putting a price on it, since, even though they are usually ignored, they remain as fundamental today for making a profit out of the Third World as they were at the dawn of capitalism in Europe. In fact, the current development strategy of the capitalist mode of production based on the 'informatic revolution' continues to imply a strategy of underdevelopment that presupposes these operations which create hunger and poverty in order continually to refund and re-stratify the global

working class.

Obviously, the continual imposition of wage-labour discipline at the world level does not imply that all those who are expropriated are destined to become wage-labourers. Today as five centuries ago, this will be the fate of only a small part of the population: those who can will find employment in the sweat shops of the Third World or the countries they emigrate to. The others will be faced solely by the prospect of death by hunger, which may explain the tenacity of resistance and the toughness of the struggles. And, returning to the poster in Milan, it explains the revolt in Chiapas. The *price* of capitalist development understood as a whole, in its facets as development and underdevelopment, is *unsustainable* because it consists of *death*. As I have argued elsewhere (Dalla Costa M., 1995), a central assumption must be that, *from the human viewpoint, capitalist development has always been unsustainable* since it has assumed from the start, and continues to assume, extermination and hunger for an increasingly large part of humanity. The fact that it is founded on a class relationship and must continually re-found this relationship at a global level, in conflict with the power that the class of waged and non-waged men and women build through struggle and resistance, only makes its *original unsustainability* more ample and more lethal in time.

The operations that produce hunger, poverty and death, have accompanied the continuous and progressive expropriation of the land, and its rendering as commodity/capital have obviously been redefined in ideological and technological terms over time. 'Food policies' brought into effect during the present century, officially in order to solve or mitigate the problem of insufficient nutrition have always been closely linked to 'reforms' of the relationship with the land. The outcome has been better nutrition for the few, insufficient nutrition or hunger for the many, and above all a powerful tool for social control by breaking up those organisations that parts of the world's population, in very many areas of the globe, had created in order to achieve better nutrition and a better level of life as a whole.

The 'social reforms' characteristic of these policies have always been linked to new divisions and a new hierarchy between the waged and the unwaged as well as within these two groups. Harry Cleaver's essay (1977) remains fundamental for its analysis and the globality of its information as well as for its reports on numerous struggles and the sort of policies adopted to fight them. We agree in full with the assumption that food crises are fundamentally produced by capitalism's political economy. As this author informs us, it is interesting to note how experiments carried out by the Rockefeller Foundation in China in the 1920s and 1930s provided clear evidence of the stabilising effect of better food supplies coupled with some land reform measures on peasant unrest. In the 1950s, politicians were still talking about an Asian rice policy as a tool for halting peasant revolt in many parts of that continent. Later, the issue officially became a humanitarian one.

The Green Revolution, on the other hand, was put into effect in the 1960s in both East and West on the basis of a technological leap in the mechanical, chemical

and biological inputs in agricultural policy. The aim was to apply Keynesian principles to agriculture, in other words, achieving wage increases linked to an increase in productivity. But, as Cleaver argues, the whole history of this technological breakthrough in agriculture was linked to the de-composition of the class power of the waged and the unwaged, the continual creation of new divisions and hierarchies, and the progressive expulsion of workers having different forms of relationship with agriculture.

Agricultural technology became more and more subject to criticism and analysis by feminist scholars, being so closely linked to large land holdings, which meant the expropriation and the expulsion from that land of unwaged workers, who were managing to make a living from it, and of waged agricultural workers, displaced by the continual technological change. Important in this connection is the work of Vandana Shiva (1989), whose approach is not Marxist, and who uses the category of the female principle against male reductionist science. An outstanding physicist, Vandana Shiva abandoned India's nuclear programme because she felt that the 'reaction of nuclear systems with living systems' was being kept secret from the people. In her well-known work, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1989), she illustrates the systematic and grave loss of resources for health and subsistence through the reduction in biodiversity imposed in India by the agricultural policies of recent decades; the dependence and poverty created by the imposition of new laboratory hybrids; the drought and human and environmental disasters created by dams and their irrationality by comparison with earlier forms of water management. The history of the enclosure, expropriation and commercialisation not only of the land, but also of its plants, animals, and waters is revived in Shiva's analysis, which is centred on the events of these last decades. There are other important works belonging to the ecofeminist current, first of all the work of Maria Mies (1986 and, with Shiva, 1993), to mention only the most famous ones. In contrast Mary Mellor's book (1992), while it has many points of contact with the above cited studies, is rather concerned to define a 'feminist green socialism'.

I share much of the critique advanced in this blossoming of feminist studies on the relationship between human beings and nature and on the North-South relationship. Here, there is not enough space to compare our positions more extensively. But one point I can make is that some ecofeminist scholars look primarily at the forms of struggle and resistance in the Third World, while seeing the First World primarily as an area of excessive consumption whence the assertion of the need for a reduction of production and consumption. For myself and the circuit of scholars I have worked with since the early 1970s, we affirm that besides looking at the Third World struggles, just as much importance should be given to advanced capitalist areas, not only as a source of consumption, but also as a place of labour, hence our stress on the importance of the struggles of waged and unwaged that occur there and their relationship with struggles in other areas. We also see a

need to analyse consumption in a more articulated way. By definition, consumption by workers, obviously including housewives, has in fact never been high and, today, is falling dramatically. But these are simply a few hints in a debate that will develop further.

Let us now return to our discourse. Vandana Shiva (1989) says of water and drought: "The drying up of India, like that of Africa, is a man-made rather than a natural disaster. The issue of water, and water scarcity has been the most dominant one in the 1980s as far as struggles for survival in the subcontinent are concerned. The manufacture of drought and desertification is an outcome of reductionist knowledge and models of development which violate cycles of life in rivers, in the soil, in mountains. Rivers are drying up because their catchments have been mined, de-forested or over-cultivated to generate revenue and profits. Groundwater is drying up because it has been over-exploited to feed cash crops. Village after village is being robbed of its lifeline, its sources of drinking water, and the number of villages facing water famine is in direct proportion to the number of 'schemes' implemented by government agencies to 'develop' water" (p. 179).

"Commercial exploitation of forests, over-exploitation of ground water for commercial agriculture and inappropriate afforestation are the major reasons identified for the water crisis" (p. 181).

Time and again, Vandana Shiva points out, famous British engineers who learned water management from indigenous techniques in India, commented on the "sophisticated engineering sense, built on an ecological sense, that provided the foundation for irrigation in India". Major Arthur Cotton, credited as the 'founder' of modern irrigation programmes, wrote in 1874:

"There are multitudes of old native works in various parts of India...These are noble works, and show both boldness and engineering talent. They have stood for hundreds of years...When I first arrived in India, the contempt with which the natives justifiably spoke of us on account of this neglect of material improvements was very striking; they used to say we were a kind of civilised savages, wonderfully expert about fighting, but so inferior to their great men that we would not even keep in repair the works they had constructed, much less even imitate them in extending the system" (p. 187).

The East India Company, as Vandana Shiva adds, took control of the Kaveri delta in 1799, but was unable to check the rising river bed. Company officials struggled for a quarter century; finally, using indigenous technology, Cotton was able to solve the problem by renovating the Grand Anicut. He wrote later: "It was from them (the native Indians) we learnt how to secure a foundation in loose sand of unmeasured depth...The Madras river irrigations executed by our engineers have been from the first the greatest financial success of any engineering works in the world, solely because we learnt from them...With this lesson about foundations, we built bridges, weirs, aqueducts and every kind of hydraulic work...We are thus deeply indebted to the native engineers."

But the lesson has obviously been overwhelmed by the full flood of the capitalist science of development/profit, what Vandana Shiva calls 'maldevelopment' (4). British engineers in the 1700s and 1800s recognised that indigenous technology and knowledge tended to preserve water resources and make them available for the local people. Today, capitalist water-management projects cause drought and deny survival to entire populations. One woman from Maharashtra State in India sings against the dam she has to help build so that crops such as sugar cane can be irrigated while women and children die of thirst (Shiva, 1989):

As I build this dam
I bury my life.
The dawn breaks
There is no flour in the grinding stone.

I collect yesterday's husk for today's meal
The sun rises
And my spirit sinks.
Hiding my baby under a basket
And hiding my tears
I go to build the dam

The dam is ready
It feeds their sugar cane fields
Making the crop lush and juicy.
But I walk miles through forests
In search of a drop of drinking water
I water the vegetation with drops of my sweat
As dry leaves fall and fill my parched yard.

A response to this mad 'enclosure' of water became more and more a problem on the agenda of political networks that monitor and struggle against projects of this kind. The immediate future will show the effects of this effort. An exemplary case is the Bangladesh flood control plan (Del Genio, 1994), presented by the World Bank in London in December 1989. Even though it was claimed to differ from previous projects because of its low environmental impact, other estimates of its effects were so dramatic that an international coalition of organisations, opposed to the World Bank's approach to the canalisation of rivers, was created in Strasbourg in May 1993.

Considering solely the immediate human impact, the building of the Narmada dam in India was expected to require the evacuation of 500,000 inhabitants

and aroused strong opposition from the 'tribals' and the organisations supporting them. The Bangladesh Flood Action Plan (FAP), coordinated by the World Bank on behalf of the Group of Seven, would require the forced transfer of 5-8 million persons in a territory whose population density is 10 times that of India.

Del Genio's article illustrates the reasons cited to justify the plan - on the one hand, mystified assumptions and, on the other, the lethal techniques of the Green Revolution. This plan insists on the need to "propagate modern mechanised agriculture capable of coping with the food crisis" so as to increase the cultivation of modern high-yield varieties of rice which, in its turn, requires a large and regular quantity of water and a system of flood control and irrigation to make it available.

The drawbacks of the high-yield varieties include a dependence on the market and the laboratories, since they are unable to reproduce, and imply the reduction of the genetic diversity of local seeds. Awareness of the drawbacks is growing in the world, and rural workers' grass-roots organisations are putting up increasing resistance to these agricultural improvements that are supposed to be more appropriate for satisfying their nutritional needs. As regards flood control, some of the year's regular flooding bring nutrients which ensures the soil's fertility and top up the water-table as they expand across the plain. Other, purely destructive floods need to be controlled through works different from the planned ones if the aim is to be achieved without destroying the environment, including the humans in it. In this connection, it is worth remembering the level of sophistication achieved in biodiversity by long-term cooperation between humans and nature; among the hundreds of local rice varieties developed in response to the demands of territory and climate, a sub-variety called Aman is capable of growing over 15cm in only 24 hours if the level of the water rises.

As for transferring 5-8 million persons by coercion, this is in itself inconceivable from my point of view, since to uproot a population is like cutting a tree's roots, but in this case a forest's. The first and obvious question that comes to mind is: where and how does one suppose that the peasants are to find the money needed to pay the costs of agricultural modernisation (machinery, fertilisers, etc.)? The answer is identical and repeated thousands of times over in the history of the Green Revolution: only the big proprietors and the big enterprises can sustain the costs. And the others? Work has begun in the meantime...

The peasants and many working with them in international networks are organising resistance and opposition. The Asswan dam and what the consequent loss of the soil nutrients has meant for all the peasants who lived off the soil, plus all the other grave consequences it has precipitated, necessarily comes to mind. For example, the flooding of part of Nubia and, with it, the burial of major relics of that civilisation and the abandonment of the land by those who lived there. But this is only one case in the midst of the many one could cite. When I was in Egypt in 1989, there was talk of a project to turn the Red Sea into a lake. I hope that the growth of the ecological movement, the movements of the native populations and

others will have relegated this project to the nightmares of a past era.

Returning to Vandana Shiva, the same observations, made by her and many other scholars today about the dams and other Western water management projects in the Third World, can equally be applied to the technologies that are imposed on Third World agriculture, in livestock raising, and in the destruction of forests to cultivate export crops: the destruction of biodiversity, ecological equilibriums, and the life-cycles that guaranteed subsistence. In short the production of profit for the big companies, the denial of survival for the population.

Even though her cultural and theoretical approach is far from Marxian, when Vandana Shiva interprets the logic of the continual enclosure of segments of nature and the effects it has, she finds no difficulty in concluding that the foundations of capitalist accumulation are the science and practice of the culture of death. Her merit is also to have contributed to bringing to international attention struggles and movements otherwise ignored or neglected. Our argument here is that the Chipko movement in which women organise to stay in the forest even at night, embracing the trees to prevent the logging companies from cutting them down, should be placed on the same level as all the other struggles against various forms of expropriation and attack against individual and collective rights in different parts of the world - not only the right to survival, or a better life, but the right to the self-determination of one's own future.

The economic and life system of the Indian 'tribals' [5] who created the Chipko movement which forms the focus of Vandana Shiva's studies and practical activity, is based on a combination of agriculture, livestock raising and the use/conservation of the forest. The forest has a central and many-sided role in the whole system. The forests bear "soil, water and pure air", sing the Chipko women (Shiva, 1989, p. 77), and they play an important nutritional role. Whatever crisis may hit crops or livestock, say the Chipko women, the children will never suffer hunger if there is a forest near. Thus embracing the trees to stop them from being felled is like occupying the land to prevent it being expropriated, or struggling in defence of jobs or a wage or a guaranteed income when survival depends solely on money. This is what we see if we want to spotlight how the different parts of the working social body struggle contemporaneously and in different forms against the same system that exploits and besieges them in different ways.

This is important for getting a real idea of how an opposition to this form of development is growing increasingly at the world level and is refusing to pay its price while seeking other paths for a different future. But I think that the struggles of the Chipko women and all the other movements for the maintenance and defence of an age-old experience and knowledge in humankind's relationship with nature are all the more vital for us. In fact, *the political debate in the 'advanced' areas empowering the voice of those who refuse to pay the price of this development must necessarily be an ecological debate, too.*

The other great denunciations advanced by Vandana Shiva, whose work I have

considered here, even if briefly, because it is representative of an entire school of feminist studies developed by women in the world's various Souths, concern the genetic manipulation of living species. To the tampering of the nutritional resources of entire communities is added the genetic manipulation of the species. This topic that has attracted extensive attention in recent years from the various circuits of women scholars and activists.

"With engineering entering the life sciences, the renewability of life as a self-reproducing system comes to an end. Life must be engineered now, not reproduced. A new commodity set is created as inputs, and a new commodity is created as output. Life itself is the new commodity..." (Shiva, 1989, p. 91). "The market and the factory define the 'improvement' sought through the new bio-technologies... Nature's integrity and diversity and people's needs are thus simultaneously violated" (Shiva, 1989, p. 92).

This biotechnological trend is matched by the determination to patent and 'bank' the genetic heritage of the living species. This was denounced by women meeting in Miami in preparation for the Rio conference (*Women's Action Agenda 21*, 1991), but their opposition is widely shared. After patenting cotton, the agro-industrial corporations now want to do the same for rice and soy, two of the fundamental foodstuffs for many parts of the world's population. Increasingly food, already difficult to obtain because of the combination of expropriation of land, technological innovations in farming methods, and the ratio between prices and wages (when there are any), is manipulated, placed beyond access, privatised, monopolised, patented, 'banked'. A new enclosure. *No Entry: Food!*

In this parabola of technological conquest over nature, expropriation reaches its acme: human beings are expropriated, the living species are expropriated, the earth's own reproductive powers are expropriated to transform them into capital. This mode of production pretends to capitalise the generation and reproduction of life. What a long time has lapsed since capitalism, indifferent to life, was satisfied with nothing more than appropriating an excessive number of working hours [6] or when it simply pretended to transform all life into work and, to that end, whilst ignoring the contradiction of exploiting free and slave labour at the same time, on the one hand, drained dry the life of the free workers, and on the other, enchained masses of slaves!

But, the amplitude of the various rebellions and struggles in the world in rejection of this type of development is matched by the increasingly massive, lethal and monstrous structures and forms of domination. Considering only the most recent past, from the Gulf War on, the increasingly warlike character of this development has undeniably produced an escalation of war that removes any residual doubts over whether or not it is founded on the science and practice of death. Referring to the wars in the Gulf, ex-Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda-Burundi finds its limit in the fact that these are simply the wars that have received the most coverage in the media in the last three or four years. We certainly have no intention

of underestimating the number of wars that have been pursued in the world without them ever entering the limelight.

If anything, the escalation of war in recent years has confirmed the emptiness of what the major powers said on disarmament. *Rather, war has become increasingly the instrument par excellence for disciplining the working social body at the global level*, through annihilation, terror, division, deportation, and the lowering of living conditions and life expectations. In the end, humans, when they are not *massacred directly*, are increasingly 'enclosed' in refugee camps and the more or less concealed concentration camps of war situations.

But, at the same time, the *other face of war as a form of development* has been revealed ever more clearly, through the growing monstrosity of the enterprises its macabre laboratory generates. War is recognised as having always been a great laboratory, but since the voracity of capitalist technology has begun to pursue life in the attempt to steal and capitalise its secrets, death has been discovered increasingly as a terrain for profit. In this case, too, the shift is from the 'primitive' indifference to the death of masses of individuals expropriated of their means of production and sustenance, to the identification of death, dead bodies or bodies destined in a nonchalant way to die in order to experiment with new technologies or commercialise body parts in trafficking in organs. Besides the traditional markets of arms, post-war reconstructions and techno-industrial experimentation on which our 'peace economy' rests, war today offers above all the biggest mass of living/dying guinea-pigs on whom to test, on a mass scale, the new technologies applied to acquire more knowledge of the body and how to operate on it. Here too, it is clear how the part of guinea-pigs has been played above all by the people of the 'non-advanced' nations, even if a similar role has recently been emerging for citizens for the most part from the weaker social sectors of the great powers, dispatched to war or used without knowing it in 'peace-time'.

But war continues to offer new and horrifying terrains on which to reap profits. Trafficking in children [7], for example. How many for pornography [8]? How many for trafficking in organs [9]? How many for slavery [10] and the traffic in war cripples [11]? How many for prostitution? How many to be sold for adoption by childless couples? Trafficking in adult males and females also goes on, for all the reasons mentioned above, apart from the last.

It is rather strange that, in discussing sustainable development, there is usually no mention of the *unsustainability* for humankind and the environment of the *form* that development has increasingly taken, namely *war*.

The poster with the image of Zapata from which we set out was sent to us from the Chiapas revolt and the war and truce that resulted from it. Carried as a banner by the workers in Milan, it gave voice to the two great expropriations, from the land and from work. At the same time, it poses with all the force expressed in the struggles throughout the world carried on by those who have been expropriated, the question of what is the contemporary relationship between waged and unwaged

labour in this development? In the Third World as in the First, what future is there for unwaged labour?

II. Zapata and the women.

It may be a provocation, then, but not excessive to think that, in relaunching the increasingly dramatic question of the relationship between these two great sectors of labour, the poster of Zapata also relaunches the feminist question that emerged and stimulated the women's movement in the early 1970s, i.e., the problem of the unwaged labour of reproducing labour-power. The woman is in fact the unwaged labourer par excellence and experiences in this development a *doubly unsustainable contradiction* (Dalla Costa, M., 1995; Dalla Costa, G.F., 1989). On the one hand, her condition, which has been created by capitalist development, is unsustainable in its typical form in the 'advanced areas' as an *unwaged worker*, in that she is responsible for reproducing the labour-power in a *wage economy* (Dalla Costa, M., James S. 1972). On the other, her situation has become increasingly unsustainable as an unwaged worker in an unwaged *subsistence economy* where the expansion of capitalist relations progressively deprives her of the means to fulfil her tasks of reproduction for herself and the community. The contradiction and, with it, the unsustainability of the woman's condition, cannot be solved within capitalism, which forms its basis. To be solved, it requires a totally different conception and organisation of development, but by the same token, women's struggles around their condition amplify the demands of other unwaged social subjects from whose labour this capitalist development continually accumulates value.

Numerous studies of which I mention only some (Michel, Agbessi Dos Santos, Fatoumata Diarra, 1981, Michel 1988; Boserup, 1982; Shiva, 1989) have illustrated how the continual realisation of capitalist projects in the Third World's rural areas, apart from expropriating the land, makes it increasingly difficult for women to gain access to the fundamental means for the production of subsistence: from wood for fuel to water for the home and forage for the animals. Now, hours or days have to be spent in fetching things that were previously fairly close. These resources too have been swallowed up by enclosure/appropriation/commoditisation/capitalisation.

Feminist authors (Mies, 1992) have noted the paradox that precisely for their activities related to acquiring these resources, as well as for having too many children, rural women are blamed for doing harm to the environment. Supposedly, they destroy the forests if they go there in search of wood; they pollute and use up the water sources if they go to fetch water; they use up the earth's resources if they have too many children. It is a typical case of blaming the victims. At the same time, their working and living conditions and, with them, the entire community's life are continually undermined by the debt policies imposed on the Third World

countries by the major financial agencies, policies of which the expropriation/privatisation of the land is only one, but fundamental aspect (Dalla Costa M. and Dalla Costa G.F., eds., 1993).

When it is not directly the expropriation and expulsion of the rural communities without anything in exchange, the capitalist proposal which presents itself as an 'alternative in the direction of development', not only removes an assured subsistence and replaces it with an uncertain wage, but deepens the gap between the male and the female conditions. Significant once more in this respect is the example (Shiva, 1989) also quoted by Mies (1992) of the Chipko women, who oppose the felling of trees in the Himalayan forests for commercial purposes. As in many cases, the men were less determined in their opposition because they were tempted by the prospect of the jobs they would be given in the saw-mills.

But one of the women's biggest doubts was of how much of that money/wage they would have received - and therefore they opposed the creation of a hierarchy based on having or not having a wage. Above all, they posed the problem of what would happen to all of them when the forest, the basis of their subsistence, had been swallowed up by the saw-mills which, since there would be no more wood to cut, would be closed. The women said clearly that they needed no jobs from the government or private businessmen as long as they kept their land and their forests.

In Shiva (1989), there are many other episodes of this kind. After five centuries in which the scene has been repeated, the lesson has been learned in the most remote corners of the earth. There is a great determination not to put one's life in the hands of the planners of development and under-development [12], to stop others from plunging whole populations into total uncertainty, which if it does not lead to hunger today will do so tomorrow; a determination to avoid being turned into beggars or refugee camp inmates.

Ecofeminist practices and positions linking nature, women, production and consumption in a single approach are often criticised for 'romanticism' by male scholars. One might wonder, if only to raise the most simple question, what value do these scholars attribute to the right to survival of those communities - and there are many of them - whose subsistence and life system are guaranteed precisely by these practices with nature, while the 'development proposal' almost always presupposes the sacrifice of the vast majority of the individuals that constitute these communities. Significantly, Mary Mellor (1993) observes in this connection: "I see all this as something that men should prove to be unfounded, rather than as something that the feminists must justify."

As emerges with increasing clarity from the 'charters' that the various native peoples have elaborated with the growth in their movement in the last two decades, together with the right to land, i.e., the right to survival/life, there is an increasingly strong demand for the right to identity, dignity, one's own history, the maintenance of the complex of collective and individual rights belonging to one's own culture, and the right to work out one's own future starting from one's own

premises. Obviously, there is no intention here of skating over the contradictions within the existing customs and systems of rules, above all those between men and women. If anything, what needs immediate clarification is that capitalist development, far from offering solutions to these problems, most often aggravates them. Politicians promoting development often try suppress the women's movements which deal with these questions. Nevertheless these movements have grown and are creating an increasing number of new networks, that struggle, denounce and demonstrate great determination in changing a state of affairs clearly causing women harm.

In this connection, the Chiapas revolt is exemplary since it brought to international attention how the Maya women defined their rights with respect to men and society at large. Work and grass-roots debate in the communities produced a code of rights [13]. Some rights concern the economic/social/civil plane such as the right to work, a fair wage, education, basic health care, the necessary food for oneself and one's children, the right to decide autonomously the number of children one wants to have and to rear, to choose one's companion without being required to marry him, to suffer no violence inside or outside the family. Others rights concern the political plane, such as the right to take part in managing the community, to hold office if democratically elected, to hold positions of responsibility in the Zapatista National Liberation Army (ZNLA). The code repeats that women must have all the rights and obligations deriving from revolutionary laws and regulations. As far as one knows, women participate fully in the highest offices in the ZNLA.

I was in Chiapas in the winter of 1992-93, and in San Cristobal I was struck by the numerous posters put up by women's right activists alongside the posters in praise of the guerrilla heroes. A year later, the great work achieved by these women took on new substance and became known throughout the world, disclosing how much progress had also been made within the community as regards the relationship between the sexes. It is significant that an important point in the code of women's rights, corresponding to the centrality this issue has won in the Western world, concerns violence. I would only like to add that, during my visit the year before the revolt, I was told in San Cristobal that the Maya women were no longer willing to go to the hospital to have their children for fear of being raped - evidently not by the natives.

It seems clear that these women's elaboration of their rights was not in a mythical and improbable phase, 'after' the movement that was tending towards a radical change in the state of things, but formed an integral part of it. The same thing happened in the elaboration of their rights by the Eritrean women during the Eritrean liberation war, and it is repeated in an increasing number of situations. These facts show how it is invalid to presume a lack of movement in 'non-advanced' societies because of a supposed observance of tradition.

I would also like to underscore that the relationship with nature [14] is for all of us a fundamental contribution made by the movements of the native women, yet

there is great resistance to it being recognised as such by the more or less historical elaborations of urban male intellectuals that try to find a way to change the world.

As the Chipko movement shows - and numerous other examples are available from various parts of the planet - the leaders are increasingly *women in movements that link* the maintenance, recovery and reinterpretation of a relationship with nature with a defence of economic subsistence and the conservation of the identity and historical-cultural dignity of the communities/civilisations to which they belong.

In that their primary task is the reproduction of individuals in wage and non-wage economies, that they are *unwaged subjects par excellence* in both types of economy, and that their possibilities of autonomous subsistence are progressively undermined in the proceeding of capitalist development, women emerge as the *privileged interpreters* for the unwaged of the earth's future. Today, their critique and their theoretical contribution form a necessary moment in the formulation of a different development, or in any case in reasserting the right not to be developed against one's own will and interest.

On the other hand, international networking between women scholars and feminists and women active in various ways and various organisations concerned with the women's condition, development and the native peoples have brought an awareness of these experiences of resistance and struggle, stimulating a closer attention from Italian women researchers as well. Several of them, internationally well known, are cited by Cicoella (1993). One is the *Green Belt Movement* founded in 1977 by the Kenyan woman, Wangari Maathai, who starting from the idea of 'afforestation for life', has created green belts around cities in 12 African countries where forests had been replaced by open spaces. Then, the *Gabriela* group in the Philippines began its activities by safeguarding a mountain precious for its natural equilibrium and fragile ecosystem. The *Third World Network* founded by a Chinese jurist Yoke Ling Chee aims at forms of development that truly respond to people's real needs and, above all, are independent of aid from the industrial nations. The *Mapuche movement* in Chile led by Alicia Nahelcheo, who was already active against the Pinochet dictatorship, is today struggling against development projects, the expropriation of land to build power stations, and the cropping for commercial purposes of the *araucaria* tree whose fruit is a basic foodstuff.

But these are only some examples. The forms in which many men and women increasingly try to guarantee their survival and at the same time fight against this type of development can be expected to multiply and emerge further. At the same time, there is a growth of increasingly ample initiatives at the international level [15] designed to contest the legitimacy of, and to halt the directives handed down by, the World Bank and the IMF. At the economic and social level, these are the key points in the management of contemporary development, as well as being the major factors in the poverty and degradation of the 'developing' countries.

At the same time, the strong critique and forms of struggle and resistance against this form of development have produced an increasingly vast and articulated debate in which various interpretations of what a different development should be have emerged. Recent summaries (Gisfredi, 1993) of the major positions stress that the centre of it all is the importance of the environment and the cultural context for elaborating an autochthonous project. [*] They also stress the significance of typologies which, in order to identify the fundamental goals of development, list as categories of basic needs, rather than those concerning pure physical survival, those concerning security, welfare, identity and liberty as against violence, material poverty, alienation and repression which typify the way in which governments rule 'developing' countries.

Central to approaches such as these remains self-reliance, by mobilising all the human and material resources available locally and by using technologies compatible with the cultural and natural environment. But many other positions could be listed. To the range of approaches of basic needs, self-reliance, and eco-development summarised by the Dag Hammerskjold Foundation (1975), others have been added because, since then, the debate has developed significantly. The most questioned idea is 'sustainable development' as it emerged from the famous world commission for the environment and development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland. The main criticism is that it confuses development with economic growth and confuses 'everyone's future' with the future of the First World.

In any case, it is clear that any definition of a new approach concerning development makes sense only in so far as it grasps the demands of those men and women who have so far paid the heavier price for development while gaining the least from it. And in so far as it recognises the *right to reject development* in all situations where people refuse it, as it often happens in many different parts of the world. In this sense, Gustavo Esteva said as long as ago as 1985, in his comments on a conference of the Society for International Development: "My people are tired of development, they just want to live." (quoted in Shiva, 1989, p. 13)

Granted the perspective described above, a look at the contribution made by movements wanting to approach the question of development from a feminist viewpoint shows, in my view, that the most interesting approaches include eco-feminism, because its starting-point is respect for human life and the life of living beings in general. Since it appreciates rather than devalues the knowledge and experience of the women in the native communities, eco-feminism also relaunches an approach including the relationship with nature as the source of life and subsistence, the right to self-determination, and the rejection of the capitalist model of development.

I think that a cross between this feminism with the more radically anti-capitalist feminism which has analysed the condition and struggles of women and the unwaged in this model of development, posing the question of what perspectives, may make a very interesting contribution. In this context, I would like

to recall, if only briefly, Vandana Shiva's conception of nature which forms the foundation of her discourse.

She uses a reading of Indian cosmology in which Nature (Prakrti) is an expression of Sakti, the female principle, dynamic primordial energy, the source of abundance. Joining up with the male principle (Purusa), Prakrti creates the world. Women, like any other natural being, have in themselves the female principle and, therefore, this capacity for creation and the maintenance of life. According to Vandana Shiva, the reductionist vision typical of Western science continually expels the female principle from the management of life, by the same token interrupting the life cycles and therefore the regeneration of life itself, creating destruction in its place. The reductionist vision with respect to nature and women ensures that they are reduced to means for the production of commodities and labour-power.

"Patriarchal categories which understand destruction as 'production' and regeneration of life as 'passivity' have generated a crisis for survival. Passivity, an assumed category of the 'nature' of nature and women, denies the activity of nature and life. Fragmentation and uniformity as assumed categories of progress and development destroy the living forces which arise from relationships within the 'web of life' and the diversity in the elements and patterns of these relationships" (Shiva, 1989, p. 3).

"Feminism as ecology, and ecology as the revival of Prakrti, the source of all life, become the decentred powers of political and economic transformation and restructuring" (Shiva, 1989, p. 7).

"Contemporary women's ecological struggles are new attempts to establish that steadiness and stability are not stagnation, and balance with nature's essential ecological processes is not technological backwardness but technological sophistication" (Shiva, 1989, p. 36).

Discourse on land, on water, on nature return to us, brought by the native movements and the knowledge of the native women, almost the most precious of the riches that ancient civilisations hid and the secrets that they never revealed.

But with the land, there also returns to us the immense potential of a human diversity that has been able to resist and preserve its heritage of civilisation. And now it gives forceful expression to the will to work its own future autonomously. The need for a relationship with the earth, for liberty, time, and an escape from the modalities of labour and the relations that the capitalist model of development wants to continue imposing also represents a long thirst for expropriated Western humanity. Perhaps, precisely the fact of having being heard so widely in the world, as happened with the Chiapas revolt, gave many their first perception of the real feasibility of a different life project which they had resignedly relegated to a dream of impossible flight - a world in which life would not be all work, nor nature an

enclosed park in which relationships are prepackaged, pre-codified and fragmented into atoms. It is evidently because these deep and dolorous chords in expropriated Western humanity were touched that the whole body of working society vibrated together with the Chiapas rebels, beating a thousand keys, transmitting, declaring, sustaining. A thousand arms and a thousand legs were moved, and a thousand voices heard.

A hinterland of communication and liaison has been constructed with the growth of the native movements across the Americas and in the world in the last twenty years. Relations, analyses and information have been more closely and more strongly interwoven, especially recently in opposition to the North America Free Trade Agreement. And all this has become the primary tissue for communication between and action by different sectors in the working social body. Workers and non-natives, ecological movement militants, women's groups, and human rights activists have been attracted into a complex support action, helping and monitoring from various parts of the world. But it is clear that, in the last analysis, what has moved all these individuals, groups and associations is the fact of having recognised their own demands in the demands of the native movement; of having seen their own liberation in the native movement's chances of liberation.

The natives have brought the keys, and they are on the table. They can open other doors to enter the Third Millennium. Outside, the full flood has arrived, breaking the concrete banks and drowning the latest high-yield variety of rice...The peasants take out their hundreds of seed varieties, while Aman pushes its stems out above the water.

Translated by Julian Bees.

Notes

[1] See *Il Manifesto*, February 8 1994, but many other newspapers have used the same image. The demonstrating workers were led by the Cobas, the rank-and-file committees created to negotiate on working conditions without passing through the traditional trade-union organisations. The movement now has a national liaison committee.

[2] This is the subject of the third part of *Midnight Notes Collective* (1992).

[3] In lectures on *Capital* that I used to give each year, I devoted some comments in 1970 to the fundamental question of the two opposite tendencies characterising the history of the working day. They were published later (Dalla Costa M., 1978). In my university courses, I continue illustrating fundamental parts of *Capital*, especially those concerning primitive accumulation. Social processes in this period which were neglected by Marx in *Capital*, e.g., the great witch-hunt, have been analysed by the feminist scholars I worked with (Fortunati, 1981; Federici and Fortunati, 1984), with the aim of clarifying the capitalist sexual division of labour and the construction of proletarian women's individuality in capitalism. It is no

coincidence that this period is considered as crucial by various currents of feminist thought.

[4] The term *maledvelopment* and its French equivalent *maledéveloppement* were originally coined with a biological meaning in mind, rather than a political one. The reference to the idea that the wrong type of development is male-related is clear.

[5] India has about 50 million members of scheduled tribes, recognised as such by the Indian constitution because of their particularly disadvantaged situation. They are found most extensively in the states of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Maryana and are at most marginally integrated into the market economy. Their specific social organisation tends to be non-masculinist and generally speaking egalitarian, with a particularly 'sustainable' approach to natural resources. But they are considered as without caste, being despised and exploited as cheap or unpaid labour when they are forced to join agricultural or industrial units. Consequently, 'tribals' referring to India, has not only a social-anthropological meaning but a juridical one as well.

[6] "Capital asks no questions about the length of life of labour-power"... "What experience generally shows to the capitalist is a constant excess of population"... "*Après moi le déluge!* is the watchword of every capitalist and every capitalist nation" (Marx, 1976, Vol. 1, p. 376, 380, 381).

[7] In *La Repubblica*, May 17 1994, an article entitled, "Where have the Sarajevo children disappeared to?" Wondering where the children evacuated from the Bosnian war have finished up, the article quoted spine-chilling figures from the humanitarian organisations on trafficking in children and reported the case of one 14-year-old girl who finished with Italian go-betweens and managed to escape. Also mentioned is an article in the weekly, *Focus*.

[8] The number of children used in the pornography market was referred to with increasing frequency in the media in 1993-94.

[9] International criminal networks and international crime organisations with legal terminals are growing around the clandestine traffic in organs. In this connection, Italian public television has broadcast a series of programs on this issue. One of the most interesting, on March 5 1994 on the second state channel, provided evidence of a relationship between these organisations and legal terminals in France.

[10] It seems worthwhile putting this question given the incredible figures on slavery published recently: 200 million in the world, according to *Economist* of January 6 1990. 100 million are reportedly children, according to *Il Manifesto*, 8.06.1994, which quotes a Unicef report published on the previous day.

[11] *Il Mattino di Padova*, 4.06.1994, publishes an article on the discovery and denunciation of an organisation that was exploiting women and war cripples from ex-Yugoslavia. In Mestre, Venice, the former were sent to work as prostitutes, the latter as beggars.

[12] An effective description of the creation of under-development through development is

provided for the Port Harcourt area in Nigeria by Silvia Federici (1992).

[13] Since January 1 1994, the day on which the revolt broke out, there has been a continual flow of information in the press. In Italy, *Il Manifesto* and other newspapers have reported the major demands of the rebels and with them the women of Chiapas as they were advanced. Two articles with very precise information on the demands as a whole and the details of the mobilisation are Gomez (1994) and Cleaver (1994). A brief synthesis of the women's rights in the Women's Revolutionary Law is to be found in Coppo and Pisani (eds. 1994). I must add that a book not to be missed for knowing the condition of the Maya women, this time in Guatemala, is Burgos (1991), *My name is Rigoberta Menchù*.

[14] In any case, it needs recognising that, in recent years, even if with different approaches, there has been a growth – internationally – in attempts to link different theoretical elaborations with approaches whose focus is the relationship with nature, particularly Marxism and ecology. The magazine best-known for publishing this type of debate is *Capitalismo. Natura. Socialismo*, which is explicitly located in an eco-Marxist perspective. In this same magazine, a particularly ample discussion has developed around the O'Connor (1992) theses on the "second contradiction of capitalism". On the relationship between the left and ecological issues, see, among others, Ricoveri (1994).

[15] Just to mention two initiatives: the Circle of the Peoples coordinated a wide range of associations in a counter-summit against the Naples summit of the Group of Seven on July 8-10, 1994, and, in the first ten days of October of the same year, a large number of associations is taking part in a counter-summit in Madrid for the annual assemblies of the World Bank and the IMF, this year marking the fiftieth anniversary of Bretton Woods and the international financial organisations created there. For the same event, the League for the Rights of the Peoples is working at the Lelio Basso Foundation in Rome to produce a statement on the Bretton Woods institutions to be published when the summit is on in Madrid, just as was done for the IMF general assembly in Berlin in 1988.

[*] Autochthon, from the Greek [ott pl.] are of the earliest known inhabitants of any country and/or an animal or plant that is native to a region, Greek meaning "from the earth itself" [Editor].

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Mayas and Zapatistas

Javier Villanueva

The zapatista mayas came down from the jungle when everything seemed to be lost. Whole villages, Indian villages from the Lacandona jungle, came forward when everything that we call ours, the communal, was being hurled into the remotest of pasts. They came down and spoke with the voice "of fire and truth": "Enough!" they said. It was the first of January 1994.

In the precise instant in which that voice was heard, the neo-liberal image, seen by many as being the only reality and the true future, was revealed as a vile hallucination; and, as it was unmasked, from underneath there began to reemerge the most utopian dreams, recognised now as beloved reality!

The mayas were there, the zapatistas were there, one and the same community in struggle, with their own government - the Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee (CCRI) - and their own army - the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). They came from far off in time and arose from deep inside our history. They spoke as nobody had ever spoken and they struggled for that to which anyone who still has even a little dignity aspires: for democracy, justice and freedom.

Since 1983, "the smallest of our land" were uniting their hearts, "those without face and without name were coming, carrying with them the word of the oldest of our old", cultivating patiently their tender fire, without wasting themselves or letting themselves be trapped, without cheapening their voice, without confusing the light and heat of their communal work with the cold gleam of the thirty pieces of silver. Ten years talking with their own and keeping silence among strangers, identifying their own steps and those of others, establishing brotherhood with those who would be their translators and comrades and isolating the deceivers and traitors, opening the paths of the community and mining those of falsehood.

And so during those ten years they forged what would become invincible arms. Their sole principle: dignity. Their simple programme of eleven points: work, land, shelter, food, health, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. Their commitment: for everybody everything, for ourselves nothing. Their norm: whoever rules, rules by obeying. Their law for women: they too have the right to be armed. Everything is so natural and yet (precisely for that reason) it

was enough to cause scandal among the men of money, to make the Mexican state feel threatened by a plot to destabilise the country and, consequently, for the voice of the future to be given to the people in arms.

Then came the first of January 1994. While the lords of money were celebrating the beginning of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the zapatista mayas presented their free community agreement: they dug up their rifles and shotguns and came to the balconies of four town halls to cry against the 500 years of injustice and 200 years of falsehood: "Enough!" And so started a new era of revolution, and so the world entered into a new cycle of fruitfulness.

Their revolution represents a revolution in revolution. Without any doubt it is a new and original experience in the history of revolutions. To say that it is impossible to classify is no more than saying that it is a genuine revolution. But everything seems to indicate that it is more than that: it is something inaugural, a revolution of a new type. Where does its novelty lie? It is very difficult to answer, perhaps for that very reason. And we are still too much inside it to make it an 'object' of study and 'analyse' it. For the moment we must be content just to sketch some of its distinctive features.

I think the most important is summed up in the following passage from Captain Benito an Indian of 25 years, one metre and a half in stature, who led the zapatista contingent in the taking of Ocosingo, one of the four towns, on that first day of the first year. That was where there was the most intense fighting and where Benito lost an eye. When he was interviewed two months later, he made a very significant statement: "it was our job to take Ocosingo militarily, although politically we had already taken it many years before, but we had to take it militarily". What was Benito referring to with this "politically we had already taken it many years before"? And why did he think that still "we had to take it militarily"?

Of course there is something here that is not at all new: the separation between the political and the military, so characteristic of the revolutionary movements of national liberation in Asia, Africa and Latin America since the 1950s. But at the same time it is clear that there is something distinct and original: the political conquest precedes the military conquest, the political defeat of the enemy is the condition for his military defeat. This recalls more the classical idea of a revolutionary mass movement, which finds its clearest expression in the great popular insurrections in important cities, more or less linked to peasant uprisings and wars. But Benito's proposition is made from the jungle and in relation to a city which, even if it is the principal town of the district, is still rural and pretty marginal in terms of industrial development. Perhaps that is why it should be seen in the context of a general proposition of a politico-military nature.

In other words, through this improvised, spontaneous declaration of Benito, we are shown a movement, the zapatista maya movement, which seems to be an original synthesis (although still in the process of invention) between an insurrectional rising of highly politicised masses and a war of displaced peasant and

indigenous peoples. Both components have a long and very respectable tradition and neither is outdated, but the synthesis is very much of the present, its material basis is beyond doubt and it has an ever broader future ahead. Unfortunately I cannot argue the last point here, but it seems to me a very direct consequence of the present movement of globalisation or regionalisation of the economies by financial capital: whole countries are being displaced today in the same way as the indigenous populations of the Lacandona jungle were yesterday; in the highlands of Chiapas can be found the whole experience of Nicaragua and El Salvador, its learning process and its critique.

One fact in particular, apart from being very striking, has the advantage of showing us what Benito and the zapatista mayas are referring to by this "conquer politically". If their practice relates the political and the military in an original way, it is because their political (and their military) practice is itself original. Political conquest here is not - very far from it - the struggle that focuses on the conquest of posts or responsibilities in institutions and organisations.

The particular fact that I refer to is this: the week following the first day of the first year, the zapatista mayas stopped shooting and kept their guns silent for a year; they kept them in their fists, but they had no need to shoot to maintain their positions in the face of a much more powerful army (in terms of armaments) and in the face of a social enemy which sought by every method the slightest pretext for wiping them out. And not only that: the liberated zone was converted by them into a public centre for the organisation of the popular forces of the whole country, for the discussion of alternatives and plans of action as well as for commemorating revolutionary dates and holding dances, issuing dozens of communiqués and letters which circled the world and giving hundreds of interviews to the means of mass communication. They even granted themselves the luxury of constructing a village around a new centre for meetings for ten thousand people, entirely built by them. They imposed all this on the Mexican state for more than a year and without firing a single shot. If there is an example in history of the 'purely' political use of arms, that example is given by the zapatista mayas of Chiapas.

It is clear, then, that for the zapatista mayas this "conquer politically" has nothing to do with bureaucratic aspirations. To conquer politically is for them, above and before all else, to win over the people. And if we read their communiqués, we see that this is not just a question of 'convincing' the people of this or that interpretation or proposal; winning over the people, conquering politically, is to win their respect, their confidence, their appreciation and even their deepest affection. And for that it is necessary to demonstrate skill, responsibility and coherence, but also sincerity, commitment, consistency, what the salvadorians call a very solid and authentic ethical texture; and above all, it is necessary to show oneself to be flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood of the people themselves, to be that which people consider worthy of their children, brothers and sisters, something that can be recognised even in the sense of humour, or in dance, or in a

single circumstantial phrase. This is the sort of thing that it is difficult to demonstrate when one tries: it has to come out spontaneously, as in Benito's phrase.

That is what it means to conquer politically, to win over the people. And that is what the zapatista mayas have been doing since the first day of the first year with the whole of Mexico and with all who have news of them, and we can guess that that is what they were doing and becoming during those ten years in the jungle. That is what all of them are doing, from the youngest children in their bases of support to their subcommander and their principal commanders. It is an impressive and inexhaustable political force. It is something that can only be explained in one way: if so much and such deep and such complete humanity is put at stake, then it can only be that the threat to humanity is reaching such extremes as to put at risk the lives of entire nations.

Perhaps for that reason it had to be Indians, like the mayas, who gave us this lesson. It is not for nothing that they have spent 500 years defeating this type of threat and almost two hundred years confronting a state which claims to have liberated them at the same time as discriminating against them. They are the first to resist the counter-revolution: long live the revolution! When they came down from the jungle, it seemed that we would win a world. *Ours*, the communal, seemed to come to life again. And it was true. It was the first day of the first year.

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What Do We Owe To The Scots?

Reflections on Caffentzis, the Property Form and Civilization

Richard Gunn

My intention in the present paper is two-fold. In Part One, I undertake a critical discussion of George Caffentzis's account (published in *Common Sense* 16) of the putatively Scottish origins of the concept of 'civilization'; and, in Part Two, with reference to the work of Adam Smith and Francis Hutcheson, I explore the paradoxical and indeed self-contradictory mode of existence of *property* in its modern, bourgeois sense.

A comment on the relation between the two sections of my discussion - respectively, the critical and the exploratory sections - is in order. Whilst each section admits of being read separately from the other, as an independent essay, my two converging lines of argument gain strength and (so I believe) interest when their complementarity is born in mind. The whole, to employ a familiar image, adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

A brief indication of how this is so will introduce various of the issues my paper seeks to raise. Caffentzis's argument is to the effect that what we owe to the Scots is nothing less than the concept of 'civilization'; that the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment played a pivotal role in the development of this concept; and that the concept presided over and served to legitimize the list of horrors - the repressions, the slaveries, the famines, the imperialisms and the slaughters - by which the capitalist era has been marked.¹ My critical response to these contentions on the part of Caffentzis is that the arguments with which he supports them are methodologically flawed, historically misleading and politically naive. This tale of historiographical reservations is not however the whole story because, although Caffentzis does his themes scant justice, these themes themselves, and his identification of them, are of considerable importance. Moreover, one strand in my argument in Part One concerns omissions rather than commissions in Caffentzis's account. Part Two, therefore, moves beyond criticism to exploration and supplies a separately standing *reformulation* of the issues which Caffentzis seeks to address. In effect, the second part of my article offers the analysis which Caffentzis, as a

necessary condition of his gaining purchase on the question of a Scottish dialectic of civilization, *ought to have supplied*.

This second section of my presentation builds upon fresh conceptual and terminological foundations, and neither its mode of discussion (form-analysis, on which see later) nor its subject matter (the Scottish theorisation of private property) stands in any direct relation to Caffentzis's view. To the contrary, my proposal is that the absent but necessary condition just referred to is the notion - in the sense just alluded to - of 'form'. This said, however, my discussion in Part Two is intended as a reworking and refashioning of the notion of a Scottish dialectic of 'civilization', or of enlightenment, which is Caffentzis's main theme. In place of Caffentzis's emphasis on the term 'civilization' itself, my own focus is on the notion of *reification*,² as a key to the Scottish Enlightenment's theorisation of private property, and my working assumption is that the dialectic of reification is the key to the Scots' dialectic of enlightenment for its part.³ My concern will be with what I shall call the *property form*, and some passages from Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith will serve to illustrate what reflection on the property form might entail.

By way of a final prefatory observation, it may be worth drawing attention to the circumstance that Caffentzis's paper and my own are not merely Marxist, as hopefully will become evident, but Marxist according to recognizably differing traditions of theoretical work. My intention is to place these traditions one beside the other and to invite not a choice between, but a comparison of, the work concerned.

I. Historiographical Reservations

I have already indicated the general nature of the issues which Caffentzis is addressing. His presentation tells a detailed and intriguing story, tracing 'civilization' from its jurisprudential recesses in Scottish Civil Law (as opposed to English Common Law) and charting its centrality in 'that peculiar 18th century flourishing of bourgeois thought that goes by the name of Scottish Enlightenment' (Caffentzis p. 67).

'Civilization' is followed as it evolves from its origin as a concept with a quasi-technical, legal meaning into its more familiar incarnation as a term which plays a normative and fully ideological role. Its 'final destination' (ibid. p. 66) is discovered in the genocide of the Highland Clearances and the saga of Western imperialism's bloody and rapacious decades. 'If the history of the concept of "civilisation" were better known, we might be more cautious in granting this term our unquestioning seal of approval' (ibid. p. 66).

In what follows, I shall first of all explore what I take to be Caffentzis's methodological weaknesses, and then indicate the historical and political difficulties to which these weaknesses lead. The weaknesses concerned can usefully be given

names. Caffentzis's argument (so I shall argue) is flawed by *teleologism* and is deeply *manichean*, or dualistic. The force of these terms will be explained as my discussion proceeds.⁴

Already, Caffentzis's term 'final destination' (p 66) is sufficient to trigger warning signs indicative of a teleological angle of analysis. Whilst it is unfair to attach excessive importance to a turn of phrase, there would be more than a little irony involved were Caffentzis guilty of replaying in the *conceptual* register a teleologism in the *social* register which he condemns as part and parcel of his anti-'civilization' argument; and this is, I propose, the case. Caffentzis rightly complains against the teleologism which can be inherent in scenarios that trace a development from 'savagery' to 'civilization' (Caffentzis pp 80-1, and his note 12), as though civilization is the goal and everything other than civilization a mere step or pitfall or diversion, but in Caffentzis's own argument the fully developed ideological meaning of 'civilization' is treated as the destination or goal whilst the earlier legal meaning (which Caffentzis highlights) makes its appearance merely as a stage or step towards the consolidation of bourgeois rule. The danger inherent in this sort of teleologism is that of writing about 'civilization' in, so to say, its early days - writing about it, that is to say, when its fate as a fully ideological category has not yet been decided - *as though* its fate is sealed from the beginning so that it *is nothing but* a prop, pure and simple, of a bourgeois-imperialist world. In fact, it is more than arguable that the Scottish Enlightenment, on which Caffentzis offers the snap judgement that it is 'bourgeois' and which in his view hatched the monster-child, 'civilization', is a good deal more than an unproblematic stage or step forward in a triumphant ideological march. Caffentzis, as will become apparent, omits the open-ended and at-issue character of the Enlightenment debates. In Marx's terms, Caffentzis casts aside the distinction between 'classical' and 'vulgar' socio-political reflection (Marx 1976 pp 174-5) and writes about the Scottish Enlightenment as an affair of vulgar ideology, alone.

Against what has been said concerning teleologism it might be urged that Caffentzis repudiates determinism: the march towards bourgeois consolidation may sometimes falter. The most notable instance supplied by Caffentzis of such a faltering is the mass action of the Gordon Riots which occurred in London, in 1780: 'the Gordon Riots put an end to the civilization of English law' (Caffentzis p 79). However, this is conceptualised as a matter of a movement (the movement towards bourgeois consolidation) encountering an external obstacle: as will be seen presently, in his discussion of the Gordon Riots Caffentzis is at his most manichean. Put crudely, *capital* is thought of as (temporarily) halted in its advance by *the workers*. The much more challenging set of questions concern the so to say - *internal* problems faced by 'civilization', i.e., the complex and always problematic character of the constitution-process which goes forward within the category of 'civilization' itself. In arguing this, I am far from advocating a capital-logic style of analysis according to which problems of capital (or 'civilization') can be posed

within splendid isolation from questions of social- and class-constitution. On the contrary, it is when the internally at-issue and problematic questions of capital⁵ and bourgeois 'civilization' are addressed that questions of class and constitution gain sharp focus, and *vice versa* (cf. Bonefeld and Gunn 1991); and it is when capital and the proletariat - or, correspondingly, 'civilization' and revolutionary subjectivity - are counterposed as external opposites that a firm purchase eludes us and a romantic haze descends.

The above are hard sayings, and justification of them is my next task. Caffentzis's manicheanism - his tendency to construe the socio-political world in terms of opposing principles of light and darkness - is easy enough to demonstrate, but it is with the implications of his teleologism that I begin.

Caffentzis's teleologism surfaces first of all in his selection of just those eighteenth century meanings of the term 'civil' - namely, the legal meanings - which can be portrayed most strikingly as contributions towards a bourgeois-ideological goal. It is this goal-guided or retrospective and preselective reading that throws into relief the seemingly direct connection between 'civilization' and 'the rationalization of intra-capitalist relations' (Caffentzis p 66; cf. pp 70-3) from which Caffentzis's argument derives so much of its striking character and lively force. In reality, Caffentzis makes life easy for himself by interrogating only the history of the term 'civilization' and saying nothing about the root-word, 'civil', concerning which, in the eighteenth century, a richer and much more extensive set of semantic issues were in play. It was in relation not merely to jurisprudence (although this was crucial) but to the complex - the vexed and hotly contested - heritage of the concept of *citizenship* (Latin *civis*, a citizen; *civilis*, of or belonging to citizens) that the Enlightenment's struggles were conducted. The nature of 'civil society' - which was of unsettled definition and not to be assimilated to our modern usage - was the prize. Alongside the jurisprudential definition of citizenship and civil society there intertwined a rival and often complementary definition, sometimes termed civic humanism,⁶ which emphasised the 'civic' virtues of (especially) active citizenship; so that it emerges as 'a major interpretive issue' how we should determine 'the relative weight which ought to be given to the civic humanist and natural jurisprudential traditions in the constitution of the language of Scottish political economy' (Hont and Ignatieff 1983 p vii).⁷ Notice that the 'citizen' envisaged in these early debates and explorations was not yet the individuated and abstractly isolated figure presumed by contemporary liberalism; as it were, the circumstance that we tend to think of 'the citizen' as 'the individual' is a sign that, in the eighteenth-century debates concerning jurisprudence and civic humanism and their interrelations, the jurisprudential tradition 'won'. One way of stating this is to say that the 'civic' became transformed into the 'civil' (cf. Pocock in Hont and Ignatieff 1983 p 240). The measure of the civic tradition's attenuation is the extent to which 'civility', like 'refinement' but unlike (say) public-spiritedness, strikes us as intrinsically a private virtue. But the jurisprudential

victory was neither one-dimensional nor preordained, and much of the civic tradition can be easily enough discerned, transposed so to speak into a jurisprudential register, in the intrinsically complex 'civilization' which won the day. Caffentzis does not merely oversimplify in the interests of hastening to his story's end; he exaggerates his argument's inevitability and (a latter day Rousseau!) he underestimates the uneven and problem-ridden character of the 'civilization' that results.

Further evidence of his teleologism together with his manicheism surfaces in the nature of the commentary on the Scottish Enlightenment that Caffentzis supplies. Apart from documenting Hume's and John Millar's endorsement of Civil Law (Caffentzis pp 69-70), this commentary turns entirely on the so-called *stadial* conception of society - 'the problematic of *historical stages*' (p 80) - which features in the writings of a good number of the Enlightened Scots. For example: 'There are four distinct states which mankind pass thro: - 1st, the Age of Hunters [or 'savagery']; 2dly, the Age of Shepherds [or 'barbarism']; 3dly, the Age of Agriculture; and 4thly, the Age of Commerce [or civilization]' (Smith 1978 p 14). Combined with what looks like a crude (although loosely textured) economic determinism,⁸ there appear to be striking resemblances between Scottish stadial social theory and the base/superstructure passage in Marx's Preface of 1859. Not surprisingly, Marxist scholars have made much of these similarities (Pascal 1938; Meek 1967 and 1978); the difficulty, however, is that to highlight them is to present both the Scots and Marx in their most unfavourable and uncharacteristic light. Few Marxists would (and none should) take solace from a passage which is certainly economic-determinist and very possibly teleological as well. Caffentzis therefore has good reason for distancing himself from the scholarship above cited - 'social science, Marxist and non-Marxist, has not transcended this [i.e. the stadial] schema' (Caffentzis p 84, fn 12) - but, having underscored this reservation, and endorsed it, a critical tone of discussion justifies itself once more.

Above, I urged that Caffentzis's teleologism leads him to treat Scottish Enlightenment theory as though it were *nothing but* vulgar ideology, on the grounds that 'civilization' as an ideological formation grew from it. The Scottish Enlightenment finds itself reduced to the status of ideology in the same movement as it is construed, teleologically and retrospectively, as merely a step or stage towards bourgeois history's goal. These critical comments regarding Caffentzis can now be defended. Not only does Caffentzis in effect reduce the Scottish Enlightenment to stadial theory, thereby offering nothing but silence concerning the immensely rich inheritance owing to the Scots in the fields of science, epistemology, ethics, 'common sense' philosophy (cf. Gunn in *Common Sense* 12) and so on virtually *ad infinitum* - presumably Scottish achievement in these areas cannot so unproblematically be characterised as steps towards bourgeois ideology - but his treatment of stadial social theory, itself, is fatally one-sided. In Caffentzis's view, writing with the Highland Clearances in mind, stadial theory is merely an apologia for genocide. 'Their [the Scottish intellectuals] first task was creating the

conditions whereby the Highlanders could become civilized. This posed the problematic of *historical stages...*' (Caffentzis p 80). Of course there is an important grain of truth in this: a teleologically inspired stadial scheme can all too readily devalue the early steps designed to culminate in its pre-given goal. However, the important question concerns not the general properties of stadial theory but *the role played by stadial theory in the theorisations of the Scottish Enlightenment* and, with the exception of some comments on the Scots' repudiation of social contract theory (p 81), this is a question which Caffentzis studiously refuses to pose. When we *do* pose it we discover that the role played by stadial theory in the Scottish theorisation is that of foregrounding the historical mutability of the forms taken by property, and thereby problematising the nature of property (or what a Marxist might call the property form) itself. The Scots are entirely explicit that this is, for them, the value that stadial theorising has. Adam Smith introduces the passage quoted above by saying 'Before we consider exactly this or any of the other methods by which property is acquired [i.e. occupation, succession, etc.: in other words the traditional methods listed by jurisprudence] it will be proper to observe that the regulations concerning them must vary considerably according to the state or age society is in that time. There are four distinct states...' etc. (loc cit). John Millar, whom Caffentzis cites, wrote an entire book exploring the relation between varieties of authority and subordination and the historically specific forms of 'property, the great source of distinction among individuals' (Millar 1806 p 4). Here, I suggest, we find a positive inheritance - and by no means merely a vulgar and potentially genocidal ideological apology - from which, to this day, Marxists interested in the renewal of Marxism can usefully draw.⁹

I turn, finally, to direct documentation of Caffentzis's manicheanism. I have quoted Caffentzis to the effect that the 1780 Gordon Riots halted the importation of Scottish Civil Law into England. This is his analysis of the burning, during these riots, of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield's house: 'Two opposing principles of justice met in Bloomsbury Square on that day. On the one side was Mansfield's transmission of the civil law of Rome into the sinews of the emerging global empire, on the other was the proletariat who demanded a justice beyond and against the universalisation of mercantile law' (Caffentzis p 78). Let me clear that I do not take exception to the formulation 'two opposing principles of justice', per se; nor am I accusing Caffentzis of manicheanism on that account. After all, it is logically conceivable - however historically implausible - that a direct and unmediated clash between bourgeois and proletarian principles of justice occurred, just as his account describes. But turn now to the evidence which Caffentzis supplies for his description. He quotes the following: 'Pilfers were punished; and one ragged incendiary, to show his disinterestedness, threw into the burning pile a valuable piece of silver plate and a large sum of money in gold, which swore should not "go in payment of masses"' (John Campbell *The Lives of the Chief Justices of England*, quoted in Caffentzis p 78). This quotation is interesting and striking, but -

how does Caffentzis understand the reference to 'masses'? Not a word is said to enlighten us and, in consequence of the ensuing silence *taken together* with the invocation of the unmediated clash of 'two opposing principles', one has a dreadful, dawning suspicion that Caffentzis construes his rioter as affirming the disinterestedness of 'the masses' in the modern, political and revolutionary sense. In the event, the 1780 riots were targeted against 'Roman Catholics and their supporters' together with other groups 'including Irishmen, Italians, Frenchmen and Spaniards' (Rudé 1972 pp 253-4) -groups, that is to say, tainted with the Roman Catholic brush. Still more specifically, 'Lord Mansfield had earned the particular hostility of the rioters both as Lord Chief Justice [the only aspect of the hostility mentioned by Caffentzis] and as a warm advocate of the Catholic Relief Act; in fact it was even claimed that, in order to direct the rioters to his house, the rumour was spread "that he had advised the Dragoons to ride over the Protestants, that he was a Roman Catholic and that he had made the King one" [State Papers]. An orgy of looting and destruction followed...' (Rudé 1970 pp 272-8). Given all of this, the answer to our question is fairly evident. The 'masses' whose payment Caffentzis's rioter sought to prevent were the masses conducted in a 'mass house' (i.e. a private chapel) or a Roman Catholic church.

All of this is not to deny that the Gordon Riots had, importantly, what Caffentzis would recognize as an anti-bourgeois dimension. It was *rich* Catholics, or *rich* supporters of Catholic relief, who were targeted; according to George Rudé, who is in effect the Riots' historian,¹⁰ the rioters displayed 'a groping desire to settle accounts with the rich, if only for a day' (Rudé 1970 p 289). However, it is Rudé's final, balanced interpretation that 'religion' was not 'merely the "cloak" for some form of deeper social protest in which men other than Protestant fanatics might share. *The two went side by side*' (ibid. pp 289-90: my emphasis).

'Religion' (in the form of no-popery) and 'social protest', to state the matter slightly differently, were one another's mode of existence or *form*. Thus, if we are to construe the Gordon Riots as a conflict of bourgeois and proletarian 'principles', we must conclude that this conflict or clash or principles was anything but unmediated and direct. Caffentzis's seductive rhetoric according to which the opposing 'principles' of darkness and light 'met in Bloomsbury Square' on the June day in 1780 counts as manichean, and dangerously romantic and naive, not because the scenario it sketches is intrinsically impossible but, no less damagingly, because it is historically wrong.

A last footnote concerning rioting suggests itself, since it leads back to the Scottish Enlightenment which is this paper's central concern. The immediate overture to the London riots of 1780 were the 'No Popery' riots which occurred in Edinburgh in 1778-79: 'there is little doubt that the Scottish "No Popery" disturbances were the model for the Gordon Riots' (Sher 1985 p 294). In the course of these 'disturbances', William Robertson, a professor and church leader and a leading figure amongst the Enlightenment literati, found himself in a position not

unlike Lord Mansfield (except that his house was threatened but not burned). Robertson had, of course, no record as a hanging judge which the rioters might hold against him, and the sole circumstance - apart from his class - which drew the rioters attention to him was his record as a proponent of toleration in the form of Roman Catholic relief. Robertson was the recipient of death threats and, fascinatingly, some of these survive. One affirms that 'you may depend if otherwise you shall not be the Bulwark nor Pope's agent longer, your out and in coming shall be watched etc. etc.'; another bluntly informs Robertson that 'I have now a pair of pocket pistols, well loaded, which I purpose to give you the contents of one of them' (quoted in Sher 1985 p 289). These documents show what is in effect the ugly face of eighteenth-century insurgency and indicate how far from unmediated a proletarian class consciousness might be. In the above letters, Robertson's Enlightened toleration is thrown into relief against the rare glimpse we are afforded into the mentality of a bigoted and unthinking mob.

Since Caffentzis nowhere mentions the Edinburgh riots (but why not?) it is, of course, unjustifiable to set up and criticise what may be a straw man. However, they are instructive because they illustrate a line-up which differs so enormously and dramatically from the manichean polarisations that Caffentzis's narrative encourages us to expect. A schema of twin principles of opposing light and darkness is simply an unsafe guide to the complexities - which includes the revolutionary opportunities - of the real world.

'Civilization' is less monolithic and revolutionary subjectivity is more self-contradictory and internally complex and uneven than Caffentzis appears to believe. Caffentzis is writing in the Autonomist tradition of Marxism¹¹ and the following, highly critical, characterisation of *autonomia* characterises its aporias *exactly*: 'labour tends to be seen as a power which exists external to its own perverted social world: the constitutive power of labour stands external to its own perversion' (Bonefeld 1994 p 44). 'The capital-labour relation is understood merely in terms of a repressive systemic logic counterposed to subjective forces in a dualist and external way' (ibid. p 45). Whilst leaving it as an open question whether or not this characterisation applies to all of autonomist Marxism, i.e. Autonomist Marxism *simpliciter*, the implication of the above critical discussion is to the effect that it most certainly does apply to Caffentzis. In his dualistic world, so to phrase it, only a contradiction *between* capital and labour is acknowledged and the no less crucial contradictions *within* capital (or 'civilization') and *within* labour (or proletarian subjectivity) are, effectively, downplayed and ignored. If one grasps all three of these contradictions, and furthermore construes each of them as internally (and self-contradictorily) related to each other, then one comes a step closer towards what Marx called 'a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought'.¹²

II. Contradictions of the Property Form

From the critique of Caffentzis I turn, now, to the exploration of a key aspect of Scottish Enlightenment social theory.

One signal achievement of the Scottish theorists is their raising to a level of clear reflection some issues concerning the nature and the social implications of *property*. What the Scots aspire to is a genuinely social conception of (private) property. Stated otherwise: the Scots are the first to raise the question of the *property form*.¹³ The effect of their theorising is to bring to the surface a pattern of tensions and aporias, of internal conflicts or contradictions, which are intrinsic to property in its fully developed, bourgeois sense. Earlier, I indicated that scholars have sometimes seen the Scottish Enlightenment's 'stadial' theorising as an anticipation of Marxism; and I endorsed Caffentzis's disquiet concerning interpretations of this kind. I now propose that, whilst there are, indeed, themes and concerns uniting Marx and the Scottish theorists, the passages which articulate these themes have generally been sought in the wrong place. It is less the 'stadial' passages in Smith *et al* which anticipate Marxism than *precisely those which set forth the 'origins' or 'foundations' of property*, that is, the passages whose reputation as 'Robinsonades' appears to be the most secure.¹⁴ Underlying my proposal is the often made interpretive point that, for the Scottish theorists, issues of individual existence can only be grasped if it is acknowledged that the individual lives a social - an interactive - life (e.g. Bryson 1945 ch VI). It would be wholly uncharacteristic of the Scots were they to have developed a conception of property along individualist rather than social lines.

The context of the Scottish attempt to articulate a social conception of (private) property can be indicated in a highly abbreviated way. Scottish Enlightenment theorising seeks to transcend *on the one hand* a heritage of Medieval and jurisprudential norms concerning suitable moral constraints on the use and acquisition of property and *on the other* the so-called 'labour' theory of property (or at any rate one interpretation of this theory) enunciated in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* published in 1689. As we shall see, the difficulty with Locke was that his theory was insufficiently social; the difficulty regarding the Medieval and jurisprudential heritage was simply that a list of the prescriptions and recommendations governing the *use of property* cannot, however complete the list might be, amount to a theorisation of the nature or form *of property*, itself. Even the Medieval view which is commonly summarised in the phrase 'property as stewardship' (e.g. Tawney 1938), a view which might at first sight appear to set forth a conception of the nature of property, turns out on closer inspection to advocate, by means of a vivid social analogy, a specific *stance towards property* rather than a *conception of property* as such. An analysis of the form of property calls for a theorisation of property *qua property*, that is, a theorisation whose

precondition is that property be stripped of the web of normative and socially specific and legal-jurisprudential encrustations in which, hitherto, it could be found.

However, at this point, a reader will very possibly raise a difficulty: once the moral and social and legal web is stripped from property, what - what, that is, *that might count as property* - still remains? Surely, property is *nothing but* whatever is acknowledged and recognized as property, and do not the moral and social and legal norms pertaining to property merely specify *in what* this recognition consists?

The answer to this question is that, whilst very properly they place the socially constitutive character of recognition at the centre of the picture,¹⁵ such questions unjustifiably assume a specific shape or character of recognition, namely, a recognition in which norms (of whatever kind) play the crucial and fundamental role. What questions framed along the above lines take for granted is that it is *the recognition of norms which constitutes property* whereas it is quite conceivable that it is *the recognition of property which constitutes norms*. Ultimately, the point at issue is a historical one. Medieval theory found itself perfectly well able to distinguish between, say, a political claim and a claim to property; amongst the Schoolmen, for example, there was a well-established distinction between *imperium* and *dominium*.¹⁶ Conceptually, all that such a distinction involves is drawing up lists of the obligations which, respectively, politics-based and property-based claims entail. By contrast, in the modern world - in the world of what Caffentzis calls 'civilization' - the recognitive force of norms in regard to property is regulative rather than constitutive and a wholly new strand in recognition (or misrecognition or alienation or reification or whatever one chooses to call it) comes into play. This strand, intrinsic to the constitutive role which property plays in 'civilized' recognitive patterns, comes into focus when we reflect on the myriad ties that link our conceptions of property and *selfhood*. In the early modern period, for example, the property/selfhood interconnection must have appeared almost tautological: one word for property was *propriety* deriving from Latin *proprius*, that is, own or peculiar to oneself. What is proper to oneself is that which - existentially *and* etymologically! - one owns. Of course, much more was at stake, here, than a verbal equivocation or confusion; what must have struck the theorists in whom we can read 'the anticipation of "civil society"' (Marx 1973 p 83) was the peculiar *aptness* of the language they were able to use. It was the language appropriate to a novel pattern of recognition in which property *qua* property (rather than norms) was acknowledged as fundamental, i.e. as constitutive, and which the queries raised earlier leave aside.

Having now cleared the way for interrogation of the category of property *qua* property, a comparison between Locke's and Adam Smith's treatment of this category will be instituted as the next step on our way. Superficially, it is their similarity which at first strikes one in regard to the following well-known passages. First Locke:

Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. (Locke 1963 pp 328-9)

And secondly Smith, who in the passage as a whole is arguing to the effect that the length of apprenticeships should not be excessive:

The property which every man has in his labour, as it is the original foundation of all property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. (Smith 1976a Vol 1 p 138)

Here, it seems, Smith is merely repeating and endorsing Locke's labour theory of property; furthermore, both theorists employ the modern language of property, namely, the language which invokes selfhood or what is *proper* to oneself. Within this same language, for Locke and apparently for Smith, not merely does property invoke selfhood but (conversely) selfhood invokes property: every man [*sic*] has a property in his [*sic*] own person, a property so primordial and so original and so, as it were, *ownmost* that the very strongest terms - terms such as 'sacred' and 'inviolable' - are called for if justice to this notion of *self-proprietorship* is to be done. This original, and originating, property consists of *labour* - the labour of our body and the work of our hands¹⁷ - in the view pioneered by Locke. One's labour is 'properly' (*nota bene*) one's own, and 'thereby' (that is, in virtue of this primordial property in one's labour) the object upon which one has laboured (or 'mixed' one's labour 'with') counts as one's property. *Self-proprietorship* entails proprietorship in general, in Locke's view. We should be clear that Locke's is a two-stage argument concerning property, and its conclusion depends on both sequential steps - first of all the argument to the effect that we have property in ourselves, viz., labour, and secondly the argument to the effect that whatever we labour upon counts as our property - being taken. The conclusion of the two-stage argument is simply that we inhabit a world where proprietors and their (private) property are the order of the day.

Intentionally, I have shifted discussion towards Locke and away from Smith, and I should like to continue the discussion of Locke for a moment longer. My interpretive suggestion has been to the effect that Locke rests his case on an appeal

to something so personal, so intrinsic to oneself and so ownmost, that its call registers itself as a voice which is distinctive; and its claims make themselves heard as prior to the clamour of competing obligations of a moral or social or jurisprudential kind. Whilst it is true enough that, in conformity with the sort of obligations set forth in the jurisprudential-Medieval tradition, Locke incorporates into his account of property a number of limitations on property's acquisition - for example, it is of importance that a neighbour should 'still have room, for as good, and as large a Possession' as oneself (ibid. p 334) - this is not, according to my reading, the core of his theorising. The core is not so much the limitations as the conception of property *qua* property. That the limitations are inessential can be affirmed the more confidently if, following Macpherson (1962 ch V), one notes how Locke displays a good deal of ingenuity in avoiding the limitations that, elsewhere, he himself has proclaimed.

In the light of the above, and although my paper touches on Locke only incidentally, it is fair to notice how my comments stand in relation to Lockescholarship as a whole. Very roughly, this scholarship has moved in the direction of emphasis on the Natural Law theme in Locke. In the passage quoted above Locke would be read less as *founding* property than as securing an individual distribution of pre-existing *common* property ('though the earth...be common to all Men'), and, in effect, the various limitations on the acquisition of property that Locke mentions would be treated a good deal more seriously than did Macpherson when the latter sought to underscore the 'bourgeois' character of Locke's thought. My own purpose is not to enter into debates on these questions but merely to note that, to the extent that natural-jurisprudential norms and limits are placed at the centre of the picture, Locke ceases to be a theorist of property *qua* property (a theorist of property *simpliciter*) however interesting in other respects his work might be. If the Locke of the traditional or Macpherson-oriented interpretation might be a straw man, then one is tempted to suggest that there is more life and strength in this straw figure than in the scholarly reconstruction who finds academic favour today.¹⁸

Standing back a little, and before directly exploring the Smith passage, we can pause to notice how a fundamental contradiction in the form of (private) property has come to the fore. As it were, what has just been said concerning Locke-interpretations contains the contradiction in a nutshell. *On the one hand*, a recognitive and thereby social account of property - an account focusing on moral and legal norms and their consequent limitations on property's use and acquisition - threatens to miss its object, namely, bourgeois private property, and become something other than a theory of property *per se*. For example it becomes a moral philosophy or a political tract. *On the other hand*, a theory which does justice to its object and which addresses itself to *property qua property* stands in danger of becoming *asocial*, inasmuch as it casts any web of recognitive (moral, legal, etc.) relations aside. The weakness in Locke's theory, as above interpreted, is that, by its insistence that we hearken to what is 'properly' our ownmost, it reduces to silence

the recognitive - the social - voices in which obligations are acknowledged and claims pressed. As it were, Locke's theory of property speaks in a *monological* voice. Locke's famous metaphor, according to which an object becomes our property when we have mixed our labour with it, is, of course, a metaphor and nothing more but *it is a wholly apt* metaphor for what he seeks to say. A purely physical - physiological, natural - process such as that of 'mixing' can appropriately stand for an ownmost, monological process inasmuch as both go forward in abstraction from any recognitive, dialogical and social, context of action or thought.

It is my claim that Smith, unlike traditional jurisprudence (which downplays property *qua* property whilst emphasising recognition) and modern Lockeanism (which downplays recognition whilst doing justice to property), clears the space in which a social or recognitive theory of private property - a theory of the property *form* - can unfold. Notice that there can be no question of merely excluding, or rejecting or ruling out, one of the terms of the contradiction just described. It is not a matter of straightforwardly *choosing between* a recognitive (other-oriented) or monological (self-oriented) conception of private property, or of parcelling out their respective claims upon our interest to discrete disciplines of for instance moral-philosophical and sociological kinds. On the contrary, really and practically and not merely conceptually and theoretically, private property has a janus face. Instead of disputing the reality of one or other of the poles of the contradiction, therefore, we need to interrogate 'the form within which they [the poles of the contradiction] have room to move' (Marx 1976 p 198). This involves envisaging a pattern of recognition which is constitutive of property *simpliciter*, that is, property not as norm-constituted but as self-oriented in the bourgeois and the 'civilized' sense. To Smith's pioneering work in this direction I now turn.

My argument will be to the effect that the similarity between the passages from Smith and Locke quoted earlier is more apparent than real. Thus Smith: 'The property which every man has in his labour, as it is the original foundation of all property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable' (loc cit). Read carefully, this sentence does *not* affirm that any object which one labours upon 'thereby' (to employ Locke's word), or by that token, becomes private property. Smith's sentence *does* state that 'all property' stems, ultimately, from labour; but it *does not* state that all labour yields property as its result. Not even all so-to-say successful labour, labour producing an artefact, need have this outcome. What is lacking in Smith but present in Locke is the term 'thereby' (or its equivalent); it is the 'thereby' which transforms property into an automatic or quasi-natural category in Locke. As it were - and the physicality is appropriate - in Locke's view labour generates property in the same way as the sweat glands generate sweat. In Smith, by contrast, what is said in the passage under examination is wholly consistent with a statement to the effect *some labour produces property and some does not*. If, taking a very natural step, one asks what it is that determines when labour produces property and when it does not, a no less natural answer suggests itself: it is social

(i.e. recognitive) considerations that determine which outcome presides. Smith by *not* affirming that the result of labour automatically counts as private property clears the space wherein a social analysis of property can occur.

Is this suggestion plausible? After all, there is a considerable difference between a silence (a *not* blocking of a possibility) and a positive opening up of a line of enquiry. Where does Smith envisage what I earlier described as ‘a pattern of recognition which is constitutive of property *simpliciter*’? Where, so to phrase it, does Smith succeed in squaring the circle by combining the strengths of the other-oriented and the self-oriented conceptions of property? Of course, the danger in such an attempt is that each pole of the contradiction dissolves and weakens the other, in an eclectic fashion. An admixture of norms into an individualist or self-oriented conception of property would, for example, be insufficient. For the attempt to be successful, not merely must property be theorised as *without remainder* constituted through recognition; conversely, what is theorised as recognitively constituted *must be property* rather than norms *applied to* a conception of property taken for granted and imported from somewhere else. Does Smith, then, offer to describe a pattern of recognition which is property-constituting? I consider that he does. The *locus classicus* is an admittedly unclear passage towards the opening of his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* of 1762-3.

Smith opens the passage by reminding his listeners¹⁹ of the conception of the ‘impartial spectator’ (Smith 1978 p 17) which he had evolved in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and on which he had presumably lectured in a previous course. At the core of this earlier book is the idea of what Smith calls ‘sympathy’ that is, our recognitive capacity to enter into the standpoint of another and see ourselves through his or her eyes (Smith 1976b pp 109-10). Thus, for example, we judge it praiseworthy to moderate the expression of pain because we can appreciate from the other’s viewpoint how irritating an unconstrained expression of our pain might be. What is interesting in this analysis, which is heavily indebted to Shaftesbury’s and Hutcheson’s reworking of the Stoic notion of *sensus communis* or ‘public’ sense,²⁰ is how in effect Smith construes social interaction as self reflective: in order to recognize others I must needs recognize myself, while at the same time and in the same movement I can recognize myself only by recognizing others. Where his discussion of ethical judgement becomes problematic is when (to pursue the same example) it transpires that different ‘others’ regard moderation and expression differently: what one person values as noble Stoicism another may regard as miserable repression of the saddest kind. The injunction that we should see ourselves as others see us becomes trammelled in difficulties if others do (or even might) view us in conflicting ways. Smith’s reply to the charge of potential relativism here indicated is to invoke the figure of the ‘impartial spectator’, that is, the ‘man within the breast’ (Smith 1976b, pp 215, 292). The impartial spectator is a disinterested other who *would* act and judge disinterestedly *if* - which may be an admitted impossibility - such a disinterested individual could be found (ibid. pp 70,

118, 141, 146, 157, 236). For the present, we are less interested in Smith's conception as a reply to relativism than in the circumstance that it allows us to see how the entirety of ethical and social judgement, impartial spectatorship included, proceeds according to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* upon recognitive terrain. Insofar as Smith in the *Lectures* proposes to theorise property by means of impartial spectatorship, a description of a pattern of property-constituting recognition is what, in our passage's continuation, we would expect to find.

In the event we do find it, but we might be forgiven if its contents seem meagre. Suppose, says Smith, I pull an apple from a tree or occupy a piece of land: then insofar as an impartial spectator would judge that I had 'a reasonable expectation' of consuming the fruit or continuing to use the land then that fruit or this land count as my property. The impartial spectator is, of course, envisaging the situation in abstraction from the possibility of intervention by others: the spectator asks whether *in the absence of others* there is a reasonable expectation that the object remains mine. 'The reasonable expectation therefore which the first possessor furnishes is the ground on which the right of property is acquired by occupation' (Smith 1978 p 17). This sentence is the all-important one, and, if we are fairly to evaluate Smith's conception of recognition which is property-constituting, we must attempt to scrutinise carefully what it presupposes and implies.

The phrase 'by occupation' in the just-quoted sentence need not detain us. *Either* it can be read as taking land-ownership as an instance of ownership in general *or*, in a usage which is jurisprudentially quite common, the term 'occupation' can be understood *as meaning* ownership in a generic sense. A much more important phrase is, of course, 'reasonable expectation'; this notion of *a reasonable expectation* may appear to be hopelessly vague and imprecise and it is true that, worryingly, it would seem to admit of gradations and degrees whereas a property claim is something which (when we know the circumstances) we cleanly do or do not recognize. However, one heartening aspect of the 'reasonable expectation' idea is that it is, so to phrase it, norm-free, and the more one reflects on this circumstance the more wonderful does Smith's *amoralism* become. What the impartial spectator makes a judgement upon is not whether my possession of the fruit or the land is morally and/or legally well-entitled - an entitlement to which the future, notionally, is irrelevant - but whether quite regardless of norms of fittingness or rightness or appropriateness my use or occupation of the object can be reasonably expected to go on. Admittedly there is a faint colouring of suitability in Smith's reasonability, but it is reasonability, suitability *of expectation* - and not of present use or enjoyment - that the impartial spectator has in mind. The reasonability of expectation is the source and foundation *rather than the implication and application* of whatsoever norms are invoked where property is concerned. Property constitutes norms rather than *vice versa*. Smith offers not only a strong (a without remainder) concept of recognition but a strong conception of property (property *qua* property) in the passage from the *Lectures on Jurisprudence* under review. There is no question of

substituting for property an account of the norms which apply to property, an account assuming and taking for granted *the category* of the property to which they apply.

A reader of the foregoing discussion of the passage in the *Lectures* may be willing to grant that the notion of reasonable expectation is more challenging than at first appears; however, there remains something unclear and impressionistic in the passage as analysed so far. What, in fact, *is the relation* between reasonable expectation and impartial spectatorship? Why not dispense with the impartial spectator altogether? After all, Smith in the 'reasonable expectation' sentence, quoted above, says nothing about the problematic spectator and urges only that the expectation 'furnishes...the ground' on which the object counts as property.

In reply to questioning along these lines our first response must be: the role that spectatorship, impartial or other, plays in Smith's treatment of property is that of ensuring the social and recognitive character of property *per se*. Property subsists in and through the reflexive, two-way and *interactive* play which, as we have seen, Smith thinks of as intrinsic to recognition as such. This is where, I have suggested, Smith breaks with Locke. Locke permits property to speak in its own, monological, voice whereas in Smith's view this admittedly monological voice is, itself and for its own part, recognitively constituted. On this score, Smith was on common ground amongst the Scottish theorists. His predecessor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow²¹ was Francis Hutcheson, who not only introduced the notion of *sensus communis* amongst the Scots (see note 20, above), thereby securing in large part the distinctively social and recognitive character of eighteenth-century Scottish philosophising, but who was responsible for mediating Locke's theory of property to Smith in a highly qualified and critical way. Consider the following two quite astonishing passages (one of which is partially quoted to broadly the same effect by Winch 1978 p 59):

The difficulties upon this subject [viz., the origins of property] arise from some confused imagination that property is some physical quality or relation produced by some action of men. (Hutcheson 1755 Bk II ch 6 p 318)

In these questions [as above] our reason is disturbed by some confused imagination of property as some physical quality or chain between the goods, and the proprietor, conceived to found a more sacred right than many other most equitable claims. (Hutcheson 1755 Bk II ch 8 p 346)

Read in context, these passages reveal Hutcheson to be at most a moderate Lockeian, a person's 'innocent labour' (*ibid.* p 347) counting as one amongst other criteria for property - other criteria being first occupation, for example - and the

criteria themselves being subject to qualifications. An instance of a qualification to the occupation criterion is that it applies 'while there remains abundance of other things which others may occupy for their own support' (ibid. p 319; cf. Locke as quoted earlier). But the really striking circumstance is Hutcheson's pin-point accuracy in his attack upon the monological, as it were natural or *physiological*, character of Locke's account. We saw earlier how fitting and non-accidental was Locke's metaphor concerning labour as mixing; now, in Hutcheson, it is the physicality of the image which is held against Locke because it encourages the latter to construe property as a natural rather than a social category, that is, to turn a deaf ear to what Hutcheson calls 'many other most equitable [social] claims'. Hutcheson's insistence on property's being a social rather than a natural concept not merely supplies valuable background for Smith's treatment in the *Lectures*; it no less strikingly invites direct comparison with the notions of reification and commodity-fetishism in Marx. 'So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange-value in a pearl or a diamond' (Marx 1976 p 177). Hutcheson's debate with Locke parallels, precisely, form-theoretical Marxism's insistence that value is not a thing or a physiological quantum of input but a social relation. This parallelism is one clue which encourages us to search for an analysis of the property *form* among the Scots.

However, convincing as the case is for the view that Smith introduces spectatorship into his account of property so as to underscore property's social character, an argument of this kind proceeds merely in a general and anecdotal way. Are there more precise implications of the *Lectures* passage cited above?

Let us ask why Smith introduces not spectatorship in general but impartial spectatorship in particular. The role that the specifically impartial spectator plays in Smith is that of disinterested adjudication; Smith commonly writes of him (or her, or it) in the subjunctive - see the list of references given earlier - as though biased or *interested* judgement is so usual, at any rate on the topics in question, that merely a *counterfactual* existence can be ascribed to one who judges in a disinterested way. It is as though Smith invites us to ask what an impartial spectator *would* decide even although it is understood that no such a spectator can in fact (and perhaps even as a possibility) be found. Thus, the topics on which the perspective of the impartial spectator might be valuable - especially valuable, precisely to the extent that his (her, its) existence is counterfactual - are presumably topics of a socially contentious kind. Fortunately, it is not our present task to assess the helpfulness of an invocation of the impartial spectator where socially contentious issues are at stake.²² All that we notice is that issues of this kind are meat and drink (in fact, the *sole* meat and drink) where impartial spectatorship is concerned; for it is its *sole rationale*. But, in the passage which interests us, we have learned that 'reasonable expectation' is one circumstance that the impartial spectator is called upon to judge. Why - in what sense - is Smithian reasonable expectation socially contentious? Why is there a *recognitive stake* involved in an estimation which at first sight

appeared to be merely so-to-say technical and instrumental in kind?

By posing this question we find ourselves, quite suddenly, at the very centre of the interpretive maze which comprises Smith's conception of property (e.g. Winch 1978 pp 58-9). Holding the threads together at this centre-point, the clues unravel and a theorisation of the property form unfolds itself in a satisfying way.

Unsurprisingly, the most important of the clues lies with the notion of reification so presciently identified by Hutcheson. Insofar as property appears to be 'some physical quality or relation', 'some physical quality or chain between the goods and the proprietor' (Hutcheson), the judgement of 'reasonable estimation' (Smith) which is recognitively constitutive of property does indeed *present itself* as technical or instrumental and as innocent of any potentially contentious cognitive stake. The view involved here can most readily be developed in three steps, as follows. First let it be observed that, in a reified ordering of categories, "property" counts as prior to "proprietorship"; this is the *order of appearance* (Marx 1973, pp. 239-75; 1976, pp. 279-80) or, as Hutcheson would have it, 'confused imagination'. Second, let it be contended that, in reality, it is "proprietorship" which counts as prior to "property"; this is the ordering which is implied once property is understood in cognitive terms. However, thirdly, let it be added that *what* one recognizes (when one recognizes someone as a "proprietor") is fundamentally a technical-instrumental matter (a matter of 'reasonable estimation') *and this alone*. Proprietorship is recognitively constituted in and through this wholly technical estimation *which is why* reification enters the picture (property *presents itself as* prior to proprietorship, as natural and monological and so forth). Property is paradoxical. Its form entails a 'real appearance' (cf. Marx 1976, p. 166) or guilty innocence, that is, the guilty innocence of an uncontentious reasonability that conceals its own constitutive and cognitive charge.

One way of expressing the theme of reification which has just been sounded is by saying that it is not merely the case that property exists cognitively; it exists *as recognition*. It inertialises recognition; that is, it renders thing-like (literally: *re-ifies*) recognition's flow. Proprietorship is not merely one cognitive content amongst others but, rather, the freezing and *demonizing* of recognition *per se*. Proprietorial eyes are vampire-like not merely because they secrete greed, and jealousy, but because they are the life-hungry eyes of a still envying corpse. The living corpse concerned is that of recognition. Arguably the most succinct and form-sensitive definition of property runs as follows: property is indeed recognition, but recognition existing in the mode of being denied.

In this light let us read Smith. My contention is to the effect that the property-constituting judgement of 'reasonable estimation' contains a hidden and far from innocent or uncontentious cognitive content. We know (Smith is telling us) that a proprietor is one concerning whom, by the impartial spectator, a judgement of reasonable estimation can be made. But at the same time we feel cheated - why call in the impartial and/or counterfactual spectator to make an uncontroversial

technical estimation of reasonability? - and in part the anodyne character of the passage derives from the seemingly loose fit between the main concepts which it invokes. We feel that *there must be*, and I am proposing that *there is*, something more than this, something social and recognitive. For then the fit between the main concepts becomes tight. My proposal is that the tacit content of the impartial spectator's judgement is that, in short, it is *for a proprietor* that the estimation of reasonability holds.

I would be the first to acknowledge that this suggestion verges on the banal were it not that, when we pause for a moment, we notice that Adam Smith has very successfully performed the theoretical equivalent of producing a rabbit out of a hat. In this case, right-based property has been conjured from *de facto*, right-free possession. There would be nothing at all surprising, or original, in the proposal that Smithian reasonability is that which is reasonable or appropriate or (in a word) fitting from the standpoint of a capitalist who most conveniently - if anachronistically - can be imagined as wearing a top hat. From the standpoint of the present paper this notion of fittingness would amount to just one more attempt to assimilate property to some set of externally given norms. That, this time, these would be *capitalist* norms makes no difference; and, in any case, the implicit personalisation of the notion of fittingness is out of place. Above, I have stressed the norm-free or 'asocial' character of the judgement of reasonability and we must emphasise that feature of the judgement once again. The basic idea of my suggestion can be conveyed by an analogy. One can have a reasonable expectation that an athlete will win a particular race. This expectation can be purely technical-instrumental, based on the strength of his or her muscles, the training programme which he or she has followed, and so forth. However, 'athlete' is a social role, recognitively constituted, and it is only in regard to athletes that I hold expectations of the above sort. Similarly, it is only in regard to 'proprietors' that - so runs the claim - it makes sense to hold it reasonable that various technical-instrumental expectations obtain.

And even this is not quite the whole story. It is tempting to respond to my analogy by noting that social roles such as 'athlete' or 'proprietor' are assumed *as pre-existing* in the examples as just employed. Insofar as proprietorship is assumed, evidently, Smith's argument concerning the 'foundation' (ibid. p 17) of property would be circular in a blatant way. However, Smith's argument (as I interpret it) construes the judgement of reasonability as constitutive of proprietorship. It is as though we had lived in a society where hitherto there were no athletes (there was no social role named 'athlete') and we initiated the term and the conception of athleticism by employing the technical-instrumental criterion of speediness in deciding to whom the new role did and to whom it did not apply. Nor indeed would this be a matter of a role whose content and character was established *externally to* its criterion. On the contrary, the role (athlete, or by analogy, proprietor) is to be conceived of as defined in and through the criterion. Stated differently, it is in and

through the application of the technical-instrumental criterion cum-definition that the recognitive constitution occurs. (Standing back a little, we might observe that *this just is* the contradiction of the property form: its whole paradoxicality, and its whole beauty.) Thus it is that recognized proprietorship springs from *de facto* possession according to Smith's highly ingenious account.

Finally, I wish to return to the initial passage quoted from Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, that is, the apparently 'Lockean' passage which contends (a) that every man has a property - namely, labour - in himself and (b) that this labour, or property in oneself, 'is the original foundation of all property' (Smith 1976a Vol 1 p 138). I argued that Smith, unlike Locke, leaves it an open question whether an object produced by ones labour counts as property; whether or not it counts thus is a question to be answered in social terms. I should like, now, to bring this argument together with my further claim that Locke's was in effect a two-stage argument for proprietorship: (a) every man has a property in oneself, namely labour, and (b) the products of ones labour counts - automatically, in Locke's view - as ones property. I have, here, set out the parallel steps in Smith and Locke to make it plain that whilst Smith does not endorse Locke as to (b), it does appear to be the case that they share common ground as to (a). That is, they seem to endorse the same conception of the individual as what I have called a *self-proprietor*. If this is so, then this counts as a drastic and severe curtailment or delimitation upon the notion that Smith, however adequately or disappointingly, thematized the question of the property form. For, as long as proprietorship is recognitively inscribed into selfhood, the bourgeois-ideological success story associating freedom, right and the individual²³ will run its course. A rejection of Locke's step (b) *alone* is sufficient to undermine Lockeanism (at least on the above reading) but it is insufficient to articulate private property's paradoxical and demonic social form.

However, there is one ready move which it is open for Smith to make. Quite conjecturally, because there is little in the texts which not merely admits but which entails it, we might read Smith in the opening of the *Wealth of Nations* passage as assuming that self-proprietorship is not a natural or *a priori* datum, despite the invocation of what is 'most sacred and inviolable', but a recognitively constituted social status or role. Read thus, the *Lectures* (the seemingly anti-Lockean passage proposing as it does a recognitive account of property along the lines of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*' impartial spectator) and the *Wealth of Nations* (the seemingly pro-Lockean passage, which apparently endorses a labour theory of property) *cease to be incompatible* (cf. Winch 1978; editorial note in Smith 1978 p 17). Smith himself gives no indication that he senses an incompatibility, and our proposed reading joins the current consensus amongst Smith commentators which is that it is mistaken to contrast *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as, respectively, "self-interested" and "sympathetic" texts (cf. Winch loc cit). In the present connection, it may be significant that Smith rounds off the *Lectures* passage (with its moral-sympathetic overtones) by permitting himself a

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sort of 'Lockean' (or *Wealth of Nations* style) joke: 'it is more reasonable that you [a thief, proposing to steal a fruit which I have plucked] should [find a new fruit for yourself instead of stealing my fruit from me], as I have gone already and bestowed my time and pains in [the labour of] procuring the fruit' (Smith loc cit). No doubt the joke, if it was one, lost a good deal in the telling. However the passage, tortuous though it is, is important because it is as though Smith is signalling that he can endorse everything in Locke's modern, monological and self-oriented, conception of property *while at the same time* he is proposing to transpose this conception into a recognition-based gear. Read thus, Smith rephrases not merely step (b) but step (a) in the Lockean analysis.

And, indeed, if we *do* adopt this reading our capacity for achieving an integration of the technical-instrumental and role-oriented (monological and social, self-oriented and recognitive) poles of the contradiction *which is the property form* becomes strikingly enhanced. To recognize an other as a self-proprietor - as a person who has property in his or her self - *just is* to acknowledge that other as one who instrumentally expects this or that; and *vice versa*. The reasonableness of the expectation remains instrumental through and through and yet a social role and a specific notion of selfhood are recognitively constituted. The integration is achieved in virtue of the circumstance that *one and the same project of acquisition, occupation and use* can be portrayed as having both technical and recognitive faces. A proprietor counts as one who is (constitutively) recognized as having such a project, and concerning whom it can be (technically) adjudged reasonably likely that he or she will achieve his or her goal. The technical question regarding likelihood only arises in relation to the recognitively constituted project. In the present case, the question of sustaining the arc of the project which I have highly schematically characterised as acquisition/occupation/use is socially specific, i.e., it either presupposes *or inaugurates* the private property form. A moment's reflection is sufficient to reveal this. In a world of co-operative or shared production, the arc which I have presented would be non-existent. In its place two discrete but complementary arcs would confront us, namely, labour/sharing and sharing/use.²⁴

The unity of the acquisition/occupation/use arc derives its cogency and intelligibility from a specific concept of selfhood, viz., that peculiar double conception according to which one has property in oneself. Better: self-proprietorship is constituted in and through the recognition of the acquisition/occupation/use project. So to say, one can *acquire* (and subsequently have, and use) what Smith calls 'all property' only insofar as there is a sort of proto-property in oneself to which external property can be added on. Stated differently: for the self-proprietor, and for him or her alone, *it makes sense* for the project above sketched to be entertained. (Conversely, this double conception of the self makes sense only in terms of the property form.) Of course the self is one outcome of the project, rather than a passive precondition. For agents in the co-operative world just indicated, the three component parts of the

acquisition/occupation/ use project would have as little intelligible relation to one another as the articles assembled in a painting by René Magritte. The hooks *on to which* newly-acquired property might be fastened would be lacking in a world where the ‘confused imagination’(Hutcheson) of double selfhood and self-proprietorship were no longer the recognitive order of the day.

The briefly-explored notion of a proprietorial *project* has enabled us at least to illustrate how property can be portrayed as having both technical and recognitive - again, monological and social, self-oriented and other-oriented - faces or sides. Each side is constitutive of each other, inasmuch as purely technical estimations make sense only in the light of recognitive evaluations, and *vice versa*, and yet neither is reduced to the other. Notice that there remains a real, and form-specific, *contradiction*: to *recognise* another as a *proprietor* is to reify recognition²⁵ and/or to constitute property *just as* a contradictory term. Stated differently: relation between the technical and the recognitive dimensions of property remains a relation which is not merely reciprocally constitutive, but antinomic. These *are the poles of the contradiction* which, however, present themselves as non-contradictory in virtue of the guilty innocence of technical estimation and the conception of proprietorship in oneself. The property form is the atmosphere of ‘confused imagination’ (Hutcheson) which we all breath.

In the above, I have sought to explore the ‘form within which’ the contradiction *that is* property lives and moves (Marx, as above). Within the shifting, kaleidoscopic configurations of this contradiction, my attempt has been to tease out a *dialectic of enlightenment* whose outline - technical-instruments *versus* recognitive reason - is familiar from Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s classic work.²⁶ To the best of my knowledge, the themes of dialectic of enlightenment and Scottish Enlightenment have, strangely enough, seldom been linked together in a systematic way. The present comments aim not so much to fill a gap in the existing literature, however, as to reformulate Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s problematic in a novel manner. I have sought to portray the technical-*versus*-recognitive polarity as merely one - albeit a crucially important - aspect of a contradiction which is many-sided. The contradiction in question is the contradiction which is constitutive of the property form. It is this latter which establishes theory’s overall social framework. My proposal is that the dialectic of enlightenment just is the dialectic of property, so that the dialectic of the property form is nothing other than the dialectic of ‘civilization’, itself.

Conclusion

Inasmuch as property is recognition existing in the mode of being denied, ‘civilization’ (the constituent dialectic of which is property) is the demonic other of recognitive interaction itself. On this, I have no difficulty whatsoever in endorsing

Caffentzis's view. However, the case which he makes out for his view is a different matter and to characterise it as less than adequate is to risk giving understatement a bad name. Whilst his discussion of the 'rationalization' or 'regulation' of commercial exchange (1994 pp 70-2) is of genuine interest, Caffentzis gives no sign of indicating that general questions concerning property, either in themselves or in the writings of the Scots, are important for the social constitution process. In place of a discussion of the property form, which in my view is what a defence of his overall thesis calls for, and which I have attempted to supply, Caffentzis rests his case on a gimmicky etymology. It is gimmicky because it is wholly one-sided, focusing solely on the legal sources of 'civilization' and passing entirely by the term's more general civic and citizenship-oriented roots. Perhaps Caffentzis did not notice that in 1649 - the quotation is contemporary, and comes two pages away from the 'civilization' entry in the *OED* - we were 'under the heavy calamity of a Civill Warre'? Nor did Caffentzis find it noteworthy that 'civil society' was an object widely theorised in early-modern times. Nor, finally, and this perhaps brings us a good deal closer towards the Scottish origin of 'civilization', did Caffentzis pause to familiarise his readers with the circumstance that 'that peculiar 18th century flourishing of bourgeois thought that goes by the name of Scottish Enlightenment' (p 67) intertwined, in its natural jurisprudence, both the substance and the terminology of an influential civic humanist strand of thought. The tale which Caffentzis tells is almost entirely natural-jurisprudential. In this I have followed him, so far as my foreground topic is concerned, but my possibly over-used term 'recognition', with its associated terms *sensus communis* and (see note 21) *socialitas*, is intended to establish a base line which allows historiographical justice to be done to the civic, intersubjective and interactive (Davie 1986 p 189) ground swell which is never far absent in Scottish thought.

Finally, as previously argued, Caffentzis's historiography devolves into a dualistic affair of heroes and villains which casts a romantic mantle over a recalcitrant and unpalatable truth. I worried aloud that these deficiencies in 'The Scottish Origin of "Civilization"' might be endemic in the *autonomia*-oriented approach to history that Caffentzis adopts. For the present, and merely repeating the hope that Bonefeld (1994) is mistaken, it is sufficient that I map my discussion of the property form on to the understanding of Marxism as thematizing an *at least* three-way contradiction with which I closed my paper's first part. As well as the contradiction between civilization and revolutionary subjectivity, which is the sole contradiction with which Caffentzis is familiar, there is a contradiction *within* civilization and a contradiction *within* the subject, and all three of these contradictions are internally (but contradictorily!) related with one another... The reader will rather painfully be aware of this conception's schematic character and so it is unnecessary to add the usual riders when I indicate that my concern in discussing Smith and the property form has been primarily the contradiction which obtains in (or better, *as*) 'civilization', rather than the contradiction between

civilization and revolutionary subjectivity itself. Not the least of my reason for selecting this emphasis has been to demonstrate, forcefully, the internal complexity and contradictoriness of the 'civilization' which Caffentzis, apparently, remains content to portray in monolithic and black-and-white terms. The contradiction which obtains between bourgeois self-proprietorship and recognition - the contradiction, that is, which is constitutive of the property form - refracts within itself, and reciprocally constitutes, the civilization/subjectivity contradiction to which Caffentzis assimilates all else. Between poles of a contradiction which are themselves contradictory, unmediated choices (magic moments such as a romanticised Bloomsbury Square) will occur infrequently, if ever, and in any attempt to formulate 'principles of justice' (Caffentzis) the heroes and the villains - recognition *or* selfhood? otherness *or* authenticity? and for that matter toleration *or* underprivilege? - will all too seldom have the kindness and the tidiness to range themselves unambiguously on opposed sides. *Pace* manicheanism, a moment of direct choice between 'principles' must needs (not least because its simplicity can be deceptive, tragically) be theorised as amongst the most densely mediated species of situation in the world.

In sum, the property form is contradiction-rich, both in estrangements and in opportunities which are themselves interlinked. There is no sheerly *external* enemy: this is perhaps the most succinct way of pointing to the issue that divides the two contrasting Marxist approaches which the present paper, by way of critique and by exemplification, has sought to place side by side.

Notes

[1] Caffentzis 1994. Caffentzis's interest in deconstructing 'civilization' might usefully be paralleled by analysis of terms such as 'Scots' and 'Scottish'; an intriguing starting point could be the late medieval national foundation myths discussed in e.g. Drexler 1987 and Mason 1990. My own 'Scots' and Caffentzis's and my own 'Scottish' are intended as purely descriptive terms.

[2] The classic discussion of reification (literally, thingification) is *Capital* Vol. I, ch. 1, section 4 (Marx 1976, pp. 163-77); cf. my own references to the 'reified' or 'think-like' character of social or recognitive relations under a regimen of private property. The notion is that the relations lose their intersubjective character, and resemble a passive structure (a "society") rather than an active play (or "social life").

[3] The phrase 'dialectic of enlightenment' is a term of art; it refers to an ambiguous process of disenchantment and emancipation which, in Horkheimer's and Adorno's key study (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969), turns upon the emergence of technical-instrumental reason into social ascendancy. (In other words it refers to what Caffentzis understands by 'civilisation'.) Perhaps surprisingly, the Scottish Enlightenment appears seldom to have been studied from a dialectic-of-enlightenment point of view.

[4] Teleologism projects the realisation of goals into historical processes; manicheanism construes history in terms of a duality of opposing principles (e.g. good and evil or dark and light).

[5] These questions never receive definitive answers; see Bonefeld 1988 on 'the permanence of primitive accumulation'. The contradictions of the property form discussed later are to be understood as endlessly unstable and in continual need of being re-posed and reformed, each time on a novel basis. Hence the 'opportunities' of my penultimate sentence.

[6] 'Civic humanism denotes a style of thought...in which it is contended that the development of the individual towards self-fulfilment is possible only when the individual acts as a citizen' (Pocock 1973 p 85).

[7] On the civic humanist strand in the Scottish Enlightenment, and its transformations and limitations, there has grown up a considerable scholarship. See Robertson, Phillipson and Pocock in Hont and Ignatieff 1983; A. Skinner's Introduction to Campbell and Skinner 1982; Phillipson 1980, 1981; Robertson 1983, 1985. An especially insightful presentation of the natural jurisprudential alternative is Forbes 1976; see also Forbes 1953-4.

[8] 'In every inquiry concerning the operations of men when united together in society, the first object of attention should be their mode of subsistence' (William Robertson 1829 Vol II p 104). The passage is quoted in both Pascal and Meek (see below).

[9] It would be satisfying to be able to report that Smith, for example, envisaged his 'savagery' or 'Age of Hunters' as a social existence without property. The importance of this will become apparent when we turn to the passage in *The Wealth of Nations* (1976a Vol 1 p 138) where Smith appears to advocate a labour theory of property. However, both in his published and unpublished discussions, Smith is disappointingly careful to urge that amongst hunters there is 'scarce any property' (Smith 1976a Vol II p 709), or alternatively 'almost no property' (Smith 1978 p 16): property there remains. This does not exclude the possibility of a product of labour which does not count as property; it merely shows that his stadial theory does not supply proof positive that Smith is thinking in such terms. His stadial theory shows an evolution and alteration in the form of private property, but not an illustration of a non-property based social life.

[10] I quote Rudé on the Gordon Riots so extensively owing to his sympathy with the rioters; in effect, I am giving Caffentzis the benefit of the doubt. Also, Caffentzis warmly invokes Linebaugh, and Linebaugh directs us to Rudé for a discussion of the rioters and their targets.

[11] Red Notes ed 1979 and Negri 1988 remain the indispensable introduction to autonomia. Naturally, the debates have advanced during intervening years.

[12] Marx 1973 p 101. Cf Gunn 1988 p 43 for a diagrammatic presentation of Hegel's version of the above contradiction; the same article presents the notion of constitutive recognition, upon which my argument in Part II, below, turns, in a more extended way.

[13] By form I understand social mode of existence. Some implications of this usage, and its Marxist provenance, are discussed in Bonefeld/Gunn/ Psychopedis 1992 Vol II pp 20ff.

[14] On 'Robinsonades', see Marx 1973 p 83. A careful reading of this passage, with its reference to 'the individual and isolated *hunter and fisherman*' (my emphasis) or in other words Smith's Age of Hunting, shows that Marx's target in his polemic against Robinsonades is precisely stadial theory rather than explorations of property's nature or social form. I cannot resist the temptation to point out that this is just what one might expect if my case 'against historical materialism' (Gunn in Bonefeld/ Gunn/Psychopedis 1992 loc cit) is justified.

[15] On 'recognition' see Gunn 1988. The justification for introducing the term 'recognition' into a discussion of Scottish social theory lies in the Scots' understanding of social life. This understanding places the emphasis upon interaction, intersubjectivity and even sociability. 'Society' - that abstract, empty and passive structure which we take so much for granted - is precisely what Scottish social theory does not assume. This is by no means to affirm that, in the Scottish Enlightenment, reflection on the thing-like character of social relations in an Age of Commerce was lacking: on the contrary - see Forbes 1953-54 for the pathos attached to this, rather than Caffentzis's (ibid. p 70) somewhat snide comment on secret transmission - the Scottish theorists became famous or notorious for their interest in invisible hands (Smith 1976a Vol 1 p 456 is the famous passage), unintended consequences (Ferguson 1966 p 122 is the clearest formulation) and the balance of social and political powers in mixed constitutions. But all of this was thematized rather than taken for granted, and the rival claims to the effect that interactive public virtue must be restored (as in civic humanism) or that, in an Age of Commerce, the structured and thing-like character of social existence is inescapable (as in political economy) were debated as a matter of course.

[16] *Imperium* connotes political rule over subjects whereas *dominium* connotes private mastery over what one owns. The distinction plays an important role in the Scottish sixteenth-century scholasticism of John Muir, who emphasises (as a constitutionalist) that one cannot dispose of a nation which one rules as though it were a species of property. Cf. Mason 1990 p 207.

[17] It is a fascinating and perhaps unanswerable question whether, in this passage, Locke is invoking a labour/work distinction as summarised in Arendt 1958 chs III and IV. Very schematically, one might say that 'labour' is the cyclical and seasonal activity of agricultural (rural) production whereas (urban) 'work' is the purposive-rational activity of the artisan. Read thus, the passage from Locke is prescient, and even poignant: even as Locke was writing, bourgeois value-production was beginning to obliterate the labour/work distinction through the twin pressures of agricultural 'improvement' and the growth of a labour market. Locke's so-called 'labour' theory of property registers this obliteration - it is, so to say, labour/work-indifferent - and, hence, it points forwards to the 'abstract' labour analysed by Marx.

[18] And one is tempted, further, to consign *all* of recent Rawlsian and Nozickian political theory to the dustbucket where (anaemic) Locke-as-eclectic rather than (full-blooded) Locke-

as-bourgeois can already be encountered. An agenda which consists of *assuming* the property form and on whatsoever basis *deducing* norms suffices for filling out the pages of volume upon volume. More interesting political theory might be written *either* by construing norms as the recognitive frame in which property is placed (the Medieval view, arguably renewed in contemporary environmentalism's conception of property as stewardship) *or* by construing property as the recognitive frame in which norms are placed (the bourgeois or 'civilized' view) *or* by mounting a critical subversion of frame and picture alike.

[19] The *Lectures on Jurisprudence* are allegedly verbatim transcriptions of lectures which Smith delivered while Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow. The reliability of the transcriptions is discussed in the editorial apparatus of Smith 1978. The passage which concerns us may have been recorded by some sort of shorthand, with the interesting consequence that the student's comprehension could be expected to be good in detail but (owing to the distraction of attention *upon writing*) shadowy where general outline is concerned.

[20] Shaftesbury 1900 Vol I, Treatise II, esp pp 69-74; Hutcheson in Raphael 1969 Vol I pp 301-2. For drawing my attention to Hutcheson's translation of *sensus communis* as '*public sense*' I am indebted to Norbert Waszek (cf Waszek 1986 pp 38-40). The philosophy of *sensus communis* - from Stoicism *via* Shaftesbury *via* Hutcheson and so to Smith and the 'common sense philosopher' Thomas Reid - was a fundamental source for the Scottish Enlightenment's social conception of the individual; cf Davie 1994 for general background. 'I am very apt to think, that, if a man could be reared from infancy, without any society of his fellow creatures, he would hardly ever shew any signs, either of moral judgement or of the power of reasoning' (Reid, quoted in Bryson 1945 p 166). Note that, for Reid, even epistemological questions are to be approached in social terms.

[21] Just as Hutcheson was Smith's predecessor in Glasgow, so Gershom Carmichael was Hutcheson's predecessor, and this succession of theories is important. Carmichael was translator of Samuel Pufendorf's *De officio hominis et civis*, an important text in seventeenth-century natural jurisprudence, and a crucial category in this work is *socialitas* (Pufendorf 1991 pp 35-8, 132) which is yet another - see note 20, above - source for the Scottish conception of the individual as social. What is striking in the present connection is that is Carmichael who first 'recast Locke's ideas in ways that would stimulate inquiry in new directions among later Scottish thinkers' (Moore and Silverthorne, in Hont and Ignatieff 1983 p 81). 'What appeared paradoxical to Carmichael' in Pufendorf's account of property, continue Moore and Silverthorne, was the latter's excessive (as Carmichael saw it) reliance on the notions of 'agreement and consent. A much better explanation...had been supplied by Locke: men may be considered to own those things which they have occupied by their labour, without waiting upon the agreement or consent of others' (ibid. p 82; cf Pufendorf 1991 pp 84-5). In terms of the contradiction or antinomy I have indicated, Carmichael's worry appears to have been that, if an attempt is made to theorise the modern or self-oriented conception of property by means of voluntaristic categories such as consent and agreement, then, although the recognitive fabric of society (or *socialitas*) is indeed foregrounded, the character of property as plain and simple *dominium* - mastery over ones own - can too readily be dissolved out.

[22] My own estimation is that the only lifeline one can offer to Smith on this score is the

replacement of the 'impartial spectator' by a no less counterfactual 'ideal speech situation' à la Habermas. Gunn 1989 explores this route, and I note it solely as a suggestion which is faithful to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* overall.

[23] Cf Marx 1973 pp 239-56; 1976 p 280. In his *On the Jewish Question*, Marx writes that 'The practical application of the right of man to freedom is the right of man to *private property*' (Marx 1975 p 229): my inclination is to interpret this sentence in the logically strong sense. Not merely is property the supreme right; *rights themselves* are a form - a highly mystical form - of private property. Rights are ones ownmost property, ones property in virtue of ones self-proprietorship and *vice versa*. In effect they are a species of *dominium*, and were unhesitatingly explained as such when John Mair found himself under the necessity of accounting for them at the dawn of the modern era (cf. note 16, above; Q Skinner 1978 Vol. 2, pp. 117-23; 176-7; 327-8). The crucial point is that not only does the property form entail rights; *rights*, much more contentiously, *entail the property form*. This being so, the currently popular notion of "socialist rights" is an absurdity, a contradiction in terms.

[24] My 'labour/sharing' and 'sharing/use' distinction is merely a reformulation of a familiar Marxist thesis: communist production no longer yields "products" which embody individually measured (or measurable) quanta of work. Social measurability, which assumes sharing, is a different matter.

[25] On reified or thing-like recognitive relations see note 2, above. The crucial Marxist passage runs as follows: 'To the producers...the social relations between the private labours appear as *what they are*, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material [*dinglich*] relations between persons and social relations between things' (Marx 1976, pp. 165-6: my emphasis).

[26] See Horkheimer and Adorno 1969; and note 3 above.

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The Politics of Debt: Social Discipline and Control¹

Werner Bonefeld

I. Introduction

During the 1980s and 1990s debt has become a serious political and social issue. This is true at the personal level and at the public level. The huge number of personal bankruptcies, insolvencies, bad debt and currency crises, culminating in Black Wednesday in September of 1992, brought home to public consciousness the awesome power of money. Debt is just one aspect of the changed perception of money. During the 1980s, not only in Britain, but all over the world, the attempt to control public expenditure, to lower wages, to expand part-time work etc., has meant a more direct subjection of every aspect of life to money. Against the background of a concerted attack on collective provisions, access to medicine, housing, education, transport, etc., depend much more directly on the quantity of money we possess. At the same time as governments tried to freeze public expenditure, access to provisions such as, for example, healthcare became more and more dependent upon the ability to pay.

The sheer misery of poverty and homelessness in the 1990s is there for all to see. However, the increase in poverty is not really surprising against the background of the credit-sustained boom of the 1980s. In fact, the level of repossessions, personal bankruptcies, etc., is intrinsically linked to the 'prosperous' 1980s. During the 1980s, the principal means of containing inflationary pressure was the control of that part of public expenditure which supported policies of social redistribution. Those dependent upon government welfare spending were held responsible for the containment of inflation through a reduction of public spending relative to GDP. Although the overall level of public expenditure increased, individual benefit rates were cut. Further, the attempt to balance credit-expansion through a policy of state austerity was reinforced by the integration of social policy with labour market policy, as emphasised by the government's training programmes, tax and poverty traps, as well as imposed reliance on credit-based consumption. Furthermore, the increase in low pay was

supported by the deregulation of wage councils, mandatory competitive tendering as well as the weakening of trade union control of the labour market. Wage council protection for a number of workers in low paid employment was repealed, making it legally possible to reduce wages below poverty levels. Local authorities, as well as the NHS, were forced through financial pressure, compounded by mandatory competitive tendering, to restrain wages. This was achieved either by contracting services out to private operators or by using the threat of contracting out to achieve compliance from trade unions with wage restraint. As a consequence wages declined and conditions deteriorated (Ascher, 1987; Rowthorn, 1992). The discrepancy between high and low paid workers increased dramatically over the last 15 years to 'levels greater than anything since the 1940s' (S. Brittan, *Financial Times*, 6.1.94). The socialisation of the debt problem through worsening conditions, low-paid work, as well as tax traps, poverty traps, rent arrears, and homelessness, was compounded by the shift in emphasis from direct to indirect taxation, particularly the increase in VAT and National Insurance contributions, and high real interest rates. The attempt at reducing public expenditure as a proportion of GDP did not only trap people in poverty but, also, did not let them out of debt.

This paper looks at the politics of debt in Britain over the last 10 years. The aim is to explore this issue in terms of social discipline. Throughout the paper, the notion of 'class' is used predominantly in sociological terms.² This is because the focus is on the disorganisation of class relations through social divisions which deny social cooperation and solidarity. The connection between poverty and gender, racism, ageing, disability, and low-income, though not new, has been reinforced over the last decade. The paper examines the policy of debt under Major and concludes with an assessment of recent debates on 'citizenship' by all major political parties.

II. Debt and Social Division

During the 1980s, the ratio of household debt to disposal income increased dramatically. It had 'remained steady at 40-50 per cent in the 1970s and early 1980s, rose from about 45 per cent in 1982 to just over 50 per cent in 1984, and then to *over* 90 per cent in 1990' (Dunn and Smith, 1994, p. 84). The casualisation of employment and financial insecurity were mirrored by a growing ratio of debt to future wage income, particularly affecting those who appeared to benefit from the 1980's boom by, for example, home-ownership. However, many had to borrow in order to secure basic needs, whilst their income proved inadequate to sustain repayment. The connection between low income and credit was reinforced by social security reforms, the deregulation of wage protection, the weakening of trade union control of the labour market, government work-for-your-benefit training programmes and, particularly, the adoption of the means-test to

determine most social security benefits. Against the background of housing benefit reforms and rising rent charges, many struggled to pay their rent. Indeed, during the 1980s, rent arrears was the most common debt problem (see Berthoud/Kempson, 1990). Furthermore, government's social fund, which replaced Family Income Support in 1989, had to be repaid. The fund is an interest-free loan for people with special needs. Although claimants might be assessed as eligible for entitlement, the payments are limited by local DSS budgets, imposing a ceiling on the total amount a local DSS office can provide. In its first year of operation the social fund was '40 per cent over budget' (McGlone, 1990, p. 168). Those who successfully apply at a time when money is still available are expected to repay these loans from subsistence level Income Support (see Ford, 1991).

Many of the very poor were excluded from credit-facilities because they were denied a bank account. They relied on legally registered or illegal loan sharks who charged astronomically high rates of interest (see *ibid.*) and resorted, in a number of cases, to physical assault in case of non-payment. Available evidence supports the association between poverty and credit and between low income and debt.³ The increase in part-time, low-paid work, and means-tested benefits, meant that basic needs had often to be secured on the basis of borrowing, precipitating a cycle of debt as additional credit was required to secure repayments of outstanding loans. The situation is particularly painful for lone mothers.⁴ During the 1980s, the number of lone mothers dependent on state benefits for their income increased from 320,000 in 1979 to more than 700,000 in 1989 (*ibid.*). At the same time, the percentage of working lone mothers dropped while those in part-time work were often excluded from eligibility for 'employment protection measures such as redundancy payments, unemployment benefit or sick pay' (*ibid.*, p. 72). Additionally, their access to unemployment benefit is threatened by the requirement to show adequate child care arrangements before qualifying as 'unemployed'. There is a lack of nurseries and for many lone parents a nursery place is often beyond their means. Their position as unwaged workers in a waged society is made worse by the denial of unemployment benefit and child-care facilities. They depend on access to credit.

The connection between poverty and credit has not changed in the 1990s. A recent study (Kempson et al., 1994) argues that half the mothers in low-income families regularly go without food to secure basic needs of their children. In the 1990s, the attacks on single mothers who are 'married to the state' rather than a breadwinner and the moral panics orchestrated by the Conservative government since 1993 targeting also beggars, young offenders and pensioners (see McRobbie, 1994), indicates that, in the pursuit of public expenditure cuts, welfare support of conditions is an expense to be avoided. However, not only 'claimant groups' are trapped, the government's education policy caught many students in debt. During the 1980s, their financial resources declined while essential resources, such as books, rose in price. In 1989, students were denied access to housing benefit and

then expected to meet extra costs such as the Poll Tax. Since October 1990 the student grant has been frozen and a complementary 'loan system' instituted. The company charged with providing student loans has now lent £700 million and the figure is rising (*Guardian*, 2.8.94). By 1993-94, 20 per cent of students were reported to have considered abandoning their studies because of financial hardship. Debts amounting to several thousand pounds are common. This situation is likely to get worse because from September 1994 maintenance grants are to be cut by 10 per cent a year for the next three years (*Observer*, 21.8.94). The costs to sustain the University education of children are particularly painful for working class families lacking the private means to supplement grants and for middle class families whose earnings are too high to qualify for a student grant and who are, at the same time, trapped by mortgage debt which they find difficult to service.

III. From the 1980s to the 1990s

The conditions for 'Thatcherism's' relative success were the political defeat of the organised working class and the world boom of the 1980s, unleashed by the global liberalisation of financial markets and sustained by an explosion of international credit. However, these conditions were ephemeral. The crash of 1987 indicated that the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s had reached an impasse. Although the world boom was sustained for a while after the crash in 1987 by continued credit-expansion, the foundations of the boom were rapidly crumbling. The bubble, created by credit-expansion, burst in the late 1980s. At the same time, average wages continued to keep up with inflation and, despite mass unemployment and an expanding casualised and low paid labour force, the attempt to lower unit labour costs failed. This was particularly true in Britain. The Thatcher governments of the 1980s presided over an increase in private and corporate debt, persistent inflationary pressures, mass unemployment, and comparatively high unit labour costs.⁵ In Britain, high unit labour costs were adjusted to competitive price rates at the world market through currency devaluation and a policy of social dumping.

The last decade did not represent a frontal assault on the working class. Sections of the working class enjoyed a growth in living standards, even if they paid the price of intensification of labour.⁶ The use of public expenditure focused on the disorganisation of class premised on the divisive orientation of collective welfare provision to the market. This was brought about by, for example, contracting out of services, deregulation of wage protection, integration of employment and social policies and encouragement of property ownership. The attack concentrated on those sections of the working class, such as women, young workers, the unemployed and 'racial' minorities, which could be separated from the organised labour movement much more easily than others. Under the Major

government, these workers continued to be disciplined through debt and precarious (short-term, casual, non-unionised, unhealthy, cheap and often dangerous) work. However, austerity encroached upon the apparent beneficiaries of the 1980s: they too found themselves in increasingly strained circumstances.

The continued mugging by the state of those pushed to the margins of society continued unabated under the Major government. However, we must be careful with the use of our terms. The state does not mess about with poor people, the homeless, the unemployed, the disabled, the low paid, the financially insecure and all others upon whose labouring existence national wealth rests. It governs in the national interest and personal freedom. The issue of 'freedom' is specific: 'poverty is not unfreedom' (cf. Joseph and Sumption, 1979) and intensification of work and lower wages (i.e. lower unit labour costs) are in the national interest. Deteriorating conditions and hardship improves Britain's position on the world market and future prosperity will derive from improvements in Britain's global competitiveness, offering better conditions and affluence for all in the long run. In other words, deteriorating conditions are only transitory as improved economic performances will eventually trickle down to the original producer and so rectify present conditions of hardship in the long run. Compliance with hardship is thus declared to be in the national interest and economic uncertainty becomes, by implication, a symbol of patriotic endurance. Safeguarding of the national interest requires lower public spending and a balanced budget, wage restraint, increased labour productivity, low rates of inflation and a sound balance of trade. The Thatcher governments ruled in the national interest by disciplining social relations through poverty, debt, unemployment, intensification of work, anti-union policies, economic insecurity and harsh conditions associated with the reform of the welfare state to a warfare state. These achievements were endorsed as being in the national interest: the fundamental challenge to the Thatcher government by the miners in 1984/5 was denounced as an action by the 'enemy within'.

The vilification of single mothers by the Major governments continued previous attacks on the so-called dependency culture. That poor people go hungry is, in this view, not a consequence of welfare policies, debt and poverty, unemployment and a labour market policy which is premised on the casualisation of employment and low pay as well as 'economic conscription'. Rather, the '12 million people who live in households with less than half of average earnings' (Guardian, 1993, p. 6) lack responsibility. They simply go hungry because they 'buy the wrong food' (A. Widdecombe, Junior Social Security Minister, according to *Guardian*, 4.6.91). The position of unwaged people in a waged society makes them not only exploitable for moral crusaders who proclaim the virtues of law and order as well as family values. They also become exploitable by creditors demanding repayment and legal action. Families on benefit or low income are forced into debt to provide essentials such as food, housing, fuel and clothing (see Kempson, et al., 1994). The other side of a politics of debt is physical and mental

illness (see *ibid.*), symptoms of a desperate struggle to make ends meet. For some, prostitution becomes a means of survival.⁷ The rationale behind, for example, the attack on lone mothers is not that of reducing the overall burden of public expenditure, or of encouraging them to re-enter the labour market. They are already on the labour market seeking proper employment, and the savings from further cuts in individual benefit rates would hardly amount to a significant reduction in the overall level of public expenditure. The rationale is the imposition of discipline and control effected through vilification, ghettoisation and financial insecurity.

The disciplining power of debt reinforced social division and, at the same time, united people through the common experience of financial distress. The moral panics of 1993 can be interpreted as an attempt to emphasise the difference between beggars and lone mothers, on the one hand, and those whose own financial distress still distinguished them favourably from the plight of the unwaged in a waged society, on the other. Those on the edge of poverty were thus invited to feel comfortable in comparison with beggars. They were thus given the opportunity to look down and to point their fingers at beggars. Unfortunately for the government, this attempt at setting people against each other back-fired. The finger was pointed at government.

There is sharp difference between the debt economy of the 1980s and the 1990s. During the 1980s the boom vindicated the market-based restructuring of the welfare state and the control of people through poverty and tax traps. Despite severe wage pressure for some workers, average earnings increased during the 1980s. According to Glyn (1992, p. 81), 'aggregate real incomes fell by 5%. Those workers who kept their jobs, however, saw a substantial (28%) increase in their real wages.' Alongside property ownership, 'most people therefore felt themselves better off year by year' (German, 1993, p. 16). In other words, social conflict was contained through wage increases which far outstripped the rate of inflation at the same time as the increase in debt and poverty discouraged solidarity with those whose poverty was the mirror image of the 'prosperous' 1980s.

However, the ready extension of credit and the coercion entailed by the collection of debt are two sides of the same coin. The lifeblood of the boom was credit and the price for the control of credit expansion was paid by the working class, particularly the unemployed, so-called ethnic minorities, women and the impoverished. Those fortunate enough to participate in the boom were disciplined by the *threat* of marginalisation. They faced harsh penalties should they fail to respond adequately to market forces or should they be in disagreement with 'management's right to manage'. The sack, or loss of wages, or even a reduction in overtime, meant that contractual agreements on interest payments might be disrupted. During the 1980s, the incentive not to risk the bases of life, such as housing, education, health, clothing, heating, and so forth, helped to undermine solidarity and made social relations exploitable for a policy of state austerity. The risk of debt and the futility of industrial militancy was for many confirmed by the

miners' strike of 1984-5. It showed the consequences of disagreement and the misery caused by lack of money. The social conflict was contained on the basis of what Hirsch (1991) refers to as the 'southafricanisation' of metropolitan countries. This characterisation is shared by Negri (1989, p. 97) who argues that the 'ideal of modern-day capitalism is apartheid'. However, and as Negri insists, unlike Hirsch, apartheid is the ideal but not the reality. The reality was an accumulation of debt on future surplus value production and an accumulation of debt on future wage income. Overt forms of social conflict were avoided through credit-expansion and indebtedness as well as the marginalisation of those deemed inessential. The market based reform of social provision involved a disorganisation of class relations distinguishing between the strong and able and the weak and marginalised. The politics of market self-regulation was in fact a politics of poverty and debt.

The 'dual society', that is, the polarisation of social relations between the poor and indebted, on the one hand, and average wage earner and indebted, on the other, was not an end in itself. Rather, it was a condition of containing social conflict on the basis of polarisation. This polarisation looked more and more fragile the longer the boom progressed. Following on from the loosening of monetary policies in 1982 and especially after the crash of 1987 and from the support to the consumer boom through the tax-cutting budgets of 1987 and 1988, the growth of debt as a proportion of future income became more and more unsustainable. Coinciding with the passage of the Community Charge (poll tax) through parliament in 1988, introduced in Scotland in 1989 and in England and Wales in 1990, government responded to growing unease on financial markets over the deterioration of the so-called Lawson boom by tightening monetary policy. The social security reforms of 1988 and 1989, as well as the poll tax, supported the pound through a tight fiscal regime at the same time as interest rates were raised from 7.5 per cent in May 1988 to 13 per cent in November of that year, and to 15 per cent in October 1989. Interest rates remained at 15 per cent for just over a year until they were cut to 14 per cent, coinciding with entry into the ERM in November 1990. The poll tax was an ill-devised attempt to make people pay the costs for the growth in credit. However, its introduction indicated that the credit-boom of the 1980s had reached an impasse and that the time to pay up had come.

IV. Debt and Social Discipline in the 1990s

When interest rates increased in the late 1980s, the cost of borrowing became intolerable for many. Although average wages continued to increase up to 1992, disposable income declined through a combination of inflation, increases in indirect tax, and higher borrowing costs. Debt squeezed household income. The debt hangover was enormous: 'Total personal debt trebled between 1980 and 1992, from £100 billion to £ 300 billion', making '*actual* wage levels today lower than

they might at first seem' (German, 1993, p. 19). The property owning democracy of the 1980s was not only held responsible for enjoying benefits which had not been earned. It also transformed into a republic of debt.

By the late 1980s, one in nine households struggled to make ends meet (see Berthoud/Kempson, 1990). In the second half of 1989 alone, the rate of home loan arrears between 6 and 12 months rose by 29 per cent and about 450,000 to 600,000 families were said to be two months in arrears (*Guardian*, 5.3.90). These arrears were not confined to the poorer regions but included wealthy areas in the south. The UK joined the ERM with interest rates at 14 per cent (down from 15 per cent) while inflation was at 9.5 per cent in 1990 (up from 7.8 per cent in 1989). During 1991 interest rates declined further from 13.5 per cent in February to 10.5 per cent in September, compared with an inflation rate of 5.9 per cent. During 1992, interest rates declined dramatically, especially after the suspension of the pound's membership in the ERM on September 14th, 1992. However, they still stood at 7 per cent in November 1992, compared with an inflation rate of 3.7 per cent.⁸ Real interest rates remained high, representing a huge transfer of resources from private debtors to banks and building societies who, themselves, were struggling with high rates of bad debt exposure.⁹ The reduction in interest rates did not indicate a relaxation of monetary policy. The politics of monetary tightness continued as real interest rates remained high. At the same time, fiscal policy was tightened and public sector pay frozen.

During the 1990s, the monetary squeeze on debtors was enormous. Unemployment increased from the official rate of 5.9 per cent in 1990 to 8.3 per cent in 1991 and 10.1 per cent in 1992. Bankruptcies increased dramatically, per year, from 9,365 in 1989 to 35,940 in the first nine month of 1992. During the same period, company liquidations rose from 9,427 to 24,825. Manufacturing output contracted and the volume of retail sales declined dramatically. The GDP dropped from 2.1 per cent in 1989 to -2.2 per cent in 1991 until it 'recovered' to -0.6 per cent in 1992. The PSBR which had shielded the pound in the late 1980s from sustained speculative pressure, moved from -14 per cent in 1988-89¹⁰ to a staggering 36.5 per cent in 1992-3. At the same time, the amount of outstanding bank and building society lending increased year by year, reaching £622.8 billion in 1992 compared with £504 billion in 1989. Indeed, as the *Financial Times* (19.10.92) reported, 'mortgages in arrears are quickly approaching total building society capital.' House prices collapsed. The number of repossessions reached staggering proportions: 75,540 properties were repossessed in 1991, 68,540 in 1992, and 58,540 in 1993, compared with 15,810 in 1989 (McKie, 1994, p. 119). This 'socialisation' of the debt problem was reinforced by an equally dramatic increase in mortgage payment-arrears: The number of mortgages in arrears in 1989 stood at a level of 80,600. By 1992, this figure had increased dramatically to 352,000 and had fallen slightly to 295,500 by 1994 (CSO, 1995). The property owning democracy collapsed under the threat of debt, repossessions and

homelessness. According to the *Independent* (19.7.93), around 150,000 young people were becoming homeless each year. The 'unofficial homeless' both actual and potential in England in the 1990s is judged to be approximately 1,712,000 (Burrows and Walenotwics, 1992). This estimate includes people sleeping rough (c. 98,000), unauthorised tenants or squatters (c. 50,000), single people in hostels (c. 60,000), single people in lodgings (c. 77,000), insecure private tenants (c. 317,000), and the hidden homeless (c. 1,200,000). (Atkinson and Durden, 1994, pp. 193-4).

Repossessions, evictions, homelessness, and loss of wages and jobs, were not the only forms taken by the socialisation of the debt problem. When the property market deteriorated, many home owners were left with negative equity. By the fourth quarter of 1994, 1,300,000 were left with a negative equity (*Observer*, 22.1.95). That is, their mortgage debt was higher than the present market value of their ill-affordable property. While many home owners were in arrears with their mortgage obligations, they found it very hard to solve their cash-flow problem by selling and moving to cheaper accommodation. They, too, were trapped in debt. Their assets changed into liabilities. While the Chancellor Norman Lamont endorsed rising unemployment and business failures as a price worth paying for the defeat of inflation (cf. Smith, 1993, p. 188), the transformation of a property owning democracy into a democracy of debt undermined the most popular policy of the Thatcher era. Mortgage default not only threatened Labour voters but included also the traditional Tory support. Their faith in 'Thatcherism' which had already taken a critical turn with the introduction of the poll tax and particularly the uniform business rate,¹¹ was broken against the background of repossessions, negative equity and job threats. Indeed one reason for the crisis of the Conservatives is the 'crisis among the lower middle classes' (German, 1993, p. 4) who, traditionally, supported the Conservatives. 'Their businesses bankrupted, their homes repossessed and even managerial jobs under attack' (ibid.), they have found 'that the market economy intended for the working class has instead come to their own door with a vengeance' (Hutton, 1994, p. 2). Debt, as Hutton reports, 'has suddenly become the millstone around the middle-class neck' (ibid.).

The increase in poverty, economic insecurity and financial distress is not just caused by low wages but also by the level of taxation, the debt hangover and the replacement of full-time employment by part-time employment and interest rates outstripping rates of inflation. In an attempt to contain the fiscal crisis of the state and cap consumer spending, the government introduced VAT of 8 per cent on domestic fuel in April 1994 proposing that this should rise to 17.5 per cent in April 1995. The proposal was defeated in December 1994. In addition, the Spring budget of 1994 saw the freezing of personal allowances, a 5 per cent reduction in the married couples allowance, an increase in national insurance contributions, and a cut in mortgage interest relief from 25 per cent to 20 per cent. From October 1994, the government levied a new 3 per cent insurance premium tax, and from

November a new air passenger tax. By April 1994, the average tax burden, in direct and indirect taxes, totalled 35 per cent of earnings. This is set to rise to 36.2 per cent in 1995-96 as compared with a figure of 32.2 per cent in 1978-79 under Labour. The burden of taxation falls most heavily on those sections of the working class existing on below average earnings. For those on three-quarters average earnings, the increase was from 27.4 per cent of income in 1978-79 to 31.2 per cent in 1994-95. However, those with two children on ten times average earnings would see the burden of taxation rise from 37.3 per cent in 1992-93 to just 37.7 per cent in 1994-95 (*Financial Times*, 24.1.94). In a survey of the period from 1979, William Keegan (*Observer*, 16.1.94) indicated that despite the well publicised reduction in the upper marginal rates of tax since 1979, tax increases since 1993 have led to a position where the average family has a greater direct tax burden than in 1979. During the 1980s, the increase in VAT and higher National Insurance contributions offset much of the putative benefit from lower direct taxes. At the same time, the direct burden in fact increased - for those earning less than £78,000 a year - because of the erosion of tax allowances.

The socialisation of debt through high real interest rates was thus compounded by fiscal tightness. Government sought to contain inflation by making people pay-up. Despite lower retail prices and a decline in the rate of inflation to below 4 per cent since 1992, consumer spending declined as people tried to service their debt. However, many people not only failed to reduce their debt but were also compelled to increase their borrowing. According to a report in the *Financial Times* (9.7.93), the number of people getting into debt increased during the second quarter of 1993. This is not surprising because the difficulties in securing basic needs means that repayment obligations might not be sustained, rendering additional credit a means to secure the servicing of previous credit-obligations.

The recession of the 1990s led to a dramatic shake out of labour. Yet, average wage increases declined only slowly during the early part of the recession from 9.5 per cent in January 1990 to 7.25 per cent in January 1992. Since then, however, average wage increases declined dramatically to 5.5 per cent in September 1992, and to 3.75 per cent in April 1993. The decline in disposable income coincided with massive redundancies. Employers laid off workers and curbed overtime in an attempt to reduce costs. 'By February [1992] 1,500 were losing their jobs every day' (German, 1993, p. 11). The rate of unemployment increased from a low of 5.6 per cent in April 1990, to over 10 per cent in 1992 (see McKie, 1993). The sustained effort by the Major government to make people pay through poverty, job uncertainty and insecurity did not involve, as it did during the 1980s, a divisive attempt at mugging those in precarious work. Although the mugging of the poor continued unabated under Major, the middle classes suffered as banks cut back on employment, as companies seeking to reduce wage costs cut down on their white collar staff, and as government itself, including its National Health Service,

announced job losses for the middle-class salariat. The generalisation of the debt problem coincided with the generalisation of unemployment. Cost saving exercises meant that not only blue collar workers were laid off but, also, that white collar staff had to go.

The disciplining powers of debt, fiscal tightness, and precarious work, can not be overestimated. Indeed, the politics of debt amounts to an attempt at disciplining social relations to monetary scarcity and a life of hard and unrewarding labour to sustain basic needs. The incentive not to endanger the bases of life, such as housing, education, health, clothing, heating, and so forth, helped to undermine resistance to wage reductions and the introduction of new working practices. People know it is bad. They see their neighbour's sudden unemployment, they know what 'repossession' and eviction mean. They know what it means to struggle with inextricable debt problems under conditions of fiscal tightness, precarious employment and wage restraint. They struggle to make ends meet, to hold on to their flats and to maintain their level of consumption. Tax increases bite into their budgets. They know that loss of employment and wages might mean loss of almost everything. They also know that social security benefits are tailored around the incentive effect of finding new employment in a society of mass unemployment. They do not need to be told that social security benefits involve a decision about the amount of money on which a human being can be kept alive. Fear and anxiety makes people agreeable to comply. The risk of unemployment and financial insecurity renders obedience a prudent response to government policy and managerial decision. In other words, social resistance against a policy of state austerity was replaced by individualised struggles to maintain existing positions of employment, income and conditions. The transformation of a property owning democracy into a republic of debt meant a control of social relations through fear of unemployment and financial ruin. The collection of unpaid debt during the 1990s through repossessions, evictions, collapse of consumer credit and living on less in order to service interest obligations imposed upon the republic of debt the principle of the free market: pay-up or else!

The increase in unemployment, and the risk of personal bankruptcy, supported a dramatic squeeze on both private and public sector wage levels. According to a CBI survey, 'manufacturing pay rises between April and June 1993' were the 'lowest for at least 16 years' (German, 1993, p. 17)¹². In the public sector, excluding managers and administrators, pay increases were very low and were held back by a public sector wage freeze at 1 - 1.5 per cent for 1993-4, now extended for a second year. Against the background of the tax increases in 1994-95 by £8.4 billion above their level in 1992-93 and a further £8 billion in extra taxes to be imposed between 1994-95 and 1996-97, there appears to be no let-up in the attempt to lower wages and to restrain spending power through fiscal pressures. Although unemployment increased markedly during the 1990s, the rate of unemployment appeared to drop from 1993 onwards. However, by Spring 1994,

almost half a million people (460,000) counted by the government as in work were in reality either on government training programmes or existing as unpaid family workers (*Employment Gazette*, October 1994, Table 7.1). Of the remaining 24.5 million workers in the UK, 18.5 were in full-time employment whilst 6.0 million had part-time work. The increase in employment concealed the loss of 40,000 full time jobs compensated by the creation of 144,000 part time jobs (*Financial Times*, 23.4.94). Despite the increase in employment, the total number of working hours in the UK continued to fall (*ibid.*). The Department of Employment recorded in Spring 1994 that redundancies were running at the same rate as in Autumn 1993, with manufacturing employment hit the hardest suffering monthly falls in employment of 6,000 workers in May and 9,000 in June 1994. Even after the government's attempts to redefine, for statistical purposes, the concept of employment, the seasonally adjusted rate of claimant unemployment stood at 9.2 per cent of the workforce in the Summer of 1994.

V. Social Division and Responsible Citizenship

During the 1980s, debt, precarious work, and the daily struggle to make ends meet were largely confined to the working class. 'Tory voters have looked on happily as employers' rights to determine pay and work conditions have been steadily increased, never thinking casualisation would come to them. The ready capacity to hire and fire was meant to enable the Tory-voting classes better to manage the wage bill of the working classes, whose lives they regulated' (Hutton, 1994, p. 2).¹³ The erosion of positive rights and entitlements associated with the Keynesian era had been pushed aside during the 1980s: the right to welfare was attacked; the right to employment disappeared; the right to housing was delegated to market forces, the right to health care became more and more selective; the right to education was eroded; the right to enjoy values other than material gains was restricted to those financially able to entertain a happy life. Rights were redefined: instead of the right to employment, the right to go in search of employment ('get on your bike') was proclaimed. Other rights either disappeared or were severely restricted: the right to campaign for higher wages, health and safety standards, for example, became more and more restricted, if not abolished altogether.¹⁴ The erosion of 'rights' coincided with the privatisation of services, deregulation of wage protection and the encouragement of private insurance against risks, such as ill-health.

However, 'debt' is a great 'equaliser', and also a force of social division. The discipline through debt, job uncertainty, economic insecurity and psychological distress has reached the middle classes. As Hutton (1994, p. 2) indicates, with 'personal debt in relation to post-tax income now the highest in the industrialised

West and house prices drifting, nobody can be carefree'. The imposition of financial insecurity needs to be seen against the background of rising unemployment and the creation of new types of employment. 'Full-time jobs only represent three fifths of Britain's jobs' and only 'a fifth of new jobs are the full-time pensionable jobs that the middle classes used to cherish' (Hutton, 1994, p. 2). The norm is part-time work, self-employment or fixed contract jobs. This norm is not new. It used to be the norm for the unskilled and semi-skilled and unemployed, and of those in low-paid employment. This has not changed. What has changed is that people like the junior manager, the partner at a City firm and the university lecturer participate unhappily and reluctantly in the new world of uncertainty and distress.

The consequence of the 1980's expansion of credit is the 1990's generalisation of a policy of social dumping. The differentiation between the unemployed and low paid, on the one hand, and the employed at the higher end of the wage scale, on the other, is changing its form. The so-called two-third society of the 1980s has been broken up into one-third societies. The marginalised are joined by the nearly marginalised. The policy of austerity divided the former two-third into the 'newly insecure' (cf. Hutton, 1993) and the full time pensionable employed. The latter are covered by collective bargaining and enjoy employment rights associated with the so-called affluent society of the 1950s and 1960s. The 'newly insecure' are those at the 'upper end of income distribution' but in casualised short-term employment and with considerable mortgage debt (ibid.). The division of social relations according to income and conditions is not new. However, it is being recomposed. From the 1960s onwards it existed in the form of a consumer society which was supported by full-time, pensionable income for the majority of the working population. Since the late 1980s this applies, as Hutton argues, only to one third of the population. Although still employed 'to manage the life of the working class' (cf. Hutton, 1994), the middle class are at risk of 'proletarianisation'. Their debt burden is made worse through cost saving reductions in the white collar labour force, the risk of unemployment, attempts to improve efficiency through intensification of work, casualisation of employment and wage pressure (including the extension of performance related pay to hitherto protected professions). The attempt to make bureaucracies and government institutions leaner and fitter, has not only involved the intensification of work but, also, financial distress, imposed premature retirement, unemployability at middle age as well as anxiety and fear that the intensification of work means growing uncertainty about future employment. Jobs for life are under threat and the reorganisation of the health service, higher education, financial business and the banking system, and Westminster's bureaucracy, make the condition of the middle classes more and more comparable with those of the working classes. The management of the life of the working class is, itself, casualised and made more efficient in terms of cost and intensity of work.

Compared with the 1980s, the Major governments are not just treading the

same path as the Thatcher governments. They do so under fundamentally changed conditions. Under Major, 'rights and entitlements' associated with the institutionalisation of labour's political power after the second world war, continued to be pushed aside. However, while continuing the policy of deregulation, labour market liberalisation and the tough public order policies of the Thatcher period, it failed to win the approval of traditional Tory supporters. The Major governments are unpopular not because of their deflationary policies but because deflation hurts those who benefited from the policy of state austerity of the 1980s. Although the Major administrations failed miserably to balance their books, they were successful in reducing inflation to a record low.¹⁵ However, the costs are grave: traditional Tory support amongst the middle classes is being alienated. This was expressed in their revolt against the poll tax, especially the component of business rate. The anti-poll tax movement raised the issue of a politics of debt to the level of mass resistance against the awesome power of money (see CSE, 1989; Holloway, 1990). Opposition to the tax straddled wide sections of society, including small business. Similarly, non-payment of the poll tax was advocated for a number of reasons, ranging from liberal conceptions focusing on the 'unfairness' of the tax to those emphasising class politics. The homogeneity of the movement was not achieved so much through political organisation but, rather, through the money form itself. It was through its resistance to the imposition of tight money that the movement achieved cohesion, unity and direction, rendering it a politically destabilising force. For government, the insubordination to the rule of money involved the risk that the social conflict transformed from a 'constructive' conflict to a 'destructive' conflict.

The characterisation of 'conflict' as a constructive conflict¹⁶ is intrinsic to the notion of a pluralist society and has been influential in the study of a variety of fields such as industrial relations¹⁷ and theories of parliamentary democracy.¹⁸ The understanding that conflict is endemic in a pluralist society does not mean that conflict should be provoked. It means that rules, procedures, and laws etc., are invoked which regulate conflict and through which conflict can express itself in 'constructive' forms. Underlying the disorganisation of class relations into relations of pluralist interests and conflicts is a policy of responsible citizenship defined by entitlements and political as well as social rights and duties. This policy does not aim at ending the position of the working class as a labouring commodity but, rather, at confining its struggle and aspirations to a pluralist conflict over distribution and conditions. The position of the working class in the production process is not questioned. Rather, the aim is to undermine proletarian consciousness and therewith the political constitution of proletarian discontent and struggle. The working class is thus treated as a specific interest group amongst others in society, defined by its income resource and consumer habits. The politics of responsible citizenship involves the denial of the question of exploitation in favour of an acceptance of the wage relation. In other words, the despotic regime of

exploitation is disguised as social relations are contained in the republic of the market. Discontent is channelled into the ballot-box allowing a choice between 'competing parties of the same kind' (cf. Kirchheimer, 1957, 1966). All groups in society are called upon to contribute 'equally' to the improvement of economic conditions, subordinating aspirations, such as decent income and conditions, to so-called national interests. However, any 'constructive conflict' does not lack its destructive potential. Social conflict and discontent questions existing rules and procedures and so raises the issue of political power. The disorganisation of class as class seeks to replace rebellion by wage conflicts and the question of political power is replaced by competing party political managers interested in the maximisation of votes and the marketing of conventional wisdom, especially during times of elections. Whether social conflict can be contained within existing forms or whether it is conducive to the reform of rules, or whether it develops to a serious political challenge, are open questions.

The anti-poll tax movement opened the Pandora's box. Government's response was swift: criminalisation and conciliation, abolition of tax, change of Prime Minister, and the depoliticisation of economic policy by joining the ERM. Government exploited the limited focus of the anti-poll tax movement and demobilised its momentum. The concern of the anti-poll tax movement was too narrowly focused on the imposition of the poll tax and it failed to widen the campaign to a broader mobilisation against the rule of money. This led the movement to dissipate with the abolition of the tax under the incoming Major government. The success of the anti-poll tax campaign to force government not only to abolish the tax, but also to force Thatcher's resignation, should not be underestimated. However, its limited focus allowed the Major government to shift emphasis by focusing on the exchange rate of the pound as an anchor of monetary tightness. As Sandholtz (1993, p. 38) indicates, 'for government that found it difficult domestically to achieve monetary discipline, EMU offered the chance to have it implemented from without'.¹⁹ For the UK, membership was largely motivated 'by the expectation of benefiting from its disciplinary effects' (ibid., p. 28). At the same time, ERM-membership allowed government to 'shift the blame for necessary adjustments to an international regime, thus evading electoral punishment' (Busch, 1994, p. 84).

Throughout the 1990s, there has been a groundswell of discontent and government has been treading on thin ice. Although the Major government had hardly the money available to buy itself out of problems, it engineered a pre-election pay-off by increasing levels of public spending in 1991-92, retreating from and avoiding a number of 'potential industrial confrontations' (German, 1993, p. 11). Further, the level of non-payment of the poll-tax remained high under the incoming Major government. Despite the abandonment of the poll tax in March 1993, thousands are either still being taken to court or threatened with pointings for being irresponsible by refusing to pay outstanding poll tax bills. Further, the

groundswell of discontent is indicated, amongst other things, by the public outcry over the pit-closure programme, the support for the Timex workers, nurses, ambulance drivers, and signalmen, the barrage of criticism over fiscal policy, civil disobedience against motorway construction, and the campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill. All these manifestations of discontent did not amount to a sustained challenge and either dissipated or did not mark significant victories. They indicate, however, that government has to be circumspect and that its attempt at socialising debt is based on precarious foundations.

The differentiated mixture of attack and conciliation changed form after the suspension of sterling's membership in the ERM. Although the support for the miners in Autumn 1992 forced government to delay its pit-closure programme, closure was imposed on a much larger scale. Wage ceilings in the public sector have been implemented since the pound's collapse and the level of taxation increased to a record high. A policy of fiscal tightness involves a more subtle attempt than monetary tightness to make people pay for the increase in debt. This is because, it involves apparently conciliatory elements through the system of rebates and specific concessions. At the same time, it makes resistance much more difficult: many direct taxes are reduced at source and indirect taxes, such as VAT, are raised over the counter. Further, progressive taxes, such as the council tax which replaced the poll tax, appear to be fair and just, so supporting the notion of the state as neutral arbitrator presiding over the pluralist conflicts amongst responsible citizens. Further, after the forced exit from the ERM, government set out to resolve political crisis by reinforcing social divisions, using the language of 'citizenship' in an attempt to channel conflict into constructive forms.²⁰ However, first of all, government took the unpopular decision to close most coal mines. Although the miners were hardly a political force since the strike of 1984-5, they represented, nevertheless, a focus for militant opposition capable of challenging government. After the miners, the Major government targeted beggars and lone mothers, reinforcing social division by distinguishing between 'scroungers' and those whose property owning dreams had turned into a nightmare. The rationale behind the orchestration of moral panics was to divide social relations between the 'responsible' citizen and the 'irresponsible' element, that is, between those who tried hard to maintain their condition and those who, apparently, called upon the state to support a life outside productive work. While Major's back to basics campaign threw some light on the 'Victorian' sexual practices of some Conservative members of parliament, the connection between the depiction of lone mothers as irresponsible members of society who are having children to gain benefits was not only distasteful but, also, symptomatic: people forced to live in miserable conditions are identified with their condition, making them outcasts in the eyes of those who proclaim in favour of decency and easily exploitable for a policy which emphasises the moral values of poverty. To use a phrase used in the late 1970s by Keith Joseph and Jonathan Sumption, 'poverty is not unfreedom'

and being 'married to the state' is the denial of freedom. The so-called 'dependency culture', upon which the above phrase focuses, is the denial of freedom because it rejects enterprise and responsibility and calls, instead, upon the state to violate individual freedom by supporting those who lack enterprise.

The vilification of beggars and lone mothers is not surprising and is more than just a repeat of earlier excesses of the Thatcher era. It amounts to a desperate attempt to overcome political crisis by securing the support of traditional Conservative voters. Vilification aims at smoothing fears of the middle classes of being 'mugged' by those left unwaged in a waged society. At the same time the traditional backbone of Conservative support is called upon to pay up. Their proletarianisation notwithstanding, fear and anxiety are exploited in an attempt to prevent solidarity with those whose poverty stands as a warning of a nightmarish future. Vilification can be interpreted as an attempt to undermine solidarity and social cooperation against a policy of austerity. It helps to divide social relations in terms of income groups and reinforce this division by setting different income groups against each other, forging a climate of distrust amongst these groups who, at the same time, are all trusted by government to pay the price for economic recovery. The other side of government's vilification is the issue of 'responsibility'. Government calls upon the population to trust its judgment and handling of the economy and urges those adversely effected by its policies to refrain from showing sympathy with the plight of beggars and single mothers. Solidarity with, government pronounced, villains is discouraged: all those who live a decent live are given an opportunity to distance themselves from irresponsible elements and to show responsibility by shouldering the burden of economic adjustment without question. The issue of 'responsibility' is specific: it defines the acceptance of hardship and deteriorating conditions as being in the national interest. Responsibility on the part of the individual is thus defined as a matter of national revival. The neo-liberalist conception of the empowered individual and its definition as an enterprising agent on the market, on the one hand, and the endorsement of individual responsibility, on the other, are two sides of the same state sponsored coin. The neo-liberal retreat from the state has meant a direct (re-)commodification of many aspects of social life and the enterprising individual is called upon to use the new found empowerment to make ends meet. The defiant protester and striker stand for all that which is harmful to the national interest. The stigmatisation of beggars and lone mothers as undesirable and irresponsible, is symptomatic: Behind the facade of moral high mindedness lurks the fear that solidarity and social cooperation might disrupt the fragile social fabric of atomised, debt-ridden and hard working people.

Against this background, Major's back to basics campaign and his talk of a classless society are much more than electoral devices and ideological window-dressing. Back to basics means the abandonment of fictitious wealth creation through credit expansion and a return to the old values of 'pray and work':²¹ Rather

than accumulating debt on future income, the demand is to act responsibly, to trust government's wisdom and thus to accept what it has in store and comply with its dictate. In other words, the responsible citizens are called upon to live not only within their means but also to consume less than has been produced in order to reduce deficits. Acceptance of lower wages, deteriorating conditions and intensification work, as well as the tailoring of life around material gain, rather than single motherhood, is endorsed as a civic duty. In this context, the issue of citizenship becomes specific. It has been raised by Conservatives, Liberals²² and the reformist Left. Douglas Hurd endorsed the notion of 'active citizenship', indicating that the time had come to shed Thatcherism's image of self-interest, greed and selfishness and to replace it by the virtues of self-help combined with moral obligations to support worthy causes.²³ The Left, particularly those connected with the former *Marxism Today*, *New Times* and the *New Statesmen*, proposes a Bill of Rights, constitutional reform and endorses the notion of a caring Britain. It espouses the idea of 'citizenship' in terms of rights, challenging both 'the unfairness and amorality of the market and the diffusion of responsibility brought about by large-scale industrial socialism'. It seeks to find a 'third' way between the market and state organised capitalism 'by linking a strong individual ethic with a new affirmation of what it means to live as part of a community' (Mulgan, 1991 p. 38). Despite the differences between these approaches, all endorse a critique of neo-liberalism and social democracy (i.e. the Labourism associated with Keynesian policy) in favour of communitarian values, community cooperation and self-help. The role of the state is no longer seen as coordinating production. In the 1950s, the Left's conception was linked to the postwar welfare state. This state was seen as providing a new common experience of real socialism (cf. Marshall, 1950). The new Left debate on citizenship has turned its back on 'state-organised socialism' and endorses a social capitalism with 'real' individual freedom and choice. The role of the state is emphasised in moral terms: to supply help for those who help themselves. The emphasis on the moral dimension of state action endorses essentially the Christian Democratic values of an ethical socialism where the state helps those who help themselves.²⁴ The state is thus charged with granting people entitlements in the market where individual awareness of injustice will help to rectify gross discrepancies.

The issue of social justice is attractive. The promise is that misery and hard and non-rewarding work in the present is a condition of prosperity in the 'long run'. This image is seductive especially against the background of mass unemployment, poverty, homelessness and financial distress. However, before we let ourselves be seduced we will first have to return to basics. Governments, not only in Britain, but all over the world, are preaching the gospel of rising productivity and competitiveness. The promise is thus that fewer and less paid workers will produce more. However, under current conditions, rising productivity translates primarily into higher unemployment, further closure of productive

capacities and financial turmoil. Does 'classness' indeed mean generalised poverty, job insecurity and financial distress rather than a return to the 'affluent society' of the 1950s and 1960s which captured the imagination of so many?

VI. Conclusion

The espousal of the notion of 'citizenship' by all major parties is symptomatic. It raises the virtues of civic duty and responsibility and emphasises social 'rights' in terms of property rights. The call for 'citizenship' has an apparent progressive ring to it. It summons equality, justice and freedom. Social relations are not perceived as class relations but as relations between individualised property owners endowed with abstract rights. The neo-liberal retreat from the state is thus legitimated through the language of the Enlightenment. The emphasis is on the civic virtues of responsibility and trust in the state, espousing the idea of the loyal and law-abiding citizen, which is empowered to utilise property for both selfish purposes and the common good.²⁵ In the context of a republic of debt, the demand is thus that law-abiding and empowered individuals recognise their duty to struggle on to make ends meet. Compliance with harsh conditions, espousal of the ethics of hard labour and the acceptance of the rule of money, is endorsed as the citizens' duty. The republic of debt is thus seen as the framework within which the rights of citizens subsist. Within this context, the role of the state is to preserve justice, that is, to impose upon social relations the condition of their existence, that is, the free and equal citizen who recognises the duty and responsibility entrusted upon it by virtue of the ownership of property, including the ownership of labour power.

Postscript

The debate on citizenship should be taken seriously. Though, it should be deepened and not restricted to legitimise the social engineering of discipline. It should be taken on in the tradition of Enlightenment thought: Doubt everything!

Notes

[1] This article arises out of a wider project conducted with Peter Burnham and Alice Brown, which will appear as *A Major Crisis? The Politics of Economic Policy in Britain in the 1990s*, Dartmouth, Aldershot.

[2] A conceptual analysis of the relationship between debt and class struggle can be found in Bonefeld/Holloway (1995).

[3] See, for example, Ford (1998,1991); Berthoud/Kempson (1990); Kempson et al. (1994); and Alcock (1993).

[4] In Britain, by the late 1980s, there were approximately 1.1 million lone parents, of whom 910,000 were lone mothers (Millar, cited in Ford, 1991).

[5] See the contributions to Michie (ed.) (1992).

[6] The following part is close to Bonefeld/Holloway (1995).

[7] On the global character of capitalist development and prostitution, see Dalla-Costa (1995).

[8] The above and subsequent data can be found in McKie (ed.) (1993, 1994) and Smith (1993) and German (1993). The data on the housing market for 1993 can be found in *Financial Times*, 27th of January, 1994.

[9] The bad debt exposure of some of the leading banks was so dramatic that some commentators, like Anthony Harris, considered that government should nationalise banks (*Financial Times*, 19.10.92).

[10] The negative PSBR stands for a public spending surplus.

[11] The uniform business rate was part of government's Community Charge (Poll Tax). It replaced 'non-domestic rates levied by local authorities on commercial and industrial properties with a national non-domestic rate' which was 'set each year by central government and collected on the basis of a single, common rate poundage'. The re-evaluation of rates led to substantial increases in the rate bills. Government was regarded as having betrayed the loyal support of small business and commercial enterprise. The business community reacted by organising a 'revolt of its own'. In some areas, especially in the South of England, non-payment campaigns were organised (Stoker, 1991, pp. 181, 190).

[12] See Panitch (1986) for an analysis of the wage-squeeze during the 1970s.

[13] The following part is indebted to Bonefeld/Holloway (1995).

[14] For example, in the UK, the young unemployed on government sponsored training schemes are not regarded as employed by the Department of Social Security. That means they are not entitled to industrial injury benefits.

[15] The reduction in the rate of inflation under Major is quite unprecedented. Its nearest equivalent was the reductions under Callaghan in the 1970s (see Jay, 1994).

[16] A theory of the 'functionality of conflict' is presented, for example, by Coser (1956) and has been developed within the Marxist framework by Poulantzas (1973) and Hirsch (1991).

[17] See the work of Flanders (1970) and Fox (1966) For an assessment: Hyman (1989).

[18] Modern variants of the interrelation between constructive conflicts and the building of democracy can be found in the work of Held (1986, 1989), Keane (1988), and the contributions in Andrews (1991) as well as Hall and Jacques (1989). For a critique of such a view: Agnoli (1990, 1992); Bonefeld (1992) and Clarke (1991).

[19] The ERM is phase one of the European Monetary Union whose final stage is complete convergence of members' currencies.

[20] Under Major, new trade union laws and the reform of public sector employment were legitimised through the introduction of 'Citizen Charters'. On the reorganisation of the public sector employment: Fairbrother (1994).

[21] 'Pray and work' is a well suited description of the socialisation of debt during the 1990s. It derives from the monastic rule of 'ora et labora'. The Roman means of control through bread and amusements ('panem et circenses') would be much too expensive. However government tried hard, although unsuccessfully, to provide amusements to strengthen its credibility. David Mellor's resignation as Minister of Heritage and as the self-appointed 'minister of fun' in 1992 indicated government's difficulties and the vilification of lone mothers during Major's back-to-basics campaign misfired miserably: the Conservative party found itself to be at the centre of modern versions of cheap entertainment as sex scandals broke. The Major government is also hoping to overcome political crisis by presiding over the provision of bread. John Redwood (Secretary of Wales) described government's future strategy as follows: 'Looking to the future, I see a good period for strengthening and broadening the base of popular capitalism' (Interview in the Independent, 3.9.93). In other words, the monastic rule of pray and work is only transitory and will be replaced by panem et circenses. We know what 'panem' looked like in the 1980s and government's own brand of 'circenses' is, indeed, amusing. However, amusement can not be sustained on a cheap basis for long as David Mellor now knows only too well.

[22] Paddy Ashdown showed his commitment to community spirit in his Citizens' Britain.

[23] See the introduction to Andrews (ed.) 1991.

[24] In Germany, the left of the CDU is committed to an ethical socialism of self-help. This issue is construed in terms of 'subsidiarity'. On the British Left's endorsement of Christian Democracy: Clarke (1990).

[25] The endorsement that property is an individual right which carries social obligations, confirms the new found interest in Germany's 'social market economy' (see Basic Law, Articles 14 and 15; for comment: Bonefeld, 1992).

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Book Reviews

Jacques Derrida

**Specters of Marx:
The State of the Debt, the Work of
Mourning & the New International**

translated by Peggy Kamuf
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Reviewed by Adrian Wilding

The 'specters' of Derrida's title refer to one of Marx's favourite metaphors: from the opening lines of the Communist Manifesto where we read that "a specter is haunting Europe, the specter of communism" to The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and the analysis of bourgeois revolutions 'haunted' by their predecessors, from the polemic against Stirner in The German Ideology, to the exposition of the 'phantasmagorias' of commodity fetishism in *Capital*, the ghost is both Marx's most favourite and most despised image. Favoured because in his writings on religion, ideology, and abstract human-

ism, the image of the ghost returns again and again, each time performing a considerable amount of conceptual and critical labour. At the same time the ghost is Marx's most reviled enemy: one can go so far as to suggest that it is as a critique of the ghost or, as Derrida puts it, of 'spectrality', that Marxian critique proceeds, since this image represents all that is mystificatory (whether it is religion, fetishism or ideology) about capitalist society.

The title has a second meaning though, since the 'specters' refer not only to the ghosts chased and exorcised by Marx, but also the specter of Marx himself. It is this second sense of the term which informs Derrida's more basic project in this book - to determine just what is living and dead in Marx's thought, the extent of our indebtedness to Marx in an ostensibly post-communist world. The two moments of this analysis are combined in a theory of the specter which Derrida thinks faithful to the spirit if not the letter of Marx's text. With the help of concepts borrowed from Freud, he characterises this reappraisal of Marx as a 'work of

mourning', an attempt to come to terms with the 'trauma' induced by the collapse of 'communist' states in Eastern Europe, but - crucially - in a way which would avoid the 'manic' triumphalism exhibited by liberal thinkers. Derrida rebuts those theorists who, in the wake of 1989, celebrate the demise of Marxism as a theory and a practice (Fukuyama's 'End of History' thesis is the object of an extended polemic in the first two chapters of the book). The 'triumph' of liberal capitalism is for Derrida merely the renewal of extreme forms of injustice and exploitation. In this development, the globalisation of capital and corporate-owned media have played a determining role, setting a new political agenda (a 'new international') which gives a lie to the rights-based morality of liberal theory. This new international will come to structure not only liberal democracy but also any politics which would oppose it. It is in this context that Derrida argues (although his comments here are somewhat gestural) for the redundancy of the party as an effective form of organisation.

Why is this book of interest? To those familiar with Derrida's writing the present work's significance lies in the fact that it represents his first extended engagement with Marx, a thinker upon whom he had hitherto exercised a deliberate and considered silence. To 'deconstruct' Marx, Derrida once confided, would involve political allegiances he wished to avoid. His silence on Marx was in this sense a covert defence of Marxism. The turnaround can perhaps be understood in

light of the fact that deconstruction has betrayed this political intent. Often (and particularly in the American academy) it has amounted to little more than a set of tools for dismantling left-wing theory. If the latest work is indeed an attempt to divert the trajectory of deconstruction then this may well explain another noteworthy feature of the book: *Specters* shows Derrida converging upon themes which preoccupied a school of thought to which deconstruction is normally opposed - German critical theory. Readers of Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch will find many familiar ideas reformulated in this book. Two examples of this indebtedness stand out: firstly the suggestion that communism's status as an historical event can helpfully be understood by analogy with religious eschatology; secondly (and following from the first point) the contention that Marx provides us with a theory of history which is not simply linear and progressive but discontinuous and unpredictable - in Derrida's words 'anachronic'.

What does this book offer to readers of Marx? This is perhaps more difficult to determine since many of the points Derrida makes are explored more exhaustively within Marxist theory. On the question of the forces structuring the 'New World Order' his diagnosis is often uncritical, relying as it does so heavily upon a postmodern over-valuation of media and technology. The logic which is thereby imputed to capitalist development sits uneasily with his attempt to theorise revolutionary organisation. In places, his readings of Marx (in particular *The German*

Ideology) are sensitive and illuminating; in others (especially on commodity fetishism) they are hasty and even inaccurate. At one point Derrida attempts to problematise the distinction between exchange-value and use-value on the grounds that since the former is said to arise only in a particular socio-historical context, the latter is by implication pure, ahistorical and uncultured. On the contrary, Derrida argues, use-value is just as much an abstraction as exchange-value. But the charge that use-value is itself culturally and historically conditioned ('contaminated', to use Derrida's terminology) can easily be conceded without in any way undermining the critical force of Marx's distinction. At this point it becomes evident that the attempt to deconstruct such categorial distinctions seems to eclipse the fundamental contradictions identified by Marx in capitalist reproduction, in this instance the dual character of the commodity-form. The difference (including that of their respective political outcomes) between a dialectical and a deconstructive approach begins to come into view.

Worryingly, the 'spirits' or 'specters' of Marx which Derrida thinks it not only possible but necessary to relinquish are just those which give Marxism its practical-critical force: dialectics, class, the concept of mode of production. What is deemed worthy of salvaging is the theory of commodity fetishism, and here Derrida again comes close to the Frankfurt School for whom emphasis upon this theme typically meant down-playing theories of class

struggle, of the labour process and (most significantly) capitalist crises, much as if their reading of *Capital* had halted at the end of the very first chapter.

For Derrida the metaphor of communism as a 'specter' contrives to undermine the use to which Marx would put it. Any faith in the proximity of revolution is compromised by the insight that a ghost can never be conjured into full presence. Marx's metaphor is not ill-chosen though since, according to Derrida, it offers an alternative and less deterministic portrayal of communism, one which sees in it an endlessly futural project; communism is to this extent always 'to come', it is "urgency, imminence but, irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation." (p. 168.) However, this reprojection of communism negates the historical openness it seeks to establish. The dynamic contradiction involved in holding thought and practice open towards an indeterminate future assumes here the form of a disabling 'un-decidability'. Politically, its outcome seems to be passivity. Derrida makes communism into an infinite task, but an infinite task is, by definition, unrealisable. A possible critique of this line of thinking might take note of Bloch's contention that Marxism combines two modes of future-orientedness: one counterfactual and against-the-odds, and one grounded in 'real possibility', lines of development already present within capitalist society. On these terms Derrida's characterisation of communism as *l'avenir* ('to come') would have rescued the former without the latter. But, as

